



NIE NEWSPAPER IN EDUCATION

STUDENT CONTESTS

CLASSIC COMIC CONTEST
DESIGN AN AD CONTEST
3RD GRADE WRITING CONTEST
WRITE A COLUMN/WRITE A FEATURE CONTEST
PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST
COVER DESIGN CONTEST

Talents of students in schools within The Indiana Gazette readership area are featured in both written and artistic form within this special student supplement marking the celebration of Newspaper in Education Month 2021.

It is a product made possible by The Indiana Gazette and The Blairsville Dispatch advertisers, hundreds of teachers and thousands of students. Like the newspaper, it brings a real world situation to the classroom.

The Indiana Gazette and The Blairsville Dispatch NIE Student Supplement, Monday, March 29, 2021 and April 1, 2021.

The Indiana Gazette and The Blairsville Dispatch *congratulate* all the NIE contest winners



As this year's Newspaper in Education contests come to a close, we would like to offer a sincere thank you to everyone who made this publication possible:

- **All of the participating schools:** Apollo-Ridge Elementary and Middle schools; Ben Franklin Elementary; Blairsville Elementary and High schools; Calvary Baptist Academy; Dayton Elementary; East Pike Elementary; Eisenhower Elementary; Elderton Elementary; Homeschool students; Homer-Center Elementary and High schools; Horace Mann Elementary; Indiana County Technology Center; Indiana Junior and Senior High schools; Learning Tree; Northern Cambria Elementary; Penns Manor Area Elementary and High schools; Purchase Line Elementary and High schools; Rayne Elementary; Saltsburg Elementary, Middle and High schools; Seeds of Faith Christian Academy; St. Bernard Regional Catholic School; United Elementary and High schools; W.A. McCreery Elementary; and West Shamokin Middle and High schools
- **All of the teachers and homeschool parents**
- **Each of the more than 3,000 students who participated**
- **Former NIE Coordinator Hastie Kinter for her direction**
- **Mr. Chad Danka from Apollo-Ridge, and Calvary Baptist Academy and Blairsville schools for their extra efforts with the Design-an-Ad program**
- **The many office support staff at each of the schools for helping through the process and communication between the teachers and Gazette staff**
- **Each of the participating businesses**

We also would like to thank everyone for their patience and understanding working with us through the various obstacles and glitches we had as we learned our way through this year's project. A project of this magnitude is not possible without each of you and your time, dedication and cooperation. We hope to work with everyone again next year.

Thank you very much,

The Indiana Gazette & Blairsville Dispatch staff

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Students display writing, art, photo skills

The Indiana Gazette and The Blairsville Dispatch are celebrating the 36th year of publication of this Newspaper in Education Student Supplement, which highlights the talents of local students from kindergarten through Grade 12 in a variety of contests.

All of the work included within has been created by students in our readership area. The kindergartners and first- and sec-

ond-graders are asked to complete the last frame of a comic strip that has been developed by one of our Gazette artists.

At the third-grade level, students are asked to write a short essay paragraph on a topic that changes yearly.

Fourth- through sixth-grade students design ads that are sponsored by local businesses, and at the high school level, stu-

dents have the opportunity to showcase their writing abilities through an opinion-writing contest and a feature-writing contest.

High school students also compete in a photography contest that includes the best feature, sports and news photographs, as well as a contest for cover design.

The goal of The Indiana Ga-

zette and The Blairsville Dispatch's NIE program is to reinforce a positive lifetime reading habit in students by engaging them in a life skill that will be beneficial to them into adulthood.

It also provides them with an opportunity to have their work published, something few school-age students can pride themselves on.

On the cover

Emily Willard, a 12th-grade student at Indiana County Technology Center, created the winning artwork featured on the cover of the 2021 Newspaper in Education Student Supplement.

Design-an-ad winners

Area students in grades 4, 5 and 6 designed advertisements for 58 local businesses.

The advertisements were then taken to the business owners, who chose the ones that appear in today's special section.

Sales representatives from The Indiana Gazette's and The Blairsville Dispatch's advertising department then selected these winners from each grade.



JADE BURNEY
Eisenhower Elementary
Grade 4



REAGAN VANHORN
Homeschool
Grade 4



SAMARA McCUTCHEON
Apollo-Ridge Elementary
Grade 4



TRINITY WISSINGER
Eisenhower Elementary
Grade 5



JANE STUBBE
Horace Mann Elementary
Grade 5



STELLA EMPFIELD
Horace Mann Elementary
Grade 5



BO BARTLEBAUGH
United Elementary
Grade 6



JOHN ST. CLAIR
United Elementary
Grade 6



CLAIRE STANLEY
Indiana Junior High School
Grade 6

A list of this year's winners

The following is a list of winners in this year's Newspaper in Education contests featured in this supplement:

COVER DESIGN

Emily Willard, Grade 12, Indiana County Technology Center

COMICS

KINDERGARTEN: Eavionna Davis, first, Calvary Baptist Academy; Emma Howells, second, Purchase Line Elementary; Jerod Sandeen, third, Homeschool

GRADE 1: Conner Unrue, first, Ben Franklin Elementary; Raya Edwards, second, Calvary Baptist Academy; Abigail Sauers, third, Purchase Line Elementary

GRADE 2: Layla Smochek, first, Rayne Elementary; Emma Kass, second, Ben Franklin Elementary; Addison Howells, third, Purchase Line Elementary

THIRD-GRADE WRITING CONTEST

Baylee Adderley, first, East Pike Elementary; Mason Miller, second, W.A. McCreery Elementary; Aubrey Henigin, third, Homer-Center Elementary

DESIGN-AN-AD CONTEST

GRADE 4: Jade Burney, first, Eisenhower Elementary; Reagan VanHorn, second, Homeschool; Samara McCutcheon, third, Apollo-Ridge Elementary

GRADE 5: Trinity Wissinger, first, Eisenhower Elementary; Jane Stubbe, second, Horace Mann Elementary; Stella Empfield, third, Horace Mann Elementary

GRADE 6: Bo Bartlebaugh, first, United Elementary; John St. Clair, second, United Elementary; Claire Stanley, third, Indiana Junior High School

FEATURE STORY

GRADE 7: Ray Gapshes, first, United Junior/Senior High School; Zak Resnick, second, Saltsburg Middle/High School; Beatrix Rummel, third, Homeschool

GRADE 8: Olivia Massari, first, Apollo-Ridge Middle School; Maximus Julin, second, Indiana Junior High School; Lizzie Kinneer, third, Indiana Junior High School

GRADE 9: Stella Rummel, first, Homeschool

GRADE 10: Henry Rummel, first, Homeschool; Bridger Blankenbicker, second, United Junior/Senior High School; Zoe Mack, third, United Junior/Senior High School

GRADE 11: Edith Fortushniak, first,

See **WINNERS: 4**

This year's list of winners

WINNERS: From 3 Homeschool; Abigail Toy, second, West Shamokin High School

GRADE 12: Adriana Guth-Borowski, first, Indiana Senior High School; David Huang, second, Indiana Senior High School; Nathan Skalican, third, Indiana Senior High School

OPINION COLUMN

GRADE 7: Lelise Allison, first, Indiana Junior High School; Jeanice Hill, second, Indiana Junior High School; Addison Rosko, third, United Junior/Senior High School

GRADE 8: Caiden Cardelli, first, Indiana Junior High School; Rocco Cosentino, second, Indiana Junior High School; Kat McLaurine, third, Indiana Junior High School

GRADE 9: Jace Parks, first, West Shamokin High School; Lou Swartz, second, West Shamokin High School; Dylan McGaughey, third, West Shamokin High School

GRADE 10: Cassidy Jakosh, first, Saltsburg Middle/High School; Kiley Branan, second, Indiana Senior High School; Cheyenne Weimer, third, Saltsburg

Middle/High School

GRADE 11: Luke Rainey, first, Penns Manor Junior/Senior High School; Jade Misko, second, Purchase Line High School; Avery Falisec, third, Purchase Line High School

GRADE 12: Harper Wehler, first, Blairsville High School; Kaylee Becker-George, second, Indiana Senior High School; Justin Reese, third, Indiana Senior High School

NEWS PHOTO

Angelo Lamantia, first, Indiana Senior High School; Rebecca George, second, Indiana County Technology Center; Henry Rummel, third, Homeschool

FEATURE PHOTO

Sierra Hart-Fabbri, first, Indiana County Technology Center; Hannah Reilly, second, Indiana Senior High School; Tanner Agnello, third, Indiana Senior High School

SPORTS PHOTO

Sierra Hart-Fabbri, first, Indiana County Technology Center; Sally Kingan, second, Indiana Senior High School; Zachary Herrington, third, Indiana Senior High School

Writing contest for the best feature story

Students in grades 7 through 12 were asked to write feature stories using the theme “What steps can we take to build unity in a divided nation?” or “What is the best way to resolve differences you have with someone?”

The stories were judged by staff in The Indiana Gazette’s and The Blairsville Dispatch’s editorial department. Here are the winners.

How can we build unity in our nation?

As young individuals, we can do many things to build unity in our nation. Even though we are young, we can still be productive members of our society and do our part to create unity.

One thing we can do is support our leadership on all levels. Whether it is our president, governor, mayor, principal or teachers, we have to be supportive. We need to put our differences and beliefs aside. We need to trust that our leaders are doing what is best for our nation. We need to focus on the positive things happening in our nation, like the COVID-



RAY GAPSHES
United High School
Grade 7

19 vaccine. This vaccine is saving lives and allowing loved ones to spend time together again. If we can turn all of the negativity towards our leadership into positive energy, maybe unity can be increased.

Other things we can do

to promote unity is to look for ways to be helpful. We should all try to volunteer in our community. Something as simple as picking up garbage on the side of the road or raking leaves in a neighbor’s yard can really lift the spirits of many. Another thing you can do is help someone without them having to ask for help.

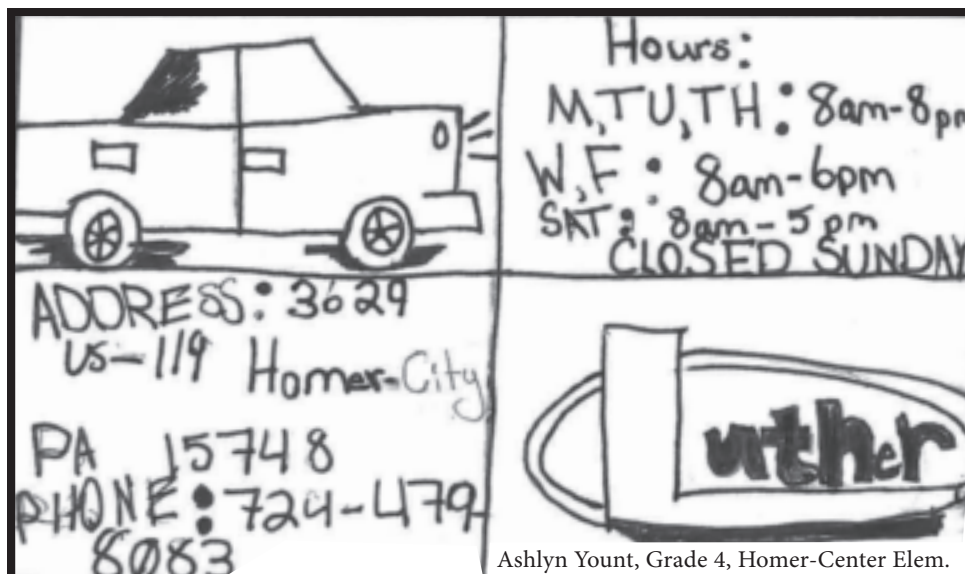
If you see someone that needs help with something, just take the time and do it for them. You could also take the time and listen to others to understand what they have to say. Being helpful makes others feel good.

Another way we can build unity is to be kind to others. All you need to do is hold the door for some-

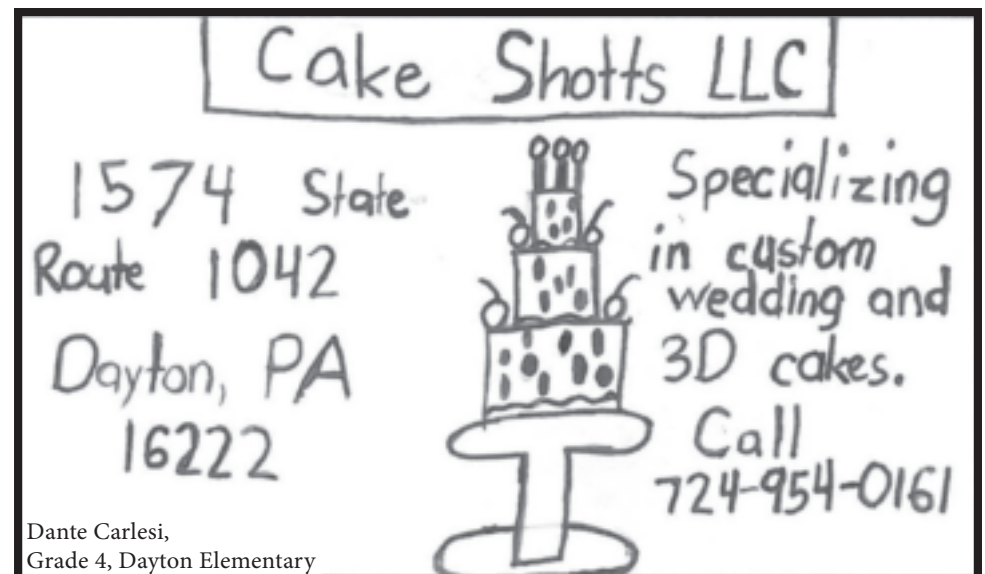
body or maybe compliment someone. You can always be kind to people just by doing little things for them to gain their appreciation. Your kindness just may encourage others to do the same. Kindness goes a long way so we should try to do something kind for someone else every day. Also, we can be kind to others by donating money for those who need it, like homeless shelters. We can easily give a few dollars to help them get food and things they need.

Supporting our leadership, being helpful, and being kind to others are just a few of the simple, but effective actions we can do to help encourage and improve the unity in our nation. Do your part.

The Indiana Gazette: In print and online. www.indianagazette.com



Ashlyn Yount, Grade 4, Homer-Center Elem.



Dante Carlesi,
Grade 4, Dayton Elementary

Writing contest for the best feature story

Untitled

Anywhere you look you can find division in this country. Take one look on the news and you'll see an example of it in a few seconds. But what can we do to end this division? To unify the people? There are many steps we can take to reach this goal but there are a few crucial ones. I believe instead of the Democrats and Republicans working against each other, they should work with each other. Working against each other is only counterproductive and in doing so will get nothing accomplished and will just divide our nation even further.

Have you ever tried to accomplish a task with someone else and instead of working together you worked against each other?

How did it end up? Did you accomplish the goal? Or did you just go right back to where you started?

Think about it. What does working against each other accomplish? Let's say two people are climbing up a mountain. The top of the mountain is the goal, or in this case unity. One of the climbers represents the Democrats and the other climber represents the Republicans. Once the Democrats get ahead, the Republicans pull on their rope sending them back down. And when the Republicans get ahead, the Democrats do the same thing. The cycle then repeats. They end up staying in the same place. Once one progresses towards the goal, the other brings them down and the same thing happens again and again. While this is hap-



ZAK RESNICK
Saltsburg Middle School
Grade 7

pening, the people watching try to defend the two sides, ending up in the division of a nation. All of this could have been prevented if they would have worked together. They would have progressed towards the goal instead of staying in the same spot. The crowd

would not be defending any side and would just be cheering them on. Sadly, this second outcome does not translate to our reality. But it could if we would just work together.

Do you know anyone who is Republican or Democrat? If you do, chances are they have strong opinions about both sides and they may defend their own side even if they are in the wrong! Since this goes for both sides, this bias can cause division and is usually blown way out of proportion. For example: the storming of the Capitol and many other riots and protests coming from each side. This is because whenever one side does almost anything, the other side tries to make them look bad by exaggerating the situation or spreading false information, and this goes for

both sides. The public sees this and defends their side, only resulting in further division. Again, this can be prevented if we could all work together. There would be no division causing bias because there would be only one side, and in today's world there are always two sides. Usually neither of them are right, but they could be if they would just work together.

It's like a never-ending game of tug-of-war between the two parties. One pulls the rope and then the other pulls back, and it's a tiring cycle. Both of the sides just want to win but it's pointless because the crowd just gets louder and louder, and neither side will give in because they both just want to win. But it's pointless. It's pointless because they are not getting

anywhere. They know that if they give in then they will lose, so they both just keep going. But what they don't realize is what they will accomplish if they both give in. Agree to disagree, accept their differences, and work together.

Think about it, what does working against each other accomplish? Nothing, right? Except division. Now think about what working with each other can accomplish. A lot of things. And now imagine what our nation could accomplish if we all worked together. Instead of focusing on which side is right or wrong.

Why don't we focus on real problems, problems that matter? Problems that, if fixed, can change the world as we know it. But this can only happen if we work together.



BEATRIX RUMMEL
Homeschool
Grade 7

What steps can we take to build unity in a divided nation?

Some people think that to bring a nation together, you have to have power. When you have power, you can have the people who you have power over do stuff to bring them together. But that's not necessarily true. Everyone can help bring about unity. You may not be able to bring unity

to an entire nation, but you can start by bringing unity to your neighborhood or school. Sometimes, to have unity, you are just friendly. Sometimes, bringing unity means making meals for the new family on the street, volunteering for the local food bank, or finding any way to help.

You might have seen some stories about people who help their local community or economy. Well, you can do that too! Even

if you don't get recognized for your good deeds, you are still doing something honorable. We should all make it a habit to help, grow, and cherish our community. If you look around you, you will see that anyone can help our world, even kids!

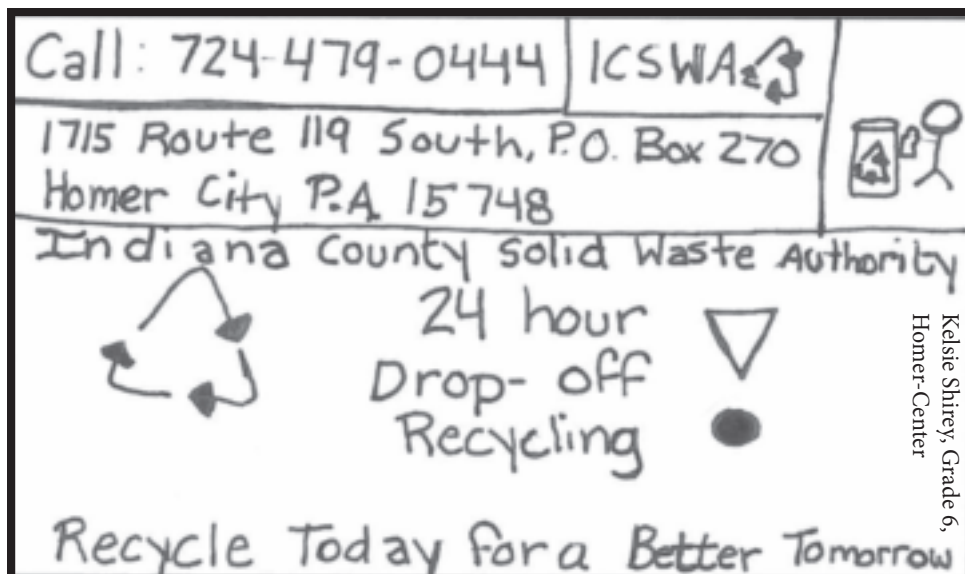
If you really want to help the entire nation, do it! One thing you can do is write to the president. Make sure you are clear about why you wrote. Tell him what you need his help with. Always

be polite and address him as Mr. President. Maybe ask him if he has any advice about how to help the nation. He might not get to you right away or even at all, but that doesn't mean he doesn't care. Meanwhile ...

Having unity in your family can help spread unity to others around you. You could try to do family projects together, ask if you can help make dinner together, set out some time to just be with your family, or maybe

play a game that you all know. If you can have unity in your family, and other families try to, too, we can all make big changes in the world.

The definition of the word unity is described as the quality or state of not being multiple; oneness. So especially during COVID-19, we need to come together as one nation. We need to have oneness and unity and reach out to those around
See **RUMMEL: 6**



Kelsie Shirey, Grade 6,
Homer-Center



Benjamin Gornick,
Grade 4, St. Bernard

Writing contest for the best feature story

What steps can we take to build unity in a divided nation?

RUMMEL: From 5 us. If we stay isolated and alone, we will not be in the right state and quickly fall. We need to be safe, and yet see each other to bring unity everywhere. We can all agree that we

need unity, but lots of people aren't united. Mother Theresa, Mahatma Gandhi, Albert Einstein, and so many others believed in unity and so we can have unity as we see their unity with others. Helen Keller once said, "Alone we can do

so little, together we can do so much." I believe that that is very true! How do we be united with people who don't want to be united? It won't help if you force them to be united but instead to keep on pursuing unity ourselves. If they

can see that our being united with others is only helping, we can then reach out to them and be united. The number one role is to not, under any circumstance, give up. In order for people to be united, you need to show

them what it looks like. First, start in your house, then your neighborhood, your community, your church, and your state. It's not easy to build unity in a divided nation. Sometimes it takes money or resources that you don't have to reach

a state or a whole nation, but it won't hurt for us to try. The only way for you to reach your goal is for you to try. If you don't try you will always be wondering if you really can bring unity to a divided nation.

What steps can we take to build unity in a divided nation?

Why, as a nation, are we so divided? Naturally, you are not always going to agree with everyone, but why do we let that affect us? Unity is defined as the state of being united or joined as a whole. As a nation, we are stronger when we are together as a

whole, instead of being divided on two sides. We need to understand what exactly divides us and how we can make changes. We live in a world where people like to cheer for things. We root for our favorite teams and feel a sense of pride when they do well. We root for them unconditionally and would never root for the other team. Our teams are our

teams, and our neighbor can have a different favorite team. It makes for friendly and fun competition. This is fine until you take that too far. In areas like politics, people often have a side they pick, and just like with sports, some will never root for the other side. People like to point the good that their side does and overlook the good that the other

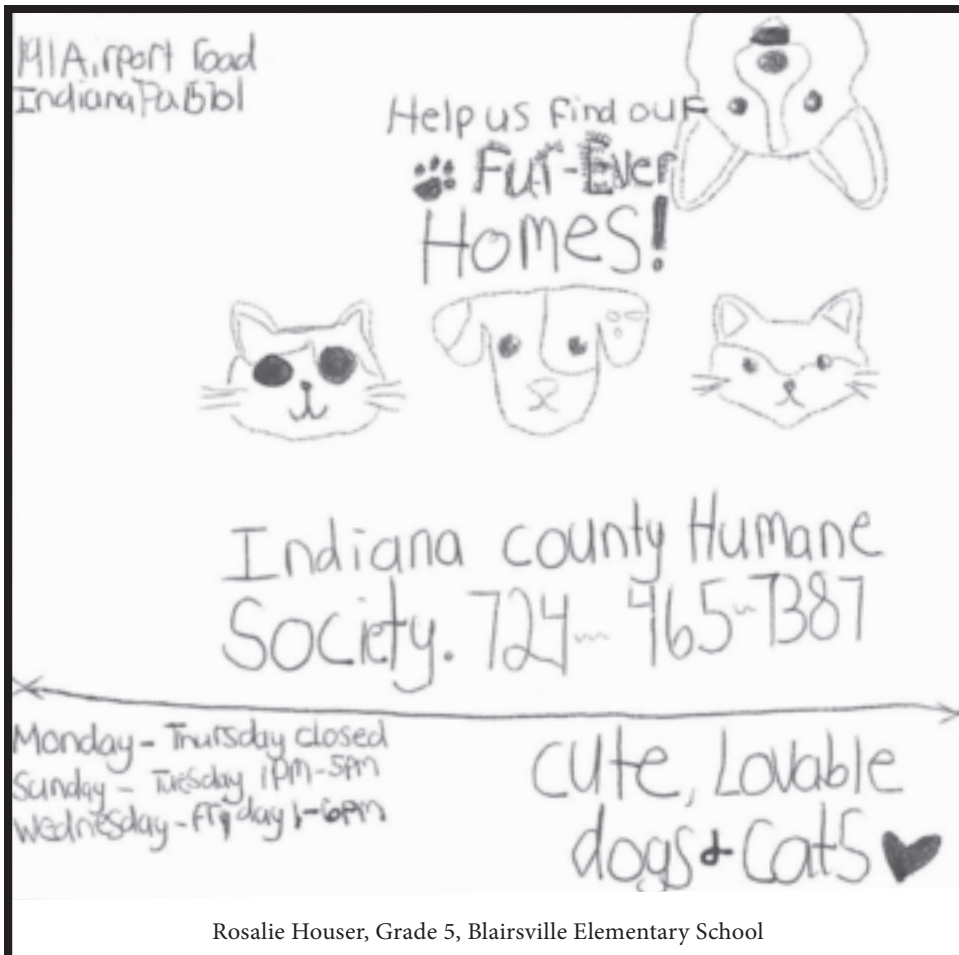


OLIVIA MASSARI
Apollo-Ridge Middle School
Grade 8

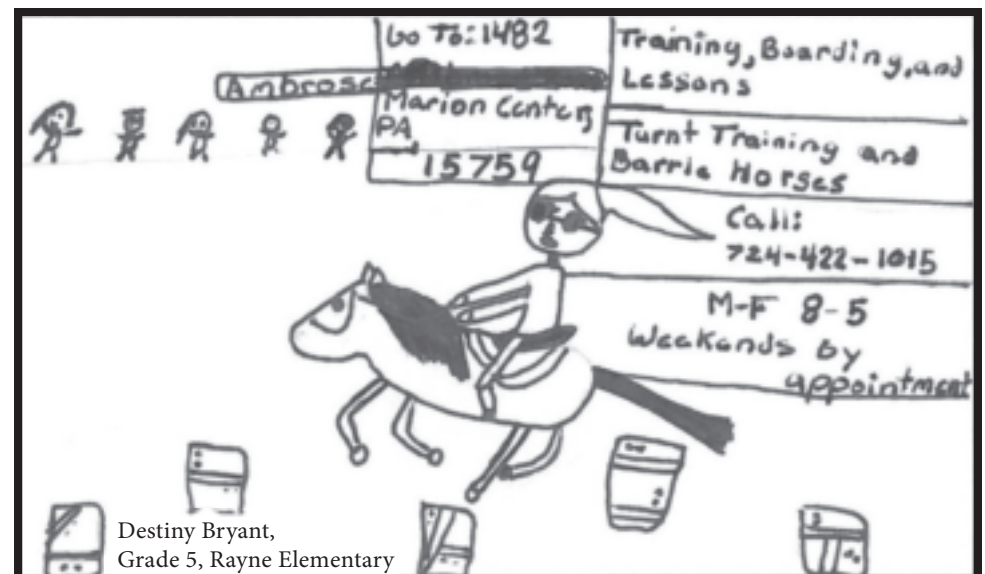
People struggle with being their own person because of this. If they see a celebrity supporting a certain idea it will make them more inclined to agree with it. They close off their minds to even being open to other ideas because they can always find social media posts to support what they already believe. That is when a lot of division happens because there is a lack of compromise and understanding. Many people would rather "be right" than look for what "is right." Understanding. That can be hard sometimes. You might not understand why someone believes something. Learn to understand why they believe what they believe. You do not have to agree, but if you understand that they have a reason for what they believe, just like you have a reason for what

you believe, you can start to build unity. You may even begin to realize that you are not as divided as you think you are because you have similar core values. Learning to understand each other and building unity will not always be easy. To do this you might need to look at where you get your news from and who you look at on social media. You might also need to think about what you believe — not what you think you do because someone else does. Finally, if we learn to understand that everyone has a reason, and that their reason is valid, we can be kinder to each other and become united as a nation. Overall, if we take these steps as a nation, that can then help bring unity and stop the division among us.

side does. This can then go even further when you add the influence of the media. With just one click you can find anything you want because of the internet. The internet influences a lot in our daily lives. What we wear, what we eat, and who we vote for are just some of things heavily impacted by media and social media.



Rosalie Houser, Grade 5, Blairsville Elementary School



Destiny Bryant,
Grade 5, Rayne Elementary

Writing contest for the best feature story

A divided nation: How do we mend?

Why is America divided?
Politics.

We've seen it everywhere: Republicans versus Democrats, Donald Trump versus Joe Biden, even CNN versus Fox News. The 2020 presidential election tore apart friendships and even families. Protests and even riots have been all over the news, but why? We haven't seen anything like this in the United States' modern history, or even in other modern countries, so why is this happening now?

Why was this election so argued over? One main factor: news media. Television/computer media is fairly new to politics, but a game changer. Online, they have a wide audience and are known to be accessible from anywhere. Fox News and CNN are the biggest names in this controversy, known for their political bias, but they are not the only ones subject to these wide claims.

These news sources are known to create an echo chamber of political bias, making some Americans unable to say anything they like about the opposing candidate and unable to say anything bad about the candidate they were supporting.

These news sources can skew stories to make someone look bad, and simply not report on stories that would put shame to their political party. This creates political ignorance.

To have a working democracy, we need unbiased news, and we need unbiased, free thinkers. These biased news sources have manipulated the facts so much that most politically



MAXIMUS JULIN
Indiana Junior High School
Grade 8

active citizens over or underestimate real facts.

"When we can't even agree on what is real" is a study by Harvard writer Christina Pazzanese that sheds light on party and political bias.

The study asks Republicans and Democrats to state the percent of a given situation, like "How likely is someone born in the bottom U.S. income bracket to make it into the top bracket?"

Now, there is a factual number to back this, which is 7.8 percent. The Democrats perceived 10.5 percent, while Republicans perceived 12 percent. One particular question asked was, "How likely is someone born in the bottom U.S. income bracket to remain there?" The real percent was 33.1 percent. Democrats overshot with 37.4 percent, while Republicans with only 29.5 percent. Not only does this show factual inaccuracy, but also a political skew; neither party was close to reality.

Political skewing is in works, affecting these parties' outlooks. It is hard to argue with "factual" statistics, causing both parties to think they're in the right. This also shows how news bias is causing a divide in

both the United States and in facts, meaning fake news exists on both sides.

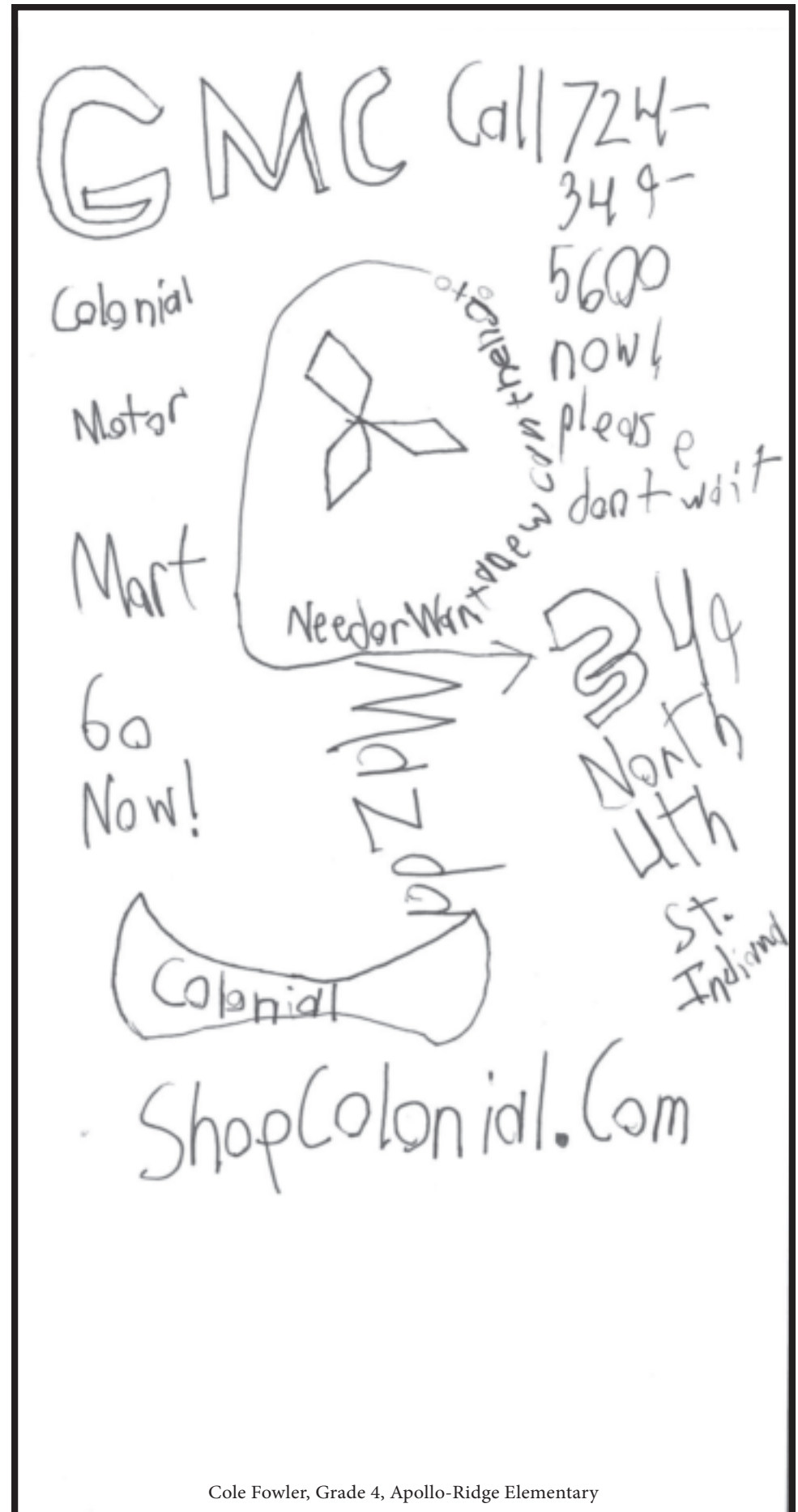
How can we fix this problem? The first step to solving this issue is to accept that both sides are full of "fake news." By doing this, Americans will be taking a step into political awareness and thinking for themselves.

Next, people need to research the news sources they're watching and see what bias they have and to what extent that bias skews their reporting. A great source to check this is at adfontesmedia.com. They have been proven unbiased when reviewing news sources.

The next step is to keep an open mind. A couple of ways to do this is to thoroughly investigate all the candidates, not just the ones a voter already supports — or detests. Voters need to familiarize themselves with the candidates' positions on issues such as the country's economy. Again, it is essential to use unbiased sources to find this information, or to be at least aware of how the sources skew. Most would be surprised at how this information, not emotion, can change their political opinions.

The final step to take is when people debate is try to find a middle ground, not arguing over one point over and over. This can be a calm way to settle a difference of position, and this is how our nation should work. Our nation was built on people from different backgrounds and different beliefs coming together to create a great country.

Political difference helps the United States thrive, but only when we come to a central ground.



Writing contest for the best feature story

What we can do

With all of the events and hardships our world is facing currently, we have to rely on something that we each personally trust. When we rely on things like the news channels, articles, and social media, it causes our country to divide.

Our world sometimes seems like it is falling apart because we are putting our energy into the wrong things.

If we take the steps and give our utmost effort to create unity, we will start to see a change. We can do this by starting small in our own neighborhoods, applying the lessons we have learned throughout our lives and making them a reality.

Growing up we have always heard the phrase, "treat others the way you want to be treated." I bet most of us, including myself, have ignored this in certain situations, but not too long ago I remember hearing a message that directly relates to the importance of this.

I was at church, and the pastor started to talk about how we should love our neighbor as we love ourselves. I have heard that phrase before and brushed it off, but as he started to go deeper I realized the true



LIZZIE KINNEER
Indiana Junior High School
Grade 8

importance. It truly starts with us.

We can create unity in our own backyard, even if it's just shoveling a neighbor's driveway or mowing their lawn. No matter what it is, big or small, it creates a sense of much-needed kindness in our world that brings us together. Something we all need to realize is that even if those little things we do go unnoticed, they are still making a difference. It's helping our world unite as one, and that's what we want. If we take just 10 minutes out of our day to treat others how we want to be treated, our world will start to improve.

When I was younger, my friends and I would always participate in an event called International Day at IUP. There were about five

of us, and we all came together with different cultures and religions to create a performance for the town to watch. It could be any performance that represented a certain culture. I was only 7 at the time, so I didn't really think much of it. Now that I am older I am starting to see a huge lesson that we could all use in our lives.

None of us had the same culture, but we solely just wanted to come together and show the town what we created. We didn't care about what each other looked like, how we talked, or even what we wore. Putting our differences aside, we came together as a team and accomplished our goal. If we stop looking at the little details that make us "different," then we will start to fall into unity without even realizing. This is a huge step we can take to start creating harmony in today's nation.

Overall, our world today seems to seek the wrong things. We are all in the same boat, and if we start to rely on each other and not what the world is forcing upon us, we will see a huge difference. We have been handed things that we can use daily to help us take these steps to create unity, because truly, "United, we stand, divided we fall."

What steps can we take to build unity in a divided nation?

There are approximately 7.8 billion people living on planet Earth right now. No two of those people will share the same views on every subject. This means there is no end to the conflicting arguments and different "sides" of the same story. Despite our differences, we needn't resign ourselves to the thought that it must always be that way. I believe that doing good is much harder than doing evil, we have millions of decisions every day, and that making the right ones can make a drastic change in the world around us.

If you've ever turned the news on TV, read an article online, or even simply glanced at the front page of the newspaper, it's hard to miss the endless opinions and conflicting points of view. People constantly defend those things that they agree with and attack those they don't. In a world where millions of voices are trying to be heard, it can be hard to listen, and harder still to know who to listen to.

It is often extremely hard to gain unity. We all have



STELLA RUMMEL
Homeschool
Grade 9

different approaches to problems and different solutions to them as well. Some people are much more comfortable taking charge while others would rather follow a leader. As we all have different personalities and opinions, it is very easy to get annoyed, upset or angry with another person. We must learn to respect others' points of view and be willing to accept that ours may not be entirely correct. In other words, we need to learn to stop and listen, then discuss our differences, which will help us to grow as people. Choosing kindness is the biggest step that we can take to build unity in our relationships and our world.

Another obstacle standing in the way of unity is

blaming. We often find ourselves blaming our leaders for everything that we don't like. However, I believe that we need to be aware of how we are acting so as not to be hypocritical. If we require our leaders to be humble, caring, and gracious, we must be very careful to be humble, caring and gracious. When we find ourselves in leadership positions, we must be very careful to "practice what we preach" and represent what we want to see in a good leader. We cannot blame a lack of unity on our leaders. Unity takes a contribution from each one of us.

None of these things will be of any value if we continue to focus on each other's differences. Unity comes only when we make it our common goal, instead of trying to be right all the time. If we continually dwell on the things that we disagree on: political views, different personalities and our different preferences of inclinations, we will never achieve unity, because we will constantly argue.

Words are important. Once said, they cannot be taken back. Words can hurt and words can help.

See **RUMMEL: 9**



Jane Stubbe, Grade 5, Horace Mann Elem.



Lilyana White, Grade 5, Blairsville Elem.

Writing contest for the best feature story

What steps can we take to build unity in a divided nation?

RUMMEL: From 8 They can change the world. They can help create unity. We must be extremely careful about what we say. In 2021, we have thousands of ways to communicate with the world. We have countless social media platforms

where people all over the world can read what we have to say. We have a choice. We can choose to say uplifting things that create a non-judgmental atmosphere, or we can choose to tear down others and their opinions. We can choose to

be the loudest in the room, or we can choose to listen, and hear, what others have to say. Unity cannot come about if we continue to tear others down. So why not choose to do the opposite? Spreading kindness is a very necessary step towards

unity. Martin Luther King Jr. once said: "Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around."

Kindness can change the world. If we choose to listen and encourage others instead of blaming and tearing them down, I believe we will see a huge impact on the world around us.

The 7.8 billion people in the world will never agree

on everything. But that doesn't mean we must be constantly bickering. We can choose to love each other and live in peace instead of war, choosing kindness over a disagreement, and working together instead of against each other.

Untitled

"United we stand, divided we fall."

These words crowned a verse of John Dickinson's "Liberty Song." The use of the phrase over the next 250 years is a testament to its truth. The world today is riddled with evil, inequality and sin. Everywhere we look, we see evidence of it; people take sides and fight for them, usually in the name of good. The problem, however, comes when those promoting equality are discriminatory themselves, when those promoting fairness are unfair, when those promoting tolerance are intolerant. Thankfully, this unfortunate truth in our world doesn't have to be.

So how can we heal a divided nation? How can we bring unity to our world? Society so often tells us that "you can change the world," that "you can be anything you want to be," and that "change starts with you." While these statements are true to an extent, it is important to remember that one cannot bring about unity alone. The very word means to work *together*.

This is really the heart of the issue — to have any sort of unity, we must work together, and work together well. The answer isn't that easy though — after all, a good story has to have conflict!

"The first thing is, to be honest with yourself. You can never have an impact



HENRY RUMMEL
Homeschool
Grade 10

on society if you have not changed yourself..." — Nelson Mandela.

Working together is hard — ideas are different, personalities are different, worldviews and goals are different. Also, while community is essential for change, Mandela was right that this change must start with ourselves. When people work together, new ideas are bound to be discovered. One person comes up with one conclusion, while another thinks of another, and both think they're right. When ideas clash, conflict can arise. It is not that our ideas or goals must change, but how we handle them around other people.

Pride is defined as "a feeling of deep pleasure derived from one's own achievements." It can take many forms, including a higher view of ourselves. It causes us to think that our ideas or thoughts are right — even when they're not. Pride is an inherent part of humanity.

We as humans must accept that natural reaction and recognize that, while unfortunate, it is true — and then take steps to change it.

The answer comes in the form of a great attribute: humility. Humility is putting others first. Humility is accepting others' ideas. Humility is having the grace to really care about others, even if it's contrary to your own ideas or desires. This great attribute is necessary for some obvious reasons. If every person is different, and pride is an inherent wickedness, then we need humility to counteract it. To build unity, to create trust and consonance, we must start with humility.

In our world, agreement is often presented as being synonymous with unity. This couldn't be further from the truth. A case could be made that the best kind of unity, the kind that brings about a deep joy and satisfaction, is only found through disagreement. Think about it — doesn't it feel good to walk away from a disagreement having restored and renewed a relationship? Or, at the very least, agreeing to be respectful and kind toward each other despite a disagreement? This type of problem-solving can only come about through great love and respect for others. If you go into any type of discussion with others — whether it's an argument or a formal debate — with the mindset that you are right,

you won't get very far. People are hurt by that type of thinking.

If you enter a discussion with respect for the other person, willing to learn and not just prove a point; to hear to understand, not just to retort; to above all else love them as God has loved you — that is when we change the world. That is

when we come together in unity, in peace, in humility, tolerance and respect.

Changing the world isn't something we can wake up tomorrow morning and do — it involves a lifetime or more of small changes. It involves all of us, working together — not making sure one of us is right, but making sure both of us are kind.

This relationship between human beings in a broken world can only bring us closer together — and closer to God. To have unity, we must have humility. To have humility, we must have respect. To have respect, we must have love.

It is true what Jesus said: "Love your neighbor as yourself."



Reagan VanHorn, Grade 4, Home school

Writing contest for the best feature story

Untitled

In the world today, hate and division flow like water in the Amazon. People just don't listen to or trust one another. This distrust is the root of our division as a nation. As Americans, we should be a team, but right now we are fighting everything somebody else says just because it isn't what we said. Instead of fighting amongst ourselves, we should be working as a team to protect ourselves and others who are being put down.

The division we have today ultimately comes down to people not having integrity and respect for others. Not only will integrity and respect create transparency, but they will also create trust. Although it sounds simple, respect and integrity are hard to apply

to everyday life. It requires a great deal of effort, consistency, and dedication. You can't just "Talk the talk," you also have to "Walk the walk" and be an example for others to follow.

Honesty is an integral part of integrity. We need not just honest people but honest media. As individuals, we need to tell the whole story and the whole truth no matter what. This will serve to educate people about issues going on so that they can make well-informed decisions. Although this sounds great, it only works if the media, too, tells the whole story without their inherent biases. To have a truly unified and educated nation, people need to stop twisting anything that happens for their own gain. Twisting stories may help you, but it will only further weaken a nation hanging by

a thread.

Having integrity and respect is important, but these ideas are very general and unspecific. There are more specific things that you need to do to successfully be a respectful person of true integrity. To start with, you have to know how to listen to other people. Listening isn't just hearing somebody speak, it is actively unpacking and critically thinking about what they are saying. It is a very hard thing to do when you are having a heated conversation, but you will get much farther by actively listening and thinking about what is being said than you will by just waiting for a time to interject. By actively listening, you can try to understand why somebody thinks differently than you, and you can better articulate your point of view



BRIDGER BLANKENBICKER
United High School
Grade 10

so that maybe they will be able to understand why you think a certain way. You also need to be able to admit when you are wrong. Admitting when you are wrong will save so much time, anger, sadness and frustration that can only lead to further division.

Once we get those basics down, we can start rebuilding our nation. Rebuilding a divided nation is just like rebuilding a divided team. There are a few fundamentals that can help us to become closer and more unified. The first thing we need to do is attack the problem, not the person. We can't fall into the ad hominem fallacy. We need to fight the idea and not the person presenting it. Now that we aren't attacking each other, we need to fight for a general, shared goal and take specific steps to get there. A team can never function if it doesn't have a goal to achieve. If we truly want unity, we can't set ourselves apart from one another. We need to stop seeing ourselves as different and start seeing everybody as a teammate working for the same goal.

Although we are very divided, we can still bridge the gap. As a team, we can do what needs to be done to gain trust and unity. We just need to keep pushing to try and see each other as people and not just see a race or a political label when looking at others. It is an uphill battle, but we can do it together.

What steps can we take to build unity in a divided nation?

How do we unify a nation that is so used to hearing about riots, murders, and violence that we barely bat an eye?

First, we have to recognize the issues and ask the question, "Why are we so divided?"

In the past few years, politics have been more debated than ever before. People end friendships and relationships over political differences. This is especially common in younger people due to social media. For example, an article on sciencedaily.com notes that "A new psychological study suggests that children and teens are worried about political issues." It continues, "Among people ages 15 to 24 — typically the least politically engaged age group — 46 percent believe they can have a moderate effect on politics, nearly a 10 percent rise in recent months."

But what caused this sudden extreme division that's in our nation today? This has a lot to do with the media we consume — especially social media. Social media has changed a lot even in the past five years. It's nearly impossible to open any social media app without seeing someone post something political, but it has its pros and cons. Social media is a great way to easily spread awareness. According to The Florida University of Journalism and Communication, "Through the use of hashtags, social media serves as a powerful tool for people and movements to share their stories, reaching new audiences across the globe... The list of campaigns gets longer each day as more people use social media to raise awareness and promote solidarity around a



ZOE MACK
United High School
Grade 10

movement." However, this isn't always a good thing. Because of this new age of social media, people are getting exposed to politics at a much younger age. It's great and important for young people to have an understanding of what's going on in the world around them, but they shouldn't be pressured to get involved in politics and have strong political opinions. Also, people are braver behind a screen, saying things online that they would never say out loud. On the internet, they make fun of people with opposing views. Seeing your friends post something that mocks your views hurts, and it damages a lot of relationships. All of these little things add up to create the division we have today.

So, what are some steps we can take to fix this?

It is possible for both sides to work together and get along, and one of the first things we have to do is recognize the problems. People tend to take "proud to be an American" so far that they fail to recognize our problems. Part of having pride is the ability to grow. I am proud to be an American. I recognize my privilege, and I'm lucky and proud to be a citizen of the United States, but we do have issues. We aren't perfect, and that's okay. No one will ever have

See **MACK: 11**

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Danni Castleberry, Grade 5, Apollo-Ridge Elementary

Writing contest for the best feature story

Unity in division

This past year has been a year that will be remembered. From adjusting to the current pandemic to the recent election, things have been strenuous on everyone. We are divided in standards of health, hygiene, and politics. While we are the people of the United States of America, we certainly act anything but “united” at times. The problem with unity is that people have a different idea of what it is. People have tried to create their own idea of unity. One of the more obvious illustrations in history is when Hitler tried to create his own unity. Millions suffered because of a man who tried to impress his own “unity” on others just because they were different.

Unity is a difficult concept to grasp. If everyone thought the way that you do, unity would be easier. If everyone thought the way that you do, we would probably not disagree on anything. Let us assume that everyone else *does* think exactly like you. Does this solve anything? Perhaps it would. However, just because everyone thinks the same way you do does not mean that you are right. So then, how can we act as a united unit when everyone thinks differently? I believe that unity is not necessarily about agreeing on everything, but about moving forward



EDITH FORTUSHNIAK
Homeschool
Grade 11

with a mutual respect for each other despite our differences. Maybe unity is not about what we think or want, but rather about others. Unity is displayed when people sacrifice certain desires to benefit an overall goal. Unity is a team effort, it involves others.

How can we act united when we are so distanced from others? If there is one thing that I have learned from the pandemic, it is that I desperately need the companionship and support of others. As a solid introvert I was anything *but* scared of the isolation that the lockdown brought. People just complicated my simple life. Companionship was something a few Zoom calls could fix if I ever *did* get the urge to talk to somebody. However, after several weeks I started feeling unexpectedly lonely and ... scared. Not scared of catching a disease, not scared of the economic crash, but scared of going

on without seeing others. I was not scared of the current day I was living in. I was scared that in future months or years I would be doing the exact same thing: trudging through life without seeing the face of an old friend.

Praise God that we are getting past that, and that we get the pleasure of going through life with others. If humans were meant to be alone then I am certain that there would not be so many of us. Unity is not limited to physical space, so even though we are forced to be distanced at times we can still move forward together. Everyone is built differently with different opinions and beliefs. We should never compromise our beliefs in order to appease someone else, but we can still be there for one another.

The author J.R.R. Tolkien once wrote: “It is the small everyday deeds of ordinary folks that keep darkness at bay. Small acts of kindness and love.” Live your life with all the simplicity and care that you can. Never forget the significance of the little things. We the people of the United States of America do not agree on everything, but we can still be a consistent positive presence for each other. Perhaps the best way to build unity is to simply be as kind and respectful to others as you can, even to those you may not agree with.

Brotherly love

“I’m so excited for you to leave for college so that I don’t have to see your face every day!” my brother, Justin, yells at me. I roll my eyes and go to respond. At this moment it hits me. Being the older sibling is amazing but so bitter-sweet. I don’t remember when Justin was born, I was only 3, but I knew it was the coolest thing ever. I was an older sister.

Looking back on that I still think it’s amazing. I never realized how much I really loved my sibling and how much of an impact he has had on me. This realization just hit me like a ton of bricks.

Justin and I were fighting yet again. It was one those fights that was so meaningless, about nothing in particular. Justin told me he was so excited

See **TOY: 12**

What steps can we take to build unity in a divided nation?

MACK: From 10

anything that’s completely perfect. The definition of “proud” is “feeling deep pleasure or satisfaction.” To me, to continue to be proud, we have to change. For example, I was proud of the way I competed in a sport in seventh grade. I’m proud of the way I compete now; however, if I performed today the same way I did in seventh grade, I wouldn’t be proud at all. Part of creating and having something to be proud of is growth.

As I mentioned, we also have to be more aware of the media that we consume. It’s as simple as doing things like not believing everything

you read and recognizing bias. Additionally, Democrats and Republicans do have things in common. For example, they both want to keep America safe. Everyone should put their differences aside for a bit and try to solve that problem.

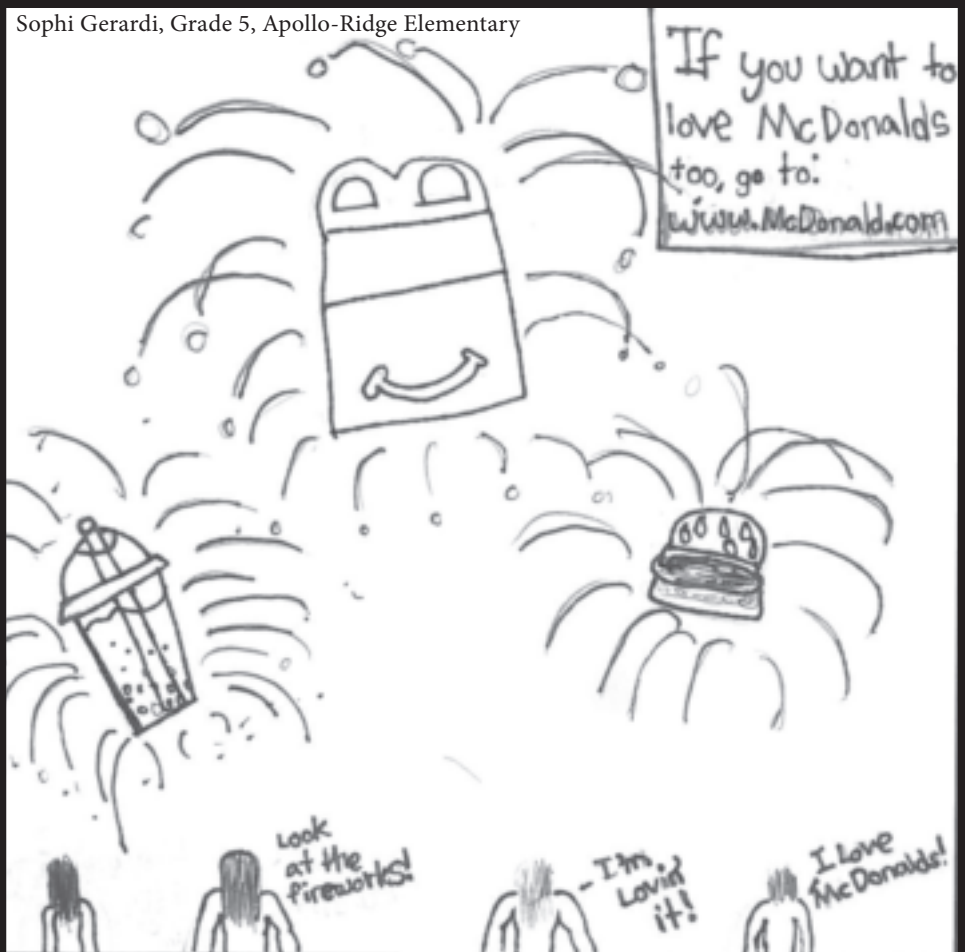
Michael Kovalcik, a member of our local community, says that “We have to find common ground. For example, everyone wants to solve world hunger, so maybe we should set our other problems aside to work together on the things we agree on.”

Similarly, Tom Mack, another community member, thinks that “we need to find a way to come together and put our political opinions

aside. We don’t always have to agree. Spend more time helping people rather than arguing,” he suggests. One thing we will always have in common is we’re all Americans, and that’s something to be proud of.

Unifying our divided nation seems impossible, but everyone seems to agree that we do have things in common, and it is possible to unite us. We just have to put our differences aside. We can do simple things, like trying to be more open minded, to help achieve this goal.

If we all work towards this goal, it’s not impossible. It’s time to unify our divided nation.



ABIGAIL TOY
West Shamokin High School
Grade 11

Writing contest for the best feature story

Brotherly love

TOY: From 11

for me to finally leave for college so he wouldn't have to see my face every day. It was a typical taunt made in the heat of the moment but at that statement it hit me. I was going to miss my baby brother. I couldn't even believe the thought that went through my head at that moment. I was going to miss him.

I went to my room later that night still thinking about the fact that I was going to miss my annoying little brother. I looked around my room and all around me were signs of Justin, from necklaces he got me when we were younger, to the memories we made because we always wanted to have sleepovers with each other. Everything in this room and about me screams that I'm an older sister who is still being shaped by her younger brother.

With glassy eyes and a bright smile on my face, I skipped over to his bedroom. I hugged him as he yelled at me to get out. Little does he know it just made me hug him tighter. While he continued to

tell me to leave him alone, I thought, "Yeah, I'm going to miss this." I eventually left his room content with the time I just spent "bothering" him. He's 14 and I don't think he realizes yet how close we are despite all of our fighting. I also don't think he realizes quite yet how much he is going to miss me doing everything that he finds annoying.

My main goal from the moment Justin was born was to be the best older sister he could ever ask for. That's still my goal. He doesn't know how much he has done for me. He still shapes and inspires me every day and I am so proud to be able to call myself his older sister. I really hope that I've been a person Justin is proud to call his sister. If not, I want to be that person he is proud to be related to. I'm going to miss him so much when I go off to college, but he is always with me in everything I do. Sure, we have our differences. We fight and get on each other's nerves but at the end of the day, we love each other. It's our differences that unite us and bring us closer to each other.

Unity

Warm sun-soaked air brushed my cheek as a tear gently glided down. My knees were hugged to my chest and I tried to compose myself while talking with my brother.

I sat watching the pride flag hung on the porch for pride month. As it flew in the wind, I felt proud of my own identity and wanted to show everyone that my family was proud too.

My brother, of course, had the opposing viewpoint. He is as conservative as I am liberal. Although he is accepting of my identity, he stated that the flag was drawing attention and making us the "black sheep" of the neighborhood.

Growing up in a rural, conservative Pennsylvania town, I never felt comfortable in my own skin. I had to overcome my own internalized homophobia before I could accept myself as gay. I knew that I couldn't put a pride sticker on my car, which I often fantasize about, because of fear that it might be keyed.

I was proud that I was able to display the flag in a place that I felt safe and accepted. The conversation with my brother opened



ADRIANA GUTH-BOROWSKI
Indiana Senior High School
Grade 12

my eyes to how people should talk to one another about their differences in opinion.

In a time where polarization is high, it is difficult to find common ground and common decency. Our nation is divided because people fail to see humanity in each other.

That day, I learned a valuable lesson about human interaction and how to discuss topics while having little common ground. My brother and I don't often see eye-to-eye, but we can have respect for each other and understand that our differences in perspective don't define us.

In order to unify, we have to come together and see each other as we are — human. Showing each

other basic levels of respect and understanding bridges the gaps that separate us. We all make mistakes, we all have different life experiences, and we all deserve to be treated the way we want to be treated.

To unify, we must first identify our differences and have honest conversations with each other. On most issues, it is likely that people will not agree with the opposing viewpoint; however, they can find some common ground to stand on.

Our democracy was designed to force people with different viewpoints to have to compromise. If our representation in the government didn't cooperate, we would have constant gridlock. Politicians constantly have to work with the other side to pass bipartisan legislation.

Our nation was born out of division and had to continuously compromise in order to design our government. The Great Compromise, otherwise known as the Connecticut Compromise, showed our founding fathers' ability to understand the needs of both the small and large states.

With the rise of social media, the national division has risen to an argu-

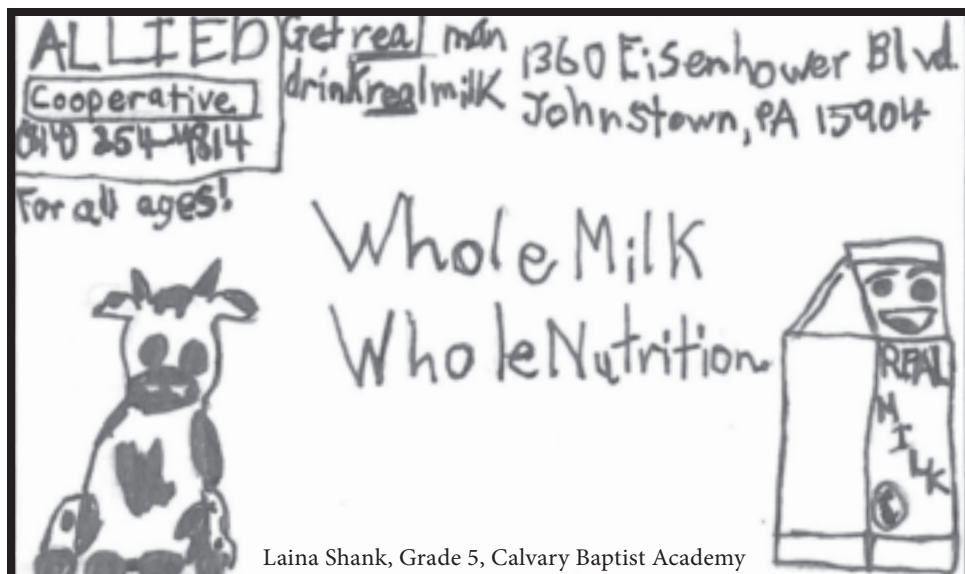
able all-time high. People with conservative views are fed conservative media and people with liberal views are fed liberal media. This polarization continues due to commentary news networks like MSNBC and Fox News.

People must be smart consumers of media and understand the difference between news commentary and unbiased news reporting. Distinguishing facts from opinions is an important step to bridging political gaps. In addition, people have to research before they believe misinformation that is easily spread through social media like Facebook.

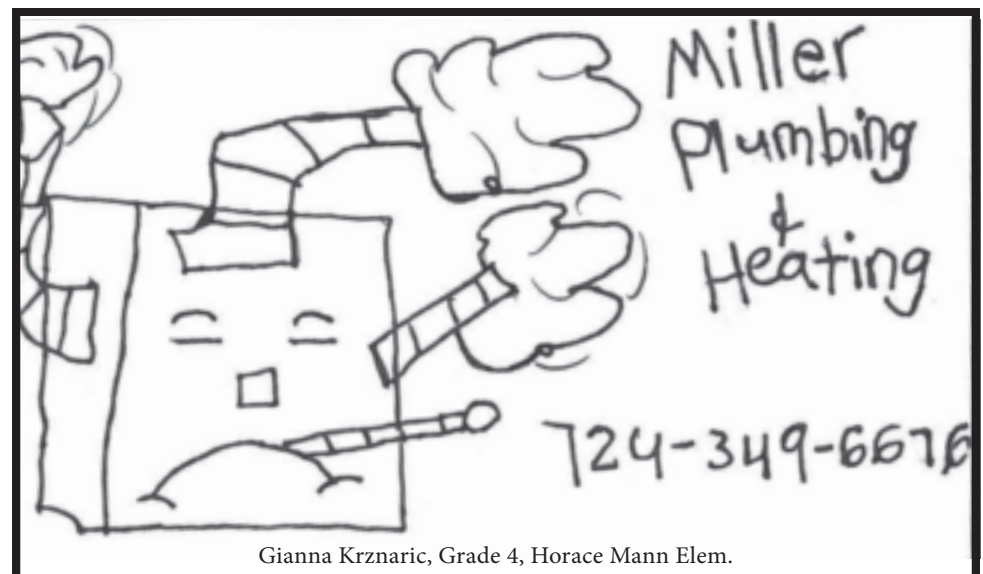
Humanization, respect, and understanding are the basic principles that we should follow when sharing ideas and opinions. In order to unify, it takes all of us to find it in ourselves to take a moment and listen to other people.

Unification is difficult, but possible if we can all work together to find common ground. My brother and I will likely never agree on certain topics; however, we can still have constructive conversations that allow us to debate and

See **GUTH-BOROWSKI: 13**



Laina Shank, Grade 5, Calvary Baptist Academy



Gianna Krznaric, Grade 4, Horace Mann Elem.

Writing contest for the best feature story

What is the best way to solve differences you have with someone?

The world is filled with a variety of ideas and beliefs. The moments that there would be a clash between those ideas and beliefs is inevitable. It's best to find the ways we can settle these disputes in the most efficient and productive way possible. Taking time to examine the ideas of others instead of simply dismissing them will only make the individual more open minded. All in all, it's undeniable that there will be differences among us, hence we should take the necessary steps in order to resolve the conflicts peacefully.

Often when there are differences among people, there is usually some form of conflict. Conflict shouldn't always be seen as terrible; though it can be damaging to our relationship at times, it'll usually bring much needed change to the relationship. Whether the conflict is between

an idea, decision or action, the best way to start resolving differences is simply by expressing the feelings associated with it. Though easier said than done, attempting to have a meaningful conversation with the other person always helps in getting a good message across. During the conversation, use expressions such as "I feel" statements to clearly convey what you feel the conflict is. From friends to family, this would apply to all forms of relationships, though it can often be one of the toughest actions to engage in the much needed discussion with them. Dr. John Gottman, a psychology professor known for his work and predictions in marital stability, discusses the issue of communication. He would discuss a phenomenon known as "stonewalling," which essentially means that one individual of the relationship simply backs out of any conversation with harmful statements such as, "Just leave me alone" or "Do whatever you want." Going through



with this decision removes any of the much needed discussion the people in conflict must have. Though being able to put one's emotions aside and discuss the issue is one of the hardest phases in resolving differences, it is the most crucial. After all, how else would we get our points across about why these differences are an issue when there is a refusal to even begin talking about it?

The discussion about issues is a necessary part of setting differences among individuals, but we should take into consideration

how to discuss the issues too. A small engagement into the conversation should start with those "I feel" statements in order to convey your thoughts and feelings about the issue. While doing this though, it is important to remember to not pursue the conflict even more by attacking the other person or attempting to victimize yourself. This simply deepens the hole the relationship is currently in even more. Again, while this is easier said than done, we would need to see the perspective of the other person. Attempt to place some empathy in them, as they always say, "try to put yourself in their shoes." Everyone has different experiences throughout their lives that shape their perspectives, and it's important to see the impacts of those experiences.

Though the hopeful outcome of any relationship is to come to a resolve with the differences, sometimes it's really difficult to do so in the moment. In some cases, if there is no ability to have a meaningful dis-

cussion about the issues, it is best to take some time off of the issue and try to do something you can enjoy. This allows for the mind to be focused on something else and not bathed in the stresses of the conflict. If the other person is close to you, this time can remind you about all the good he or she is, which most definitely would outweigh the bad because you love them. Overall, patience is a key factor in this phase. Take the necessary time to allow for a conflict to heal peacefully.

There will be differences among all of us throughout the rest of our lives. Humans are creatures of new ideas, and new ideas will clash with each other. Though taking the time to view why the clashes occur simply expands on all the ideas. Discuss the differences, express the reasons for those differences, and finally remember the reasons for those differences when it's resolved. Conflicts allow everyone to learn and can often change things for the better.



Division in the United States

Division. Division is something that every American has seen at least once in their lifetime. A disagreement is almost always the cause of division. This division we're experiencing in the year of 2021 is unlike any other. We as Americans are currently being separated from each other due to our political beliefs and what we think is right.

I believe that immaturity has a lot to do with this. We no longer agree to disagree. We fight until we are right because we are too stubborn to let others believe what they choose to believe. Times are changing as we speak and I can say right

See **SKALICAN: 14**

Unity

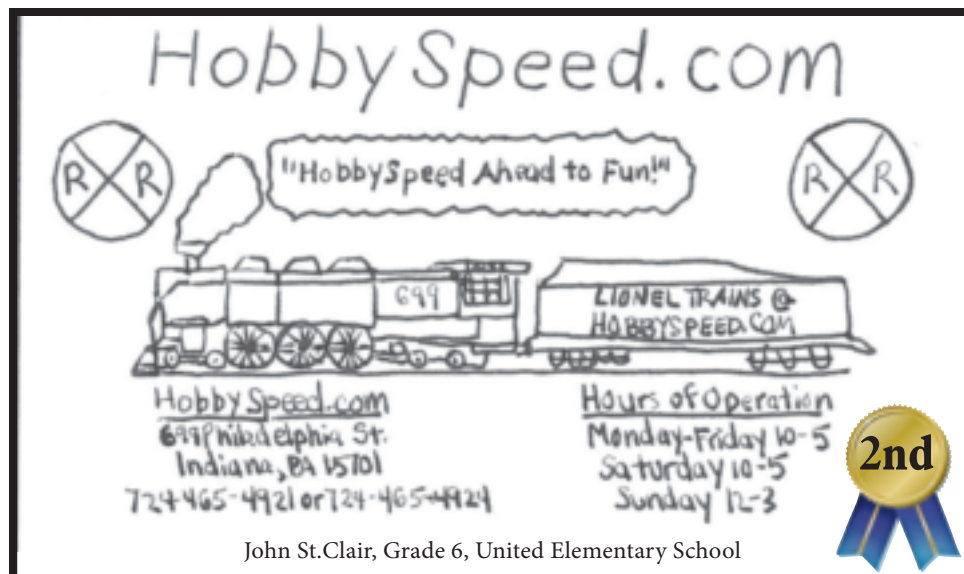
GUTH-BOROWSKI:
 From 12

consider different perspectives. Together, we work to overcome division

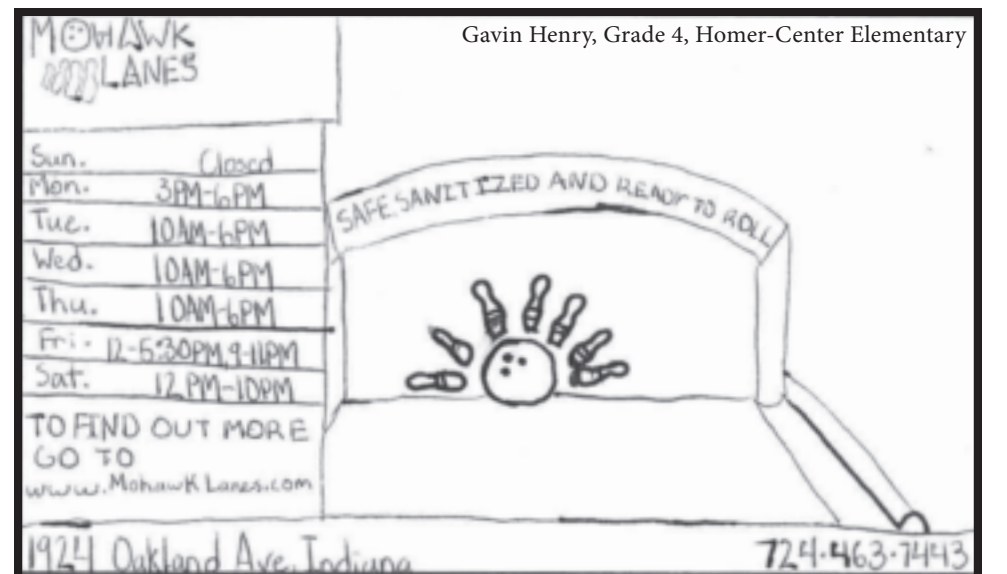
in our viewpoints and find common ground.

With our nation as divided as it is, it falls on all of our shoulders to meet in the middle. We must have conver-

sations with each other, especially with people that disagree with our viewpoints. To unify the nation, we first have to find it within ourselves to unite with the people we care about.



John St.Clair, Grade 6, United Elementary School



Writing contest for best feature story Division in the United States

SKALICAN: From 13

now, that what is happening is not good.

As Americans, we have to unite and solve our differences, not through arguing, but with productivity. To strive as Americans, we have to compromise and form something that all Americans can work with. We now live in a world where people are looked down upon for who they voted for. We now live in a world where you are looked down upon for being who you are. The same people who are looking for peace and prosperity are the same ones who look down upon these people, solely because they don't agree with you.

It is time for change. It is time for us as Americans to work together to make America a wonderful place to live and a place where you are not looked at differ-

ently because you think a certain way. We are not the same. We will never be the same. But the one thing that will always connect us is the country that we live in.

We are Americans. This is not the time to be rude to others. This is the time where we come together, put aside our differences, and work together to live a peaceful and prosperous life.

America has been receiving a bad image as of lately, and it is our job and responsibility to make every place around the globe realize that we can unite, that we can prove everyone wrong, and that we can once again become the country that welcomes all, no matter your political beliefs, no matter your views on life, no matter the religion you associate with, and no matter what you, as an American, strive toward.

Writing contest for the best *opinion column*

For this year's "Write a Column" contest, students in grades 7 through 12 were asked to write a column supporting something they feel strongly about.

The essays were judged by staff in The Indiana Gazette's and The Blairsville Dispatch's editorial department. Here are the winners.

PSSA testing in the year of 2021

The year 2020 has brought a lot of problems into the lives of people and especially students. Now in the year 2021, the school year couldn't be more hectic. With spring just around the corner, PSSA testing is being mentioned among the classes. How do the different styles of learning affect the students this year? Is state testing necessary? How would testing work this year?

First of all, how are the different styles of learning affecting the students this year? In the article "How is COVID-19 affecting student learning?" it states that students came back to school in 2020 with less than 50 percent gains in their mathematical knowledge. Also in the article "Survey: Teachers and Students Are Struggling With



LELISE ALLISON

Indiana Junior High School
Grade 7

Online Learning," it says, "56 percent of teachers said that they had covered only half, or less than half, of the curriculum content that they would have gotten to by this time last year." These two pieces of evidence show that students should not be expected to do testing on what they have learned these past two years. It is already hard enough for them to be gaining knowl-

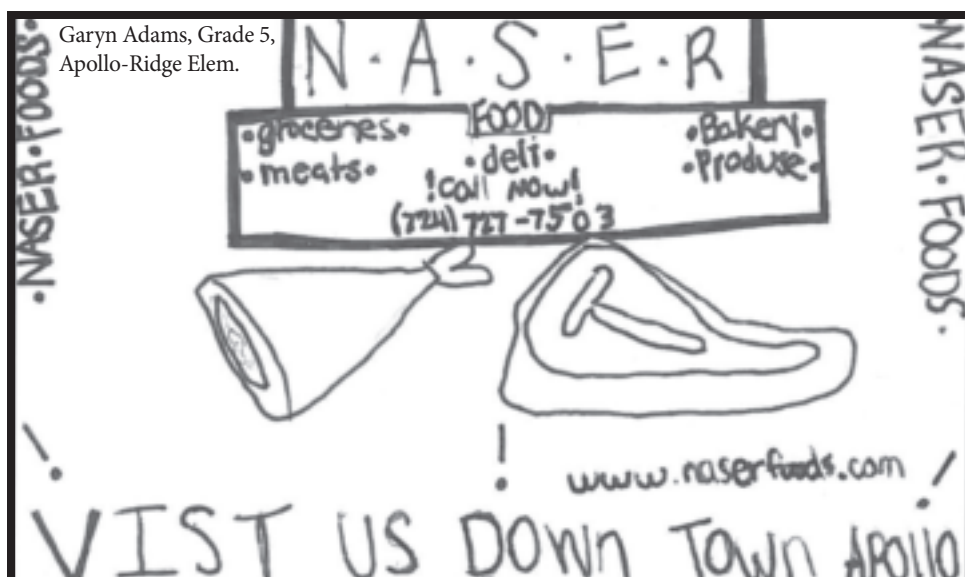
edge during online school, and being on the level of academics they should be on is a lot to ask for.

Next, is state testing necessary? State testing has been used in the United States for several years for teachers to see what level of learning their students are on, but do we need it? In the article "Here's why we don't need standardized testing," it says, "Standardized tests are unnecessary because they rarely show what we don't already know. Ask any teacher and she can tell you which students can read and write." There are a lot of factors of how a student does on a test like how well you slept, how nutritious your breakfast was, or even how attentive you are that day. There's a lot of pressure on students to completely let alone do their best work in that hour of testing. From personal experience,

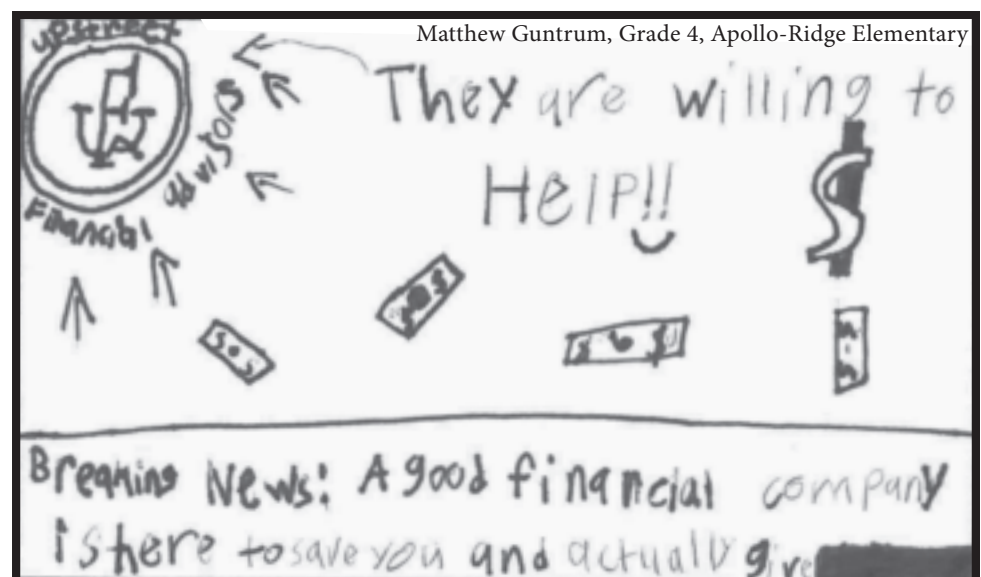
I know that PSSA testing is the most stressful part of the year. One thing can throw me off for the whole day of testing. So is all this testing worth the anxiety and time?

Finally, how would testing be done this year? Testing this year with half of the students at home some days and a half online others would be beyond difficult. There are many walls we run into with doing testing this year including that with the students' scattered schedule, testing would take a while if you expect kids to be in school to complete it. There is also another problem, which is that there are some kids that are synchronized and wouldn't be able to come into school. When kids are home they have the resources to cheat, which would just defeat the point

See **ALLISON: 15**



Garyn Adams, Grade 5,
Apollo-Ridge Elem.



Matthew Guntrum, Grade 4, Apollo-Ridge Elementary

Writing contest for the best opinion column

Will school ever be normal?

School has been hard on everyone, especially the teachers. There have been certain adaptations that schools have made in order to keep their students focused and learning. One of the adaptations is using Google Meet in order to have students stay at home to reduce the risk of spreading the disease. Most states, if not all, have a mandatory two-week quarantine after someone they have been in contact with contracted the virus. There is a big question out there right now, and that is what will happen when schools can go back to a more normal layout? Will schools even go back to a normal layout?

Although these questions cannot be determined, they certainly do apply to the situation we are in right now. With some new adaptations, the school year has not been normal by any standards. The app Google Meet has allowed students to join classes from home when sick. Because of this, schools may choose to have online days rather



JEANICE HILL

Indiana Junior High School
Grade 7

than snow days. Some students might argue that they look forward to snow days, and that they provide the students with a break from stresses of school. School and stress are usually two words that come together. Although snow days are few and far between, they proceed to relieve stress that a student or even teacher may have built up.

Any school district that is doing hybrid or synchronous learning has at least one student who is struggling to grasp the concept of learning online. When students don't understand the online learning platform, their grades may drop, depending on the situation.

Some students are not mentally capable of handling online learning, and therefore may be not doing so well in school as their peers.

School may not ever return to normal, and that is something that humans should be able to adapt to considering the past obstacles we have had to face. It will not be easy going forward to go back to the way the world was prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, if it even can at all. The human race has experienced several pandemics, and has prevailed through them all.

Although there may be minor setbacks, some things have been good. Apps like Google Meet and Zoom helped us stay connected, and provided a way for stay-at-home students to go to school. School districts can choose to keep those platforms, and they can choose to ignore them in the future.

Schools might not return to normal, or they might just yet. It is a controversial topic, and may start a debate or two, but it is a serious question and has no answer yet.

There is a familiar nursery

rhyme, Humpty Dumpty fell off of a great big wall, and could not be put back together. If COVID is the wall, will we be Humpty Dumpty or will we put ourselves back together? Although public learning is in chaos, it can come back. Teachers have been fighting about having to teach students both online and in school and it puts a strain on them they otherwise would not have. While they may find it uncomfortable, the school district may choose to keep it. That is up to the school district.

Schools might not ever return to the way it was, or they might; that will be up for debate. Who knows what the outcome will be. Humanity itself is in chaos, but this is, like anything, but a minor hurdle in the game humanity is playing, the game of life.

PSSA testing in the year of 2021

ALLISON: From 14 of having the test in the first place. Having to take such important tests at home with the distraction that is there could make it difficult to do your best work. I could go on forever about the different problems we would run into if we decided to do state testing this year. Skipping a couple of years doesn't have to be a bad thing; during this break the test makers could be finding ways to improve it. Teachers were able to recover from not having PSSA testing in the spring of 2020

and they certainly can go one more year.

In conclusion, with the different styles of learning this year, we run into problems regarding the PSSAs. How do the different styles of learning affect the students this year, is state testing necessary, and how would testing work this year? We could solve all this stress and uncertainty by just skipping the PSSA while we are in this pandemic. Do the pros outweigh the cons and can we make it a year without testing? Yes we can, and we should.

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1st

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Jade Burney
Grade 4
Eisenhower Elem.

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McKaela Boarts, Grade 4, McCreery Elementary

Writing contest for the best opinion column

Banning smoking is for the best

Smoking is very dangerous and should be banned in more public places. Smoking causes almost half a million deaths every year. The environment is hurting because of all the pollution and litter caused by smoking. Smoking also affects people who don't actually smoke. Through second- and third-hand smoke, people are developing problems from inhaling or coming in contact with tobacco smoke.

More than 480,000 people die every year from smoking-related illnesses. Some illnesses include: cancer, lung diseases, heart disease, diabetes, COPD, emphysema, chronic bronchitis, and many, many more. About 1,300 people die

from these illnesses every day, which is about one in every five people. This is one reason smoking should be banned in more restaurants, bars, stadiums, office buildings, and many more public places.

Smoking also has many harmful effects on the environment. Smoke releases toxic air pollutants into the atmosphere. Cigarette butts litter the environment. The toxic chemicals in the cigarette residue seep into the water and soil. This causes water and soil pollution. This is another reason why smoking should be banned in more places.

Smoking not only affects the person who is smoking, but it affects people around them. Secondhand smoke affects many people each year. Secondhand smoke is smoke inhaled involuntarily from tobacco being



3rd

ADDISON ROSKO

United Jr./Sr. High School
Grade 7

smoked by others. About 41,000 people die each year from secondhand smoke. About 7,333 die from lung disease, and about 33,951 die from heart disease. This is another reason why smoking should be banned in more places.

Another way smoking not only affects the person smoking, but the people

around them, is third-hand smoke. Third-hand smoke is contamination by lingering smoke caused by a tobacco product that had just been smoked. Third-hand smoke is a health hazard for infants and children. It is a hazard because they are held close to the hair, clothes, and skin contaminated with smoke residue. This is one final reason why smoking should be banned in more restaurants, bars, stadiums, office buildings, and many more public places.

Some people say that smoking is banned in enough public places and no further actions should be taken. If smoking is banned in enough places already, why are about 41,000 people dying every year from smoking-related illnesses and they don't even smoke? Smoking is

still allowed in some parks and restaurants, and this is causing people to die.

Smoking should be banned in more places for many reasons. Smoking is extremely dangerous and the risks aren't worth the rewards. One way it is dangerous is it causes almost half a million people to die every year. Smoking causes many illnesses and accounts for 20 percent of cancer deaths. Smoking pollutes the air and water, and it can affect people who don't actually smoke. Through second- and third-hand smoke, people who have never smoked before can develop problems because they inhaled or were exposed to someone who was smoking or smokes. These are just a few reasons why smoking should be banned in more public places.



1st

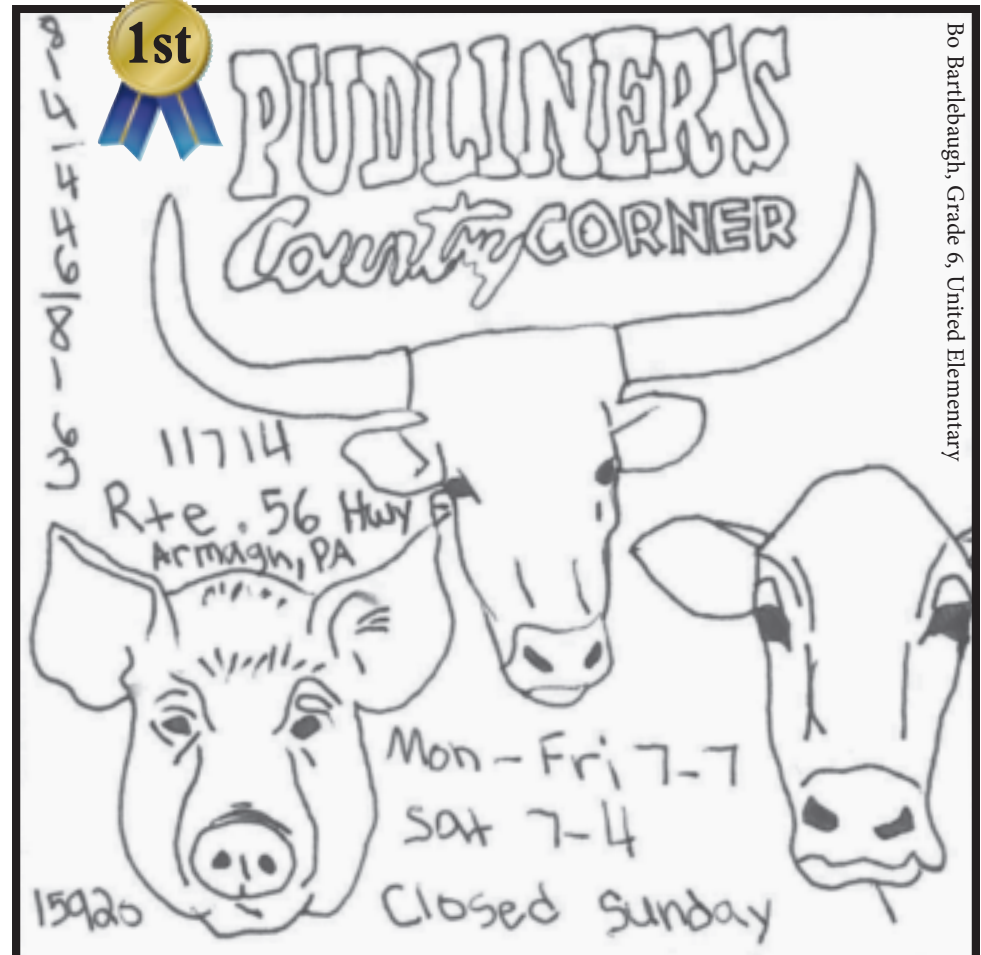
CAIDEN CARDELLI

Indiana Junior High School
Grade 8

Closed to society

Over the past year we have seen an increase in closure throughout the world, but is it really necessary? Since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, school children and teens are suffering from school closures,

See **CARDELLI: 17**



Writing contest for the best opinion column

Closed to society

CARDELLI: From 16

sports cancellations, lockdowns, etc. Along with all of this closure and cancellation, there is a decrease in social interaction, leaving kids feeling lonely.

According to NBC News, “One national testing organization reported that the average student in grades 3-8 who took a math assessment this fall scored 5 to 10 percentile points behind students who took the same test last year, with Black, Hispanic and poor students falling even further behind.” (12/15/20).

With this increase of closure, there has been an increase in mental, physical, and emotional issues. Emergency rooms have seen a 24 percent increase in mental health-related visits for ages 5 to 11. For older kids, this increases even higher to 31 percent.

Food banks have also seen some of the effects from school closures, as an estimated 17 million children, the majority of whom are cut off from free meals at school, are now in danger of not having enough to eat. Not only are the effects

mental and physical, but they are academic as well.

Barbara Duffield, who runs SchoolHouse Connection, which advocates for homeless children, also has seen the struggle families are going through. “If we fail to address this, we’re just compounding trauma. We’re compounding loss. A student who is homeless, who has a disability, who has been traumatized by the racial violence we’ve seen this year, and then to be disconnected from arguably the only universal support system is disastrous. It means higher rates of suicide. Higher rates of depression, addiction, mental illness and physical disability, particularly for young children who are growing and developing right now. They’ll face more developmental delays leading to deficits in their education as they grow.”

Is COVID-19 as serious to kids as everyone thinks? The Centers for Disease Control reports since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, of all male and female children from 0-17 years of age, only 204 have died with confirmed or pre-

sumed COVID-19 (data as of 2/24/21). Within this same time frame, 35,478 children of the same age group have died from other causes. This means that only 0.575 percent of deaths in this age group, since the beginning of the pandemic, have been COVID-19-related. It is likely many of these deaths are children who suffered severe health issues, limiting the number of healthy kids even lower.

TheLancet.com reports, “In a survey by the mental health charity YoungMinds, which included 2,111 participants up to age 25 years with a mental illness history in the U.K., 83 percent said the pandemic had made their conditions worse. Twenty-six percent said they were unable to access mental health support; peer support groups and face-to-face services have been cancelled, and support by phone or online can be challenging for some young people.”

School routines can help young people deal with mental health issues. While schools are closed, they lose an important coping mechanism, and their symptoms

could relapse. According to Zanonnia Chiu, a registered clinical psychologist working with children and adolescents in Hong Kong, where schools have been closed since Feb. 3 2020, “Going to school had been a struggle for (some children with depression) prior to the pandemic, but at least they had school routines to stick with. Now that schools are closed, some lock themselves up inside their rooms for weeks, refusing to take showers, eat, or leave their beds.” For some children suffering from depression, there will be some difficulties adjusting back to normal life if school resumes.

There seems to be a lot of proof out there that all of this closure is not necessary. The situation seems out of control for no reason, causing more problems instead of creating solutions. It is very disturbing to see kids and families suffer around the globe during the pandemic.

If there is not an easing of closure soon, then we will see unnecessary long-term and permanent mental, physical and emotional damage to kids.

XY≠XX

“Just like my fellow competitors, I race to win. But that’s virtually impossible now in an unlevel playing field.” — Selina Soule, an affected high school track and field athlete.

Athletes all across the country have similar feelings to hers. Should biological males be allowed to compete against women? If so, how should these biological males be integrated into high school, college, and professional/Olympic sports?

In many states, boys who identify as girls can compete in female high school sports. Connecticut, where Selina resides, has faced controversy due to these rules.

Selina Soule was going to qualify for the state championship in the 55-meter dash; instead, two biological males identifying as females took her potential berth. She lost an opportunity to compete in the New England Regional Championship, as well as getting scouted by college coaches — she may have even lost out on a scholarship. No matter how hard girls train, they can be prevented from achieving a favorable out-



ROCCO COSENTINO

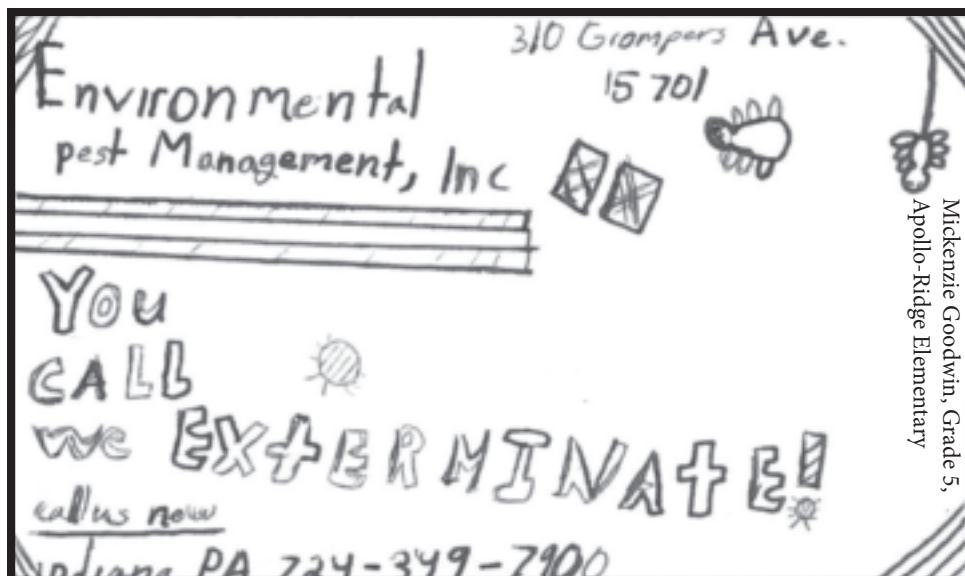
Indiana Junior High School
Grade 8

come when competing against biological males with physical advantages over them.

At the college level, the issue is significantly more complicated. According to NCAA rules, transgender athletes can compete if they get a medical exemption. A shorter version of the rules is this: If male-to-female athletes’ testosterone levels are low enough, they are allowed to compete in women’s sports.

These athletes typically undergo testosterone suppression for about a year before they can compete. However, these student athletes retain muscle mass, bone structure, and strength more than

See **COSENTINO: 18**



Mickenzie Goodwin, Grade 5,
Apollo-Ridge Elementary



Molly DeBoe, Grade 4, Eisenhower Elem.

Writing contest for the best opinion column

XY≠XX

COSENTINO: From 17 the women they are playing against.

Cece Telfer of Franklin Pierce University is a typical example of the physical disparities. Telfer was on the men's track and field team as recently as January 2018. Telfer hadn't been succeeding on the men's team, ranked at 370 for 400m hurdles in all of Division II track and field; in 2018, Telfer switched genders and became eligible to run in 2019.

Although noncompetitive as a male, Telfer won the national title as a woman by a full second. This is a simple injustice. Ultimately, college women had no possi-

ble way of finishing first in a sport they had trained decades for.

At professional sports level, transgender competition could possibly be a matter of life and death. MMA fighter Fallon Fox is the first openly transgender American MMA fighter in history, coming out as transgender in 2013. All of Fox's bouts have been in the women's division.

Commentator Joe Rogan sums up the advantage Fox had: "First of all, she's not really a she. She's a transgender, post-op person. The operation doesn't shave down your bone density. It doesn't change. You look at a man's hands

and you look at a woman's hands and they're built different. They're just thicker, they're stronger, your wrists are thicker, your elbows are thicker, your joints are thicker. Just the mechanical function of punching, a man can do it much harder than a woman can, period."

On Sept. 13, 2014, Fallon Fox stepped into the ring with a woman named Tamikka Brents. Within minutes, Fox fractured Brents' skull and won by TKO. Brents received a cut in her head needing seven staples and an injury to her eye.

Brents' professional record was 2 and 1 at the time, but she stood no chance against Fallon Fox. In an

interview, she stated, "I've fought a lot of women and have never felt the strength that I felt in a fight as I did that night. I can't answer whether it's because she was born a man or not because I'm not a doctor. I can only say, I've never felt so overpowered ever in my life and I am an abnormally strong female in my own right."

Transgender women have no place competing against biological women in any sport at any level. It isn't fair to biological women who worked their entire lives to get to the spot they are now. Years of hard work are erased for what? Cheating.

Almost 50 years ago, Con-

gress passed Title IX, which "prohibits federally funded educational institutions from discriminating against students or employees based on sex." When male-to-female athletes fracture female athletes' skulls or shred their record, they mock both the ideals of sportsmanship and equal opportunities for women's sports protected by Title IX.

The House of Representatives has recently passed the Equality Act that actually promotes inequality. The Act claims to prohibit discrimination in employment, housing and numerous other areas. If the Act is passed in the Senate, the gains of Title IX will vanish

with the stroke of a pen.

Transgender people should be treated with the exact same respect as any other person. I wouldn't be opposed to competing against a female-to-male athlete in either of my sports. Male-to-female athletes happen to be in a different situation. The whole goal of a sport is to hold a fair competition, and the best athlete that day wins. Biological female athletes don't have the basic human right of fairness anymore. That ended when biological males started playing in their sports. Women deserve the same chance of athletic excellence and achievement as men.



KAT McLAURINE

Indiana Junior High School
Grade 8

The plague before the plague

I wasn't sure if the topic I was interested in was school appropriate.

I stayed after my English class to ask my teacher if it would be OK if I wrote about opioid addiction. Immediately her eyes filled with tears, and she told me I needed to write this column.

Opioid addiction is, quite

frankly, the biggest problem in our nation, and not enough is being done to solve it. Approximately 2.1 million Americans have an opioid-use disorder. Many times this addiction can go on for quite some time before even being noticed. People find themselves in this horrible situation because of misusing prescription drugs or by using drugs to numb the pain in their lives.

Nearly a third of all opioid deaths involved heroin. Most heroin users started with prescribed pain relievers, and heroin overdoses are not an uncommon thing. These drugs control people's lives until they end them. When people can't get pain relievers prescribed for them anymore, they find other ways to get it by either buying drugs off the street or turning to another drug. Eighty-nine percent of 2020

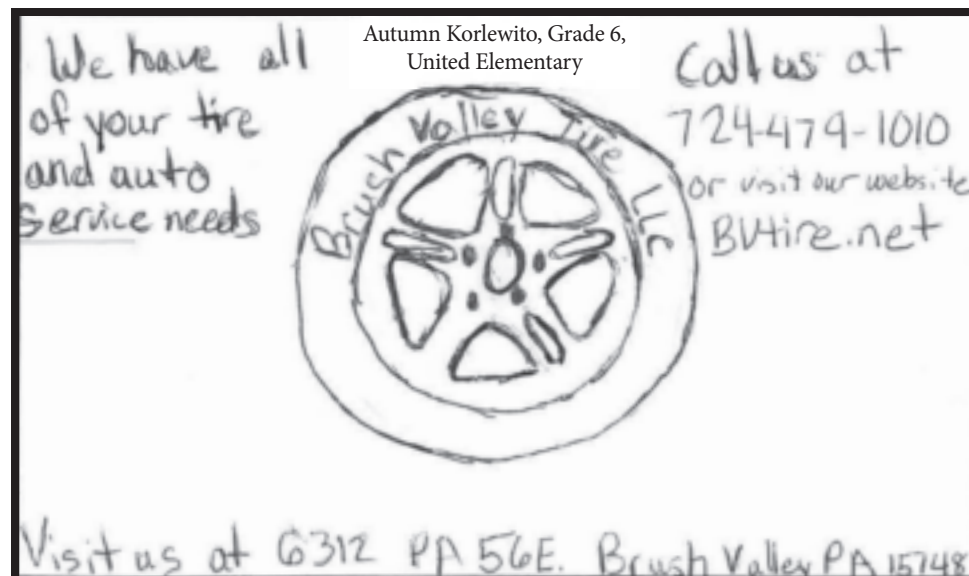
overdoses involved fentanyl. Fentanyl isn't in prescribed opioids, but when people buy pain relievers off the street, there's always a chance the opioids could be laced. Most of the time, if an opioid is laced with fentanyl, the user dies.

Physical pain isn't the only way people fall victim to opioids; emotional pain is another. Typically when people start misusing drugs to numb the pain in their

lives, they are teenagers.

Teenagers are dealing with hormones already and are at the most emotional stage in their life, or these teens are just out with their friends and see them doing it. Sometimes they sign their death sentence by turning to opioids. They might not even realize how much of an impact that one choice can have on them. They

See **McLAURINE: 19**



Writing contest for the best opinion column

The plague before the plague

MCLAURINE: From 18

unknowingly will step foot in their deathbed just to fit in. This addictive substance will weave its way into their lives either in their teenage years or in their adulthood by getting it prescribed to stop unbearable pain.

In 2010, 21,088 Americans died from an opioid overdose. Yet in 2017, that number rose to 47,600. The highest opioid death count was 49,860 in 2019. This isn't just a big number; that is more than half of Indiana Coun-

ty's population. I want to say to the opiate dealers, "You kill 128 people every day. You are the reason we found my mom lying on the floor dead." But what would be the point when they have absolutely no moral compass?

This isn't a problem that can be put off. Don't wait until everyone is dead. The only thing that will be said then is, "Well, too late now. If only I did more before."

Opiate dealers need to be charged for what they really are ... killers. They kill more people than actual serial kill-

ers — 128 murders every day. That adds up over the years. They kill millions in one lifetime. Yet what are they charged with? The sentence for being convicted of distributing heroin is only eight years; many are granted parole after just four years.

We can't necessarily say, "They had a choice to never do drugs in the first place." Most people don't get up and decide, "Hey! I'm gonna try opioids today!" People are prescribed these addictive substances, and their lives begin to revolve around their

next dose ... There is a reason we call it an addiction. Approximately 5,480 people misuse prescription pain relievers for the first time every day. So another solution would be to just stop prescribing opioids!

"You see what you want to see; believe what you want to believe," Ms. BO says during our interview. It can be hard to stop something you don't want to believe. But people are dying, so no more ignoring this problem. Teenagers kill themselves with opioids. Parents lose children (teen-

agers and adults) every day to this plague. Children lose parents every day. Babies are born addicted because their mom used to be pregnant. Is this really the world we live in? Where kids go home to find their parents so high they can't even care for the kids or themselves? Or where kids don't have food because their parents spent money on more opioids?

Ms. BO lost her son. No more mothers should go through what she went through. No more mothers should find their son dead.

Stop waiting for this killer to hurt you or your loved ones; spread awareness at the very least. As Ms. BO said, "If sharing my story will save people, I will talk to anyone, anytime." Her last comments were, "Don't even start. Turn to someone: an adult, a teacher, a family member. Just whatever you do, don't ever start."

The utter, ugly truth is that 1 in 3 Americans know a friend who has died of an opioid overdose. Don't be a part of that statistic. Don't be the dead friend either.

Global warming: Everybody's problem

In today's society, we enjoy many luxuries such as food always available inside our pantries, having fresh, clean drinking water, and a nice air-conditioned shelter to live in. Although many people think that these things are permanent and will always be there when we need them, they will not. We have become so careless about what we are blessed with, that society itself is being pulled at by the seams. And with people becoming more divided than ever, things seem to be getting worse. Many people are focusing on themselves and what happens today, but not enough people are looking into what the future holds for everybody.

The destruction global warming will bring is going to be massive, no doubt about it. In just under a century, the human race raised the global average temperature by 2 degrees. Because of this temperature change, most of Africa and India are starving with 10 percent less crop yield than normal. Imagine what the situation will be when they are unable to harvest crops at all. If the sea levels continue



JACE PARKS

West Shamokin High School
Grade 9

to rise at their current rate, the Bahamas and other Caribbean islands are also expected to be underwater by the year 2050. These examples are only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the consequences of global warming. According to NASA, every time carbon dioxide is released into the atmosphere it will stay in the atmosphere for more than a thousand years until it turns back into rock. This means that even if everyone stopped producing carbon emissions tomorrow the temperature would still rise for a few years, but the impact of 2 degrees will stay for a few lifetimes. It may seem like 2 degrees isn't that bad, but those 2 degrees have already melted more than 5,000 gigatons of

ice just from Antarctica. We cannot afford to increase the average temperature anymore.

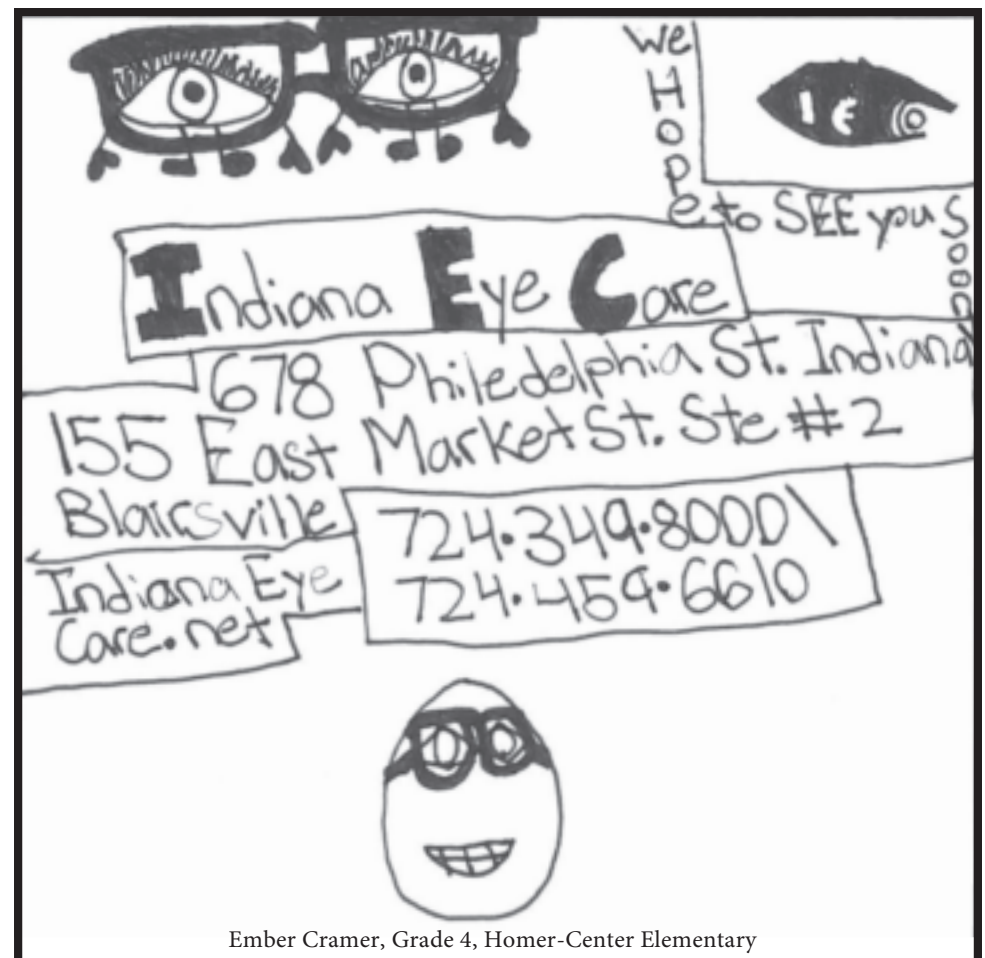
Although it seems like Earth is doomed and Mars is our next best bet, there is still hope. If enough countries sign deals to cut their emissions, invest in renewable energy, and add restrictions to how much fossil fuels can be used, it will help the crisis immensely. These restrictions will not help overnight and might even make things worse in the short term, but it will help humans and the environment for generations. The big companies and governments aren't all to blame; the average American releases 20 metric tons of carbon every year, according to an article from Penn State. If this number could be cut in half or more, it could help the crisis even more. Personal actions like buying an electric car, refusing to buy from companies that do not consider climate change, and investing in energy-efficient appliances can decrease the amount of carbon emissions and save people huge amounts of money in the long run. While most are hesitant to buy an electric car, because of a shorter

driving range and lack of charging stations, a hybrid or fuel-efficient car is the next best thing. They solve

the problems of fully electric cars while still saving money and helping the environment. Fending off

global warming will be hard and a long battle, but we all

See **PARKS: 20**



Ember Cramer, Grade 4, Homer-Center Elementary

Writing contest for the best opinion column

Global warming: Everybody's problem

PARKS: From 19 have to start somewhere. The average person, when presented with why they should help the environment, would most likely think, "Someone else will fix it" or "I will not be around to experience it, so I do not care." Both thoughts are careless attitudes to have about the situation. Most people may have this attitude because they do not want to change or they might have to sacrifice something, like a job or luxuries. Even if everyone alive now will be gone before global warming hits the hardest, our children will

be in one of the worst situations any human will have ever experienced. Many people are also misinformed about global warming and may think that it is just a hoax. Even if global warming is a hoax, would it hurt to sacrifice a small amount to ensure that your children and grandchildren have a future like you? Fighting off global warming will be a long, challenging task but it is necessary for the human race to survive. While some people do not want to sacrifice and continue to think global warming is a hoax, the

Earth continues to become a more inhabitable place. Investing in hybrid cars and efficient appliances can help cut carbon emissions and turn the tides in the war against global warming. Global warming creates huge amounts of animosity against the people who are for it and the people who are against it, but everyone needs to put their opinions aside and take care of this problem immediately. Nobody wants to be the villain in any story, but if global warming goes unnoticed our generation will be mocked by our descendants in a world too far gone.

Why Division I college football athletes should be paid

College football athletes across the nation work as hard as they can every day. Most athletes only get the recognition for the work they do for the sport, but do people realize how much work they do outside of sports? Some wake up at 5 in the morning, have a workout at 6, and class at 7. They go to school the rest of the day and will still have to workout, practice, watch film, and play their games on certain days. The schools earn a lot of profit from their teams bringing in fans and money. These athletes risk their physical and mental health each and every day. These athletes deserve to be getting paid some money to make



LOU SWARTZ
West Shamokin High School
Grade 9

their college lives a little more easy. The article "What is the average day of a college athlete?" by Drew Petcash from College Athlete Insight explains how different the lives of college athletes are from any other college student. The average D1 football player wakes up at 6:15, gets

ready, then heads off to breakfast. Once they are done with their meal, they head off to the weight room for a 7 a.m. workout. Most students are not even awake at this point in their day, and they are already having a workout. They will then head off to a few classes around 9 a.m. and then grab their lunch. After this, they will have film and practice from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. They will then have the rest of the day to shower, have treatment, and study. Division I college athletes have much different lives than that of a normal college student. With all of their time, effort and dedication, they deserve more than a scholarship. College football teams bring in a lot of money for their schools, but the

See **SWARTZ: 21**



Abigail Brode, Grade 5, Horace Mann Elementary



Lily Revilla, Grade 5, Eisenhower Elementary

Writing contest for the best opinion column

Why Division I college football athletes should be paid

SWARTZ: From 20

athletes are not getting paid any of the money. According to an article from Insider, the average college football FBS team earns \$31.9 million in revenue each year. If you take the next 35 sports in revenue earnings and combine them, the average college football team still makes more money. The second highest money-making sport in the FBS is basketball, making an average revenue of \$8.19 million.

At the University of Texas, the school earns a

combined \$182 million in sports revenue. Out of all of that, 70 percent of the income comes from football. These athletes bring in so much money to their schools and are not being rewarded with any profit. Some have scholarships, but not all do; they need some of the profit to earn money to pay for their living essentials.

Every time football players put on their pads they face the challenge of possibly hurting their body and mental health. Local Pitt football player Tre Tipton has faced several injuries in

his college football career. In his Instagram post from Oct. 14, 2020, Tipton stated, "I've been in endless pain since 2014. Have not went to bed in 7 years without pain. I am 24 and feel 42, but to be honest I just don't know how to quit. I love the grind and the adversity that comes with it."

Tipton has had injury after injury, causing him to miss out on much of his college career. His body has taken a brutal beating, but luckily he was given the chance to play in his seventh year of college football; not many people have ever done that.

Through all of this, he still managed to keep up with all of his work, and helps his community in tremendous ways. Earlier in July of 2020, Tipton told the media, "I remembered what it felt like to be depressed. I remembered what it felt when I was suicidal. I remember when I experienced anxiety. I remember all these things and I didn't want them for any other student-athletes."

Tre had been suicidal from not being able to participate in football and live his normal life. His anxiety kept him from sleeping and living a normal happy

life. As a Division I football athlete, Tre deserved to be getting money for going through all of this. Every college football player sacrifices their time and effort to play the game of football to have fun, but they are not getting paid. If a player gets one big injury that affects their physical or mental health, all of their dreams of making it pro could be gone in a second. These athletes deserve to be getting paid for all of their hard work and sacrifice.

College athletes sacrifice their time and effort to give their schools money and

put a smile on many fans' faces, yet they are not getting any money for this. Yes, some players have scholarships at the school, but that does not pay for their food, clothes and academic material.

The athletes put their body and mental health at risk, they earn a lot of revenue for their schools, and their day as a college student is much harder than that of a non-athlete student.

For all of their hard work they need to be getting paid money. Let these athletes earn what they deserve.

What do you stand for?

"When we honor our flag we honor what we stand for as a nation — freedom, equality, justice, and hope." Ronald Reagan was ahead of his time in the political debates over standing or kneeling for the flag. Before the 21st century, there was no questioning what Americans stood for. At sports events, concerts or rallies, everyone stood for the great flag of the United States of America. Now the flag takes a mere mocking on some of our grandest stages.

The American flag is the symbol of the great freedoms of our advanced society. The flag is a symbol of what our country was and is today. Everyone knows that the 13 stripes are for the 13 colonies, the 50 stars for the 50 great states, but does everyone know why the red cannot show when it is folded? The red on our flag represents the blood that has been shed protecting and defending this great nation on foreign and domestic soil. When a military family receives a flag of their fallen soldier, there is



DYLAN McGAUGHEY
West Shamokin High School
Grade 9

no red seen out of respect for the brave hero they lost. When an American hero dies, their casket is draped with the flag to respect everything that person gave to keep our country free. When you walk through a cemetery and you see little flags, those represent the true heroes of our nation's society. On Nov. 11 of every year, we dedicate that day to our national heroes present and past that have allowed us to keep our rights. Our national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner," accompanies the flag before events.

This song comes from a poem that was written during the War of 1812 as

Fort McHenry was being bombed. The poem was written about how our flag was still standing through battle and how our country is not going down. "The Star-Spangled Banner" is a representation of what our country and soldiers wage in war for our rights as civilians and our freedom as people. The American flag is more than just a piece of cloth hanging from a pole, but a symbol of how lucky we are to live in a great country and how lucky we are to have people willing to fight to keep our great country free.

As the 21st century took off, the tragic events of Sept. 11, 2001, took place. As a nation, we stood together, cried together, reflected together. The invasion and destruction of foreign attackers shocked every American to their core. We were one country united by the same anger at the thought that someone could make such a tragic attack on the Twin Towers. No matter race, age, sex or political affiliation, we all stood together. A sad moment in our nation's history was also the most uniting experience this country has ever seen. But as time

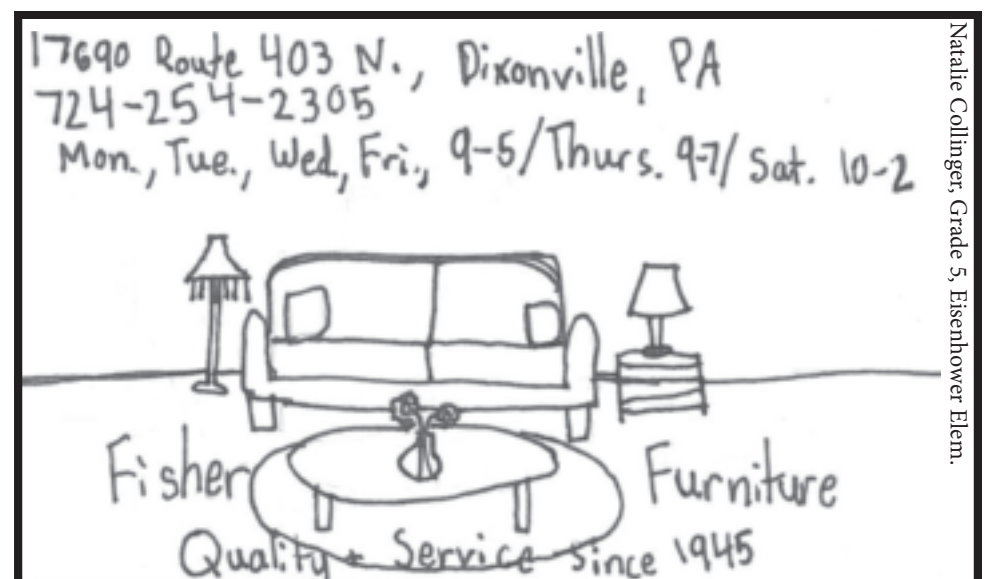
began to move on and the memory of 9/11 began to fade for many, our country began to become more divided. And as police-involved shootings became more mainstream media, the cries of injustice rained free. And on Aug. 26, 2016, the most disrespectful thing that could happen to our flag took place on a football field in San Diego. San Francisco 49ers' quarterback Colin Kaepernick took a knee during the national

anthem. This action started to become a trend in football as the season continued to roll on. Kaepernick's cries against racial injustice and police brutality were being exercised during the national anthem. Now fast-forward four years later: Kneeling during the national anthem is a normal practice in most NBA games and still in some other sports. Is this right to do?

The flag stands for our

nation and our beliefs for equality. Kneeling for our flag is a protest against all of our nation's values. It stands against all of the men and women who have fought for our rights to free speech. Those same men and women allow our multi-million-dollar athletes to speak out in such a dishonorable fashion. The heavy knee of such an athlete is weighing down on

See **McGAUGHEY: 22**



Natalie Collinger, Grade 5, Eisenhower Elem.

Writing contest for the best opinion column

What do you stand for?

MCGAUGHEY: From 21

the Earth that our country sits on, but at the same time every man and woman that has served in the U.S. military is holding that ground up. These men and women fight with everything they have to keep us free and we disrespect them by taking a knee for our national anthem during a highly televised event.

Our nation is strong and we all live under the roof of American society. We need to stand together and stay true to the country that gives us the freedoms to say whatever we want and to worship whoever we want. We need to support those who risk their lives every day to keep us free. By respecting our flag and anthem we also honor ourselves for keeping our country the way it is. The flag represents something more than colorful cloth — all of our nation's values and the people who have died for it.

The social injustices LGBTQ+ members face every day and what the nation is doing to fix it

During a 2020 survey, results have shown that in a poll of 40,000 LGBTQ+ members between 13-24, 55 percent have reported symptoms of major depressive disorder and 40 percent have contemplated suicide multiple times due to discrimination and the overwhelming amount of homophobia in their states. So, what is the government actually doing to prevent or even lessen the discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community?

Well, for starters, one of the more recent and major milestones is that the House of Representatives voted on passing The Equality Act on Feb. 25, 2021, and was ultimately passed with a vote of 224-206. This vote was made largely along the party lines. This milestone is significant for the rights of LGBTQ+ members because the act was made to amend the federal Civil Rights Act to include protections against the discrimination of people based on their sexuality or gender identity, which is something that has plagued the community for years.

This is a good starting point, but we cannot get our hopes up yet because they originally proposed this act back in 2019 and passed it in the House under the Trump administration, but it never reached the Senate for an unknown reason. So, we must take this information with a grain of



CASSIDY JAKOSH
Saltsburg High School
Grade 10

salt in case the Senate doesn't pass it, even though President Biden and his team are in support of the act.

Not to mention that the Biden administration has also worked to combat and reverse the negative and atrocious policies that were put in place by the Trump administration to weaken and ultimately get rid of the rights of LGBTQ+ members. This can be backed up when you look at what Biden has done for the LGBTQ+ members that serve in the military.

One instance of President Biden helping the LGBTQ+ members that are active duty military that we can look back on is when, in January of 2021, one of the first things Biden did in office was lift the ban on transgender troops serving in the military that was placed by his predecessor, who stated that the ban was to protect the transgender people who were serving and not a case of discrimination against one

particular group of people. This was significant because it allowed numerous amounts of active duty military people to be able to go back to work without getting discriminated against just because of their gender identity not conforming to the cisgender and heterosexual normatives.

Although we have a long way to go, the Biden administration has shared its future plans about creating equality for the LGBTQ+ community and its members. One such plan that they have is to rescind and replace regulations for Section 1557 of the ACA, which is the health care law's primary civil rights provision. This section of the ACA was introduced by the Trump administration that served to weaken the protections that were put in place by President Obama in 2016 and it also attempts to erase the nondiscrimination protections based on sexual orientation, gender identity and sex stereotyping.

Not to mention it also eliminated regulatory prohibitions on transgender-specific exclusions in health insurance coverage and in the provision of services tied to transition-related care. In doing this the Biden administration would ensure an advancement in the rights that LGBTQ+ members have in accessing better healthcare and insurance coverages.

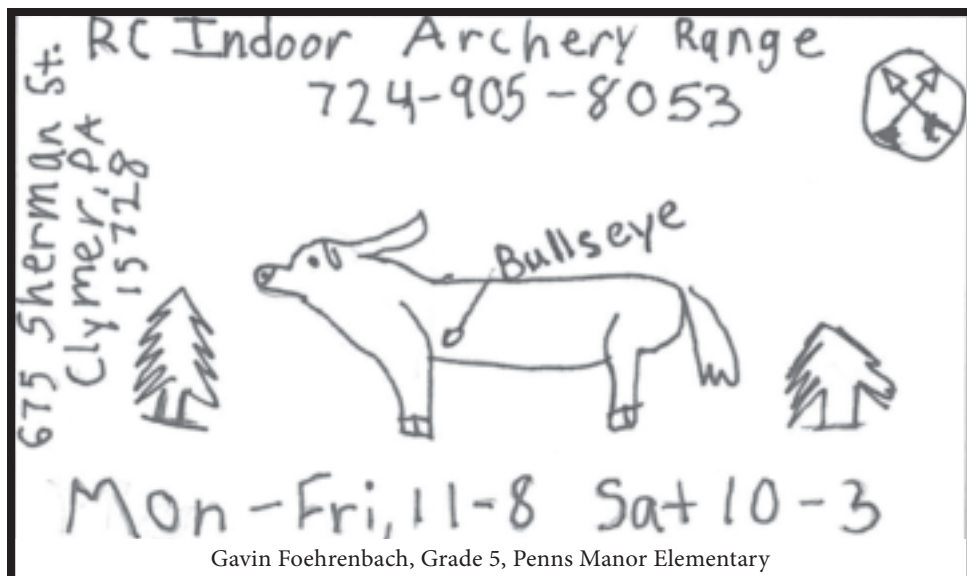
Another plan that President Biden and his administration are working toward is expanding the mental health support services and training related toward LGBTQ+ youth and adults.

This is incredibly important and influential because it has been proven that compared to cisgender and heterosexual people, LGBTQ+ members of society are more prone to experience depression, anxiety, suicidality and substance use due to a myriad of factors including family rejection, stigmatization, discrimination, minority stress, as well as bullying, harassment and assault at school.

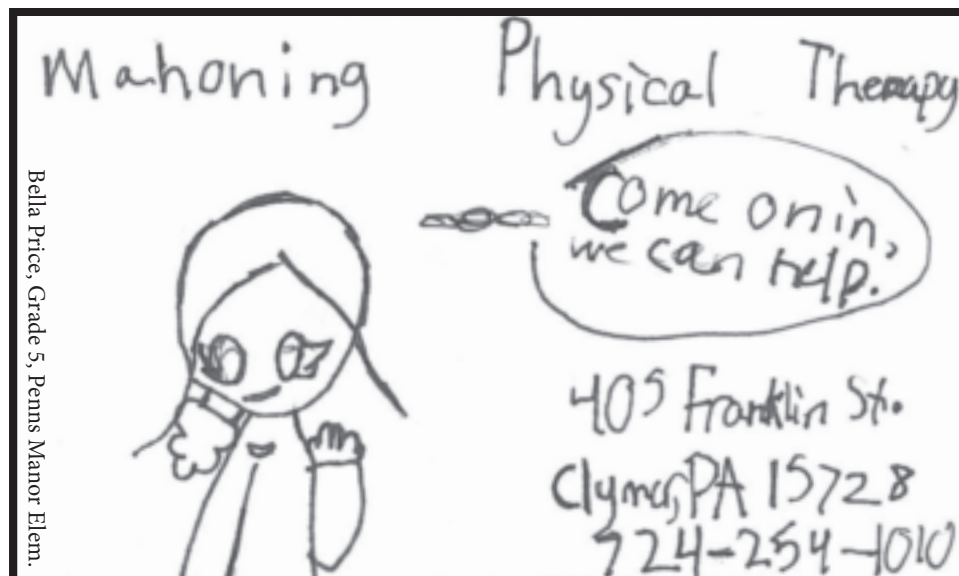
However, many members of the community, youth and adults cannot access mental health services or health services in general due to the absence of training in LGBTQ-specific cultural competencies with healthcare providers.

The Biden administration is combating this by taking steps to develop and disseminate cultural competency curricula and training on LGBTQ+ patients in federally funded medical facilities and medical training programs. They are also trying to encourage and incentivize states to expand the reimbursement and utilization of telemedicine mental health services to reach LGBTQ youth in underserved, rural areas through various children's medical insurance providers.

I realize that this column is very controversial to some, but I believe that the steps that our government administration is taking to ensure the well-being of the LGBTQ+ community and its members is needed and very influential to the process of making our country a more accepting place where all different types of people can feel accepted, safe and free.



Gavin Foehrenbach, Grade 5, Penns Manor Elementary



Bella Price, Grade 5, Penns Manor Elem.

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Grade 10



ZACHARY HERRINGTON
Indiana Senior High School, Grade 11

**To see more photo entries,
turn to Pages 42-44.**

Writing contest for the best opinion column

Women's equality in sports

Throughout history, sports have been a huge part of people's lives from being part of a certain culture to becoming entertainment. Many people are dedicated to the sports they enjoy watching and playing.

The amazing thing about sports is how diverse they are. They have become a place where people from different backgrounds, genders and ethnicities come together to do something they love.

Although sports include so many different people and places, is not always equal. One of the most noticeable inequalities is women in the sports world; the question is why is this still happening? So many people have fought

for women's equality, but, sadly, it's still showing up prominently in the sports world today.

One of the most prominent inequalities is income. There is a tremendous difference between men and women's pay who play the same sport. In soccer, male players earn as much as six times more in bonuses than that of the women who played. FIFA has communicated that they will work to change the pay gap, but there is still a \$370 million difference.

Another major example is the pay gap between LeBron James and Sue Bird. Both have been in the NBA for 17 seasons as well as four championships. James made \$37.44 million in 2020 while Bird made only \$215,000 doing the same thing.

The pay gap doesn't end

there In his bonus for winning the 2020 championship James made \$370,000 while Bird's bonus was \$11,356. The pay is a huge sign of gender inequality in sports and needs to start being changed.

Pay isn't the only gender inequality there is in the sports world, though. There is also the praise or lack thereof.

Serena Williams, a world-renowned women's tennis player and mother, has been getting beaten down with harsh words from other people including officials at her matches. She has gone through many racist and sexist attacks during her career.

In the U.S. open in 2018, Williams was defeated by Naomi Osaka but the match wasn't like those she usually plays. Chair umpire Carlos Ramos gave Williams three

thief.

The aftermath of this occurrence brought on many racial attacks toward Williams including drawn cartoons emphasizing certain characteristics in Williams' character to make her seem angrier and like she is throwing a temper tantrum. This cartoon was created by Mark Knight. Knight erased and ignored some things about what actually happened to make Williams look worse.

Some may say that the attacks and referee calls were not racial nor were they sexist. These people make a fair point, but looking back throughout the years of sports there has always been a fight for women's equality and fair treatment because it was never seen as a common courtesy to give women these rights; instead, women had to stand

up for themselves. There has also been inequality towards men as well, but this is nowhere near the amount of inequality that the women have had to go through.

Throughout the history of sports there have been many amazing feats and accomplishments among both men and women of all religions, ethnicities and backgrounds. But the ignorance of the inequalities, primarily regarding gender, is a serious problem. The sports industry should respect and appreciate the women in this field more. They put in a huge amount of time and effort whilst doing other things like raising kids.

The changes in gender equality that people have been fighting for for decades need to become a reality.

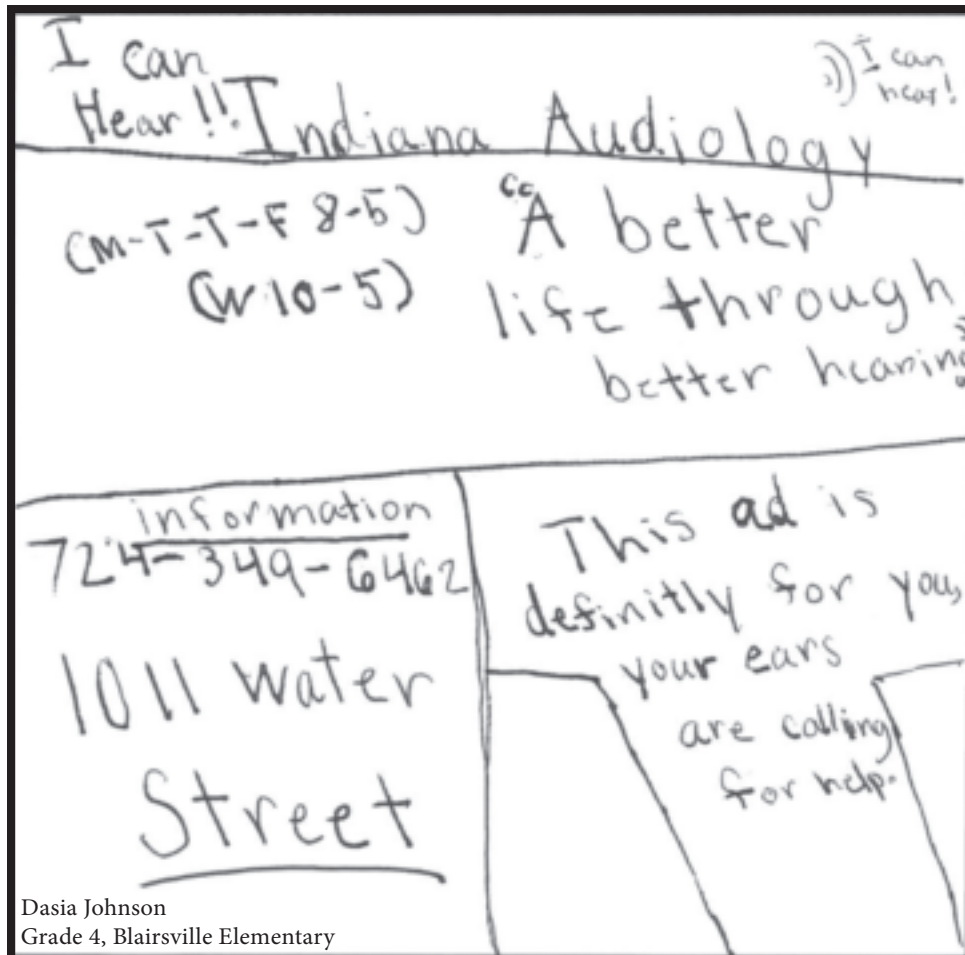


KILEY BRANAN

Indiana Senior High School
Grade 10

citations during the second set, for breaking her racket, receiving coaching during the match, and for calling Ramos a "thief."

Williams mentioned afterwards that it felt like a sexist remark for Ramos to take the game from her for calling him a thief since he has never taken a game from men who called him a



Dasia Johnson
Grade 4, Blairsville Elementary



Sara Murphy, Grade 4, Apollo-Ridge Elementary

Writing contest for the best opinion column

Untitled

Imagine that it's Friday after work and your kids just now tell you that they are having friends over this weekend. You know that your house is in desperate need of groceries and now you need to grab some extra food.

The thought that next slips into most Americans' minds holds more meaning than they care to acknowledge. "I'll just run to Walmart" is a phrase that all Americans have at least heard before if not said some version of it, and running is exactly what the American populous is doing. We are running dependently into the arms of these large corporations,

and away from the small businesses owned by our fellow citizens.

Time and time again people tend to opt for the most convenient solution to their problems. That is why large corporations that offer one-stop shopping are becoming increasingly popular. Large businesses like Walmart, for example, are capable of building large facilities and have the networks to constantly keep their shelves stocked with a wide variety of thousands of products.

Family-owned and small businesses don't have the ability to market such a wide variety of products because they are limited by the physical size of



CHEYENNE WEIMER
Saltsburg High School
Grade 10

their stores, as well as their sources in which they order their merchandise.

Walmart sells groceries, clothes, gardening supplies, technology, toys, tools, etc. so that custom-

ers don't have to go to any other stores to get all of their needs. Small businesses, though, tend to specialize in one area, meaning that someone would have to put more effort and time into gathering their necessities since they would have to drive to multiple stores. Large corporations also can sell products at lower rates by offering generic brands.

Due to these disadvantages, many small businesses cannot draw in the customers needed to keep their doors open. The economic and social effects that could stem from this decline in American small businesses are a dangerous and negative thing. The closure of small businesses will sig-

nificantly increase unemployment rates seeing as that small businesses currently employ slightly less than 50 percent of America's private workforce. Small business closures would also strengthen America's dependence on corporations like Walmart, which could cause unstable market fluctuations due to their control over it.

This would also increase America's reliance on imports, seeing that Walmart sources between 70 percent to 80 percent of its merchandise from foreign nations.

This plight that is decimating American small businesses is being even further intensified by the

current pandemic. Many small businesses are being forced to close due to COVID regulations while the large corporations can remain open. While more attention is now being drawn to this problem by the media, many more Americans still need to become aware of this. Americans need to start putting some more effort into supporting their communities and fellow citizens by incorporating shopping at small businesses into their lifestyle.

If people keep choosing convenience over stability and independence, then America as a whole will come to suffer and be worse off because of it.

The disunification of the Republican Party

There have been few sequences in recent history that have been as jeopardizing and destructive to either dominating political party as the events on Jan. 5 and 6, 2021.

What happened during this two-day period brought about a devastating conclusion to a tumultuous presidency that will forever change the course of American politics and culture. These two days, which featured the Republican Party's loss of the Georgia Senate runoff elections and the Jan. 6 Capitol Building riot, have disarrayed the party at a crucial moment in its history.

Not very soon will Americans forget the images of thousands of rioters storming into the Capitol Building, viciously attacking police officers, and sitting in the seat that then-Vice President Mike Pence held just minutes before the entire congressional body was evacuated.

And no longer is the greatest short-term threat to the Republican Party from outside; it is now from within. According to a survey re-



LUKE RAINEY
Penns Manor Jr./Sr.
High School
Grade 11

leased by YouGov.com on Jan. 7, the day after the riot, 45 percent of Republican voters said that they supported the event.

This statistic should cause great concern for Republicans, as it clearly indicates a serious philosophical divide within the party. Republican lawmakers have fiercely condemned the riot and its perpetrators, with some going far enough to instantly end their support for President Donald Trump and side with Democratic impeachment efforts on Jan. 13. It is difficult to foresee a healthy future of the party if its base cannot form a common reaction to such a major issue.

The great irony in this severe division is that for years, Republicans have gleefully watched inter-partisan conflicts in the Democratic caucus break out between the most radical and moderate figures. The question in the aftermath of President Joe Biden's victory was always how far the congressional Democrats' legislative desires could go if they were unable to flip the Senate in their favor. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, one of the furthest left politicians in Congress, said after Biden was the projected winner of the 2020 election, "We don't have to negotiate (with Republicans)," as long as Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff won both runoff elections.

Nonetheless, both candidates are now sitting United States senators. Absent of any federal government authority, Republicans are in an unfortunate position. There is no leader on the basis of power. For the past several years, President Trump was the communicator for Republicans, but his reputation may be permanently unredeemable after his overt mishandling of the Capitol Building riot.

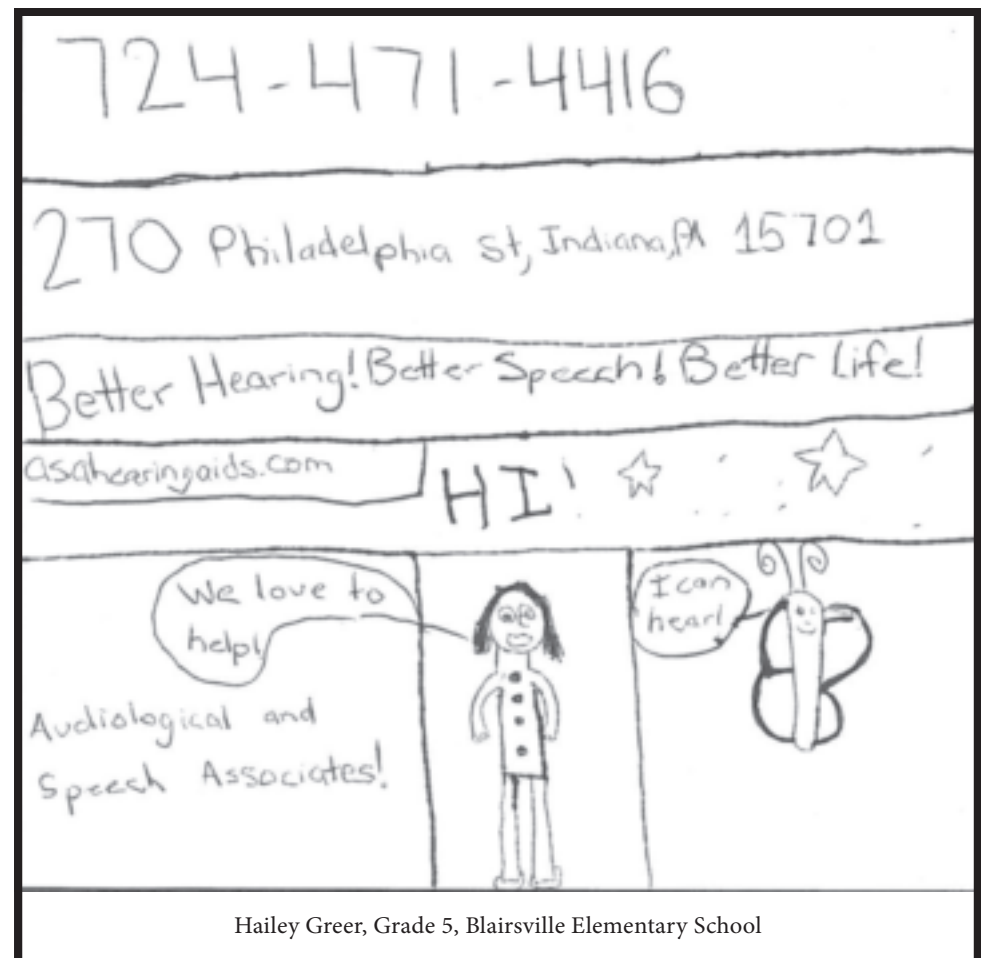
Although the Trumpian

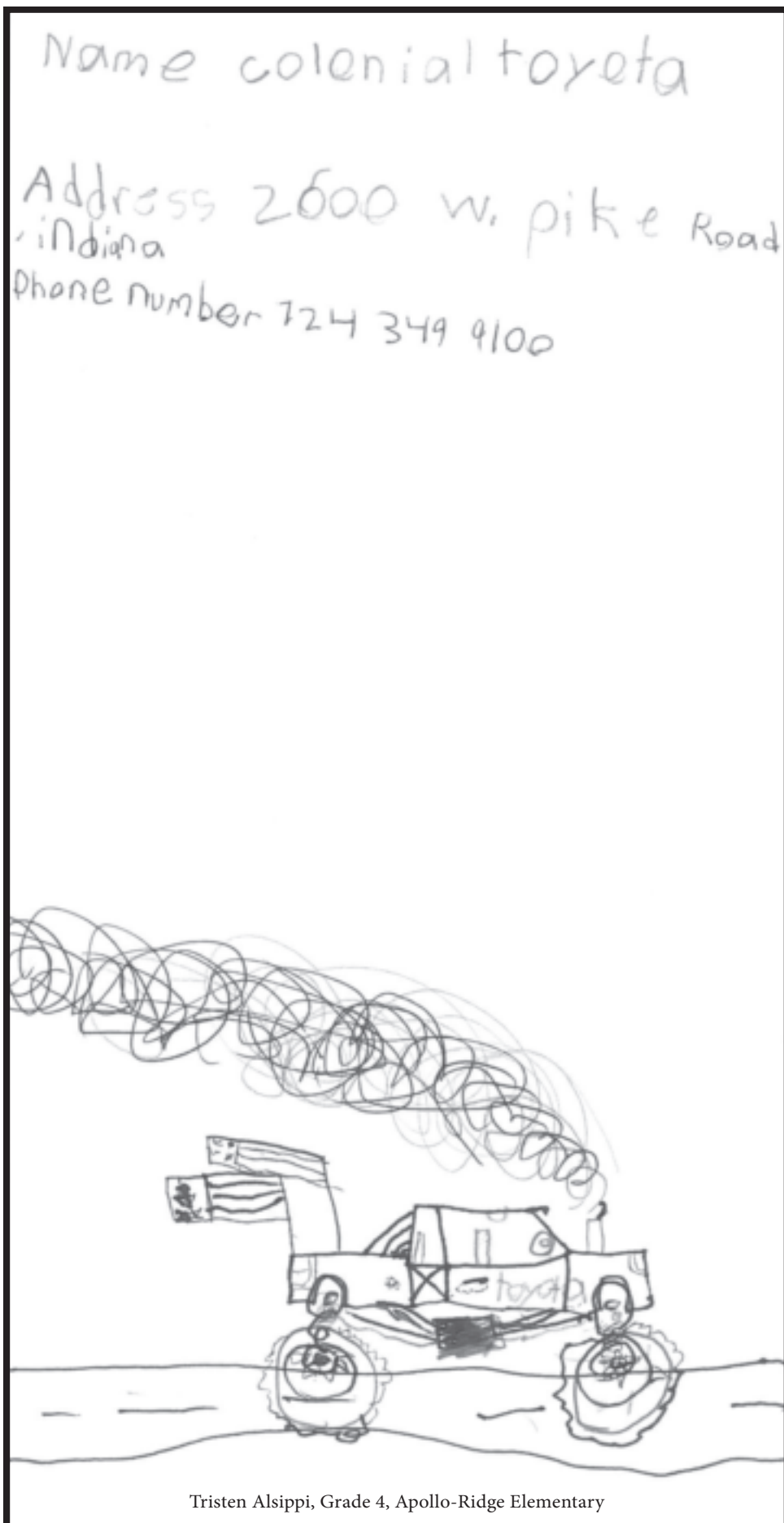
persona may need expunged for its volatility, it would be unwise for the

Republican Party to steer away from his policy prescription. A future

candidate with a similar

See **RAINEY: 28**





Writing contest for the best opinion column

The disunification of the Republican Party

RAINEY: From 27 agenda to President Trump's would have a strong chance of winning the presidency, as long as this candidate is not hindered by his or her own flaws. It is unquestionably much easier to advertise conservative positions with subtler voices in the party than President Trump.

One of the most prominent Republicans who best matches this description is former Vice President Mike Pence. While no conservative may ever again parallel the enthusiasm that former President Trump generated, he would undoubtedly be a more effective articulator of his vision and could better defend conservative positions compared to Trump.

Assuming he explores a 2024 presidential run, the first component — or possibly an obstacle — would be the role Trump takes in his campaign. Despite Pence being Trump's closest ally for more than four years, his refusal to take unilateral and unconstitutional command of election results during Congress's certification was considered to be a vile betrayal by Trump and his

most loyal supporters. On the flip side, Pence would also have to defend his reputation from a scathing media class and overcome criticisms about his role in the Trump administration.

Whether or not former President Trump's attitude toward Pence will change is anyone's guess, but Republicans' best hope would be to keep Trump away from public arenas. If he assumes a vocal role in the 2024 campaign, he would either alienate parts of the conservative voting block by resurfacing Pence's supposed betrayal, or his generally unfavorable character would once again tilt swing voters away from the Republican Party.

Fortunately for Republicans, distancing from President Trump will not be very difficult if the gatekeepers of social media, especially Twitter, keep him barred from their platforms. The lone avenue for Trump's communication was done through Twitter, but since his permanent suspension from the site, his public spotlight has dissipated. Although his banishment has concerned Republi-

cans about the power of Big Tech, previous trends suggest that hearing less from Trump may be a blessing in disguise for the party, as it was not until Trump became a central figure in the Georgia Senate runoff elections when polling started to favor the Democrats.

History has repeatedly shown that the American two-party system is resilient. For over 160 years, the Democrats and Republicans have both experienced triumphs and tribulations, whether it is the days of Franklin Roosevelt's restoration of the American economy after the Great Depression, or Ronald Reagan propelling the country ahead of foreign adversaries with "peace through strength."

However, with the base of the party bitterly divided, Republicans are faced with challenging times in the years ahead. To return to the White House and regain congressional majorities in the nearest election cycles, the Republican Party must pick up the broken pieces from early January's disaster and rebuild with a common vision toward the future.



JADE MISKO
Purchase Line High School
Grade 11

How schools can help with the mental health crisis

Imagine living in a world where 1 in 5 people experience the same type of illness (National Alliance on Mental Illness). Imagine a world where nobody acknowledges the pain and suffering that can come along with this illness or how alone people who experience it may feel. Now think about

feeling this way as a teenager — an already crazy time in your life. Trying to fit in, overloading yourself with activities, trying to please everyone around you. Being a teenager isn't easy; add having a mental illness to it, and try to imagine how much worse that would be.

Every day, more and more teenagers are facing mental health issues. Over the past few years, the number

See **MISKO: 29**

Writing contest for the best opinion column

How schools can help with the mental health crisis

MISKO: From 28 of students that have come forward about struggling with mental illness has increased tremendously. According to an organization known as Mental Health America, between January and September of 2020, 315,220 people took the anxiety screen, a 93 percent increase from the 2019 total number of anxiety screens. In addition, 534,784 people took the depression screen, a 62 percent increase compared to the 2019 total number of depression screens. This is a difficult thing for many people to do, and one thing that makes it even harder is that many students do not have the access to resources or support

that other people may have. School is one of the places where teenagers spend most of their time, a place where they should feel safe and comfortable. Yet, most teens find school to be one of the biggest parts of their problems, because they think that people there don't care or understand. The truth is, most people do care. They just aren't informed on how to handle these situations. I believe that if schools made educating students and faculty about mental health issues and how to cope with them mandatory, the lives of many teenagers could start to change for the better. Many students believe that their teachers don't

care about their mental health. However, this is one idea that is very far from the truth. The truth being that most teachers and faculty do care, very much. They want to see their students thrive and become successful. The problem that people run into is that teachers are not educated or trained. They aren't always sure of the right thing to do in certain situations that may involve students and their mental health. Because of this, if they ever do encounter a problem with a student, they will often-times try to deal with them all in the same way. They do so by offering students support and sending them to get further help from

people that are trained in this field. Though, if more teachers and other faculty were trained, they could be of just as much help. Every student has different needs, which is an important thing to think about when getting help for students. Their needs and necessary types of support may differ as their struggles or problems differ. Along with this, everyone has different perspectives of what mental health is. Considering this, many school staff members might overlook signs they see in students because they may not see it the same way someone else would. I believe that one of the first steps to take in bringing awareness to mental health

issues can start with educating teachers, and other faculty in schools. After all, they are the first line of defense for their students. An additional problem is that there are normally only a few people trained in mental health that would work at schools. These are often guidance counselors, school social workers and school psychologists. However, they are normally stretched thin from having to do so many things because there are so few of them. The trained mental health professionals that work in schools play an important role; however, they can't be the only ones responsible for students' mental health. This often

leads to them rushing to find a quick fix. They can give students short-term solutions like school therapy that may be provided. These are only programs that last for a few months or will end when the student graduates high school. If they need help beyond that, then that student is stuck without help. At that point students have developed some sort of dependency. This could mean that they have a relapse after making progress or start back into old habits because they no longer have access to the help they need. Kathy Reamy, chair member of the National Educa-

See **MISKO: 30**



Writing contest for the best opinion column

How schools can help with the mental health crisis

MISKO: From 29

tion Association's School Counselor Caucus, stated, "The misunderstanding of the role of the counselor often either prevents students from coming to us at all or they come expecting long-term therapy, which we simply don't have the time to provide." This is why short-term solutions don't work in the long run. Schools need to do more to help their students, by providing more options for support.

On top of everything else, teenagers, and everyone for that matter, that struggles with a mental illness also struggles with the stigma that comes with it. It is hard

enough to deal with the fear of being judged by fellow students and peers. When we think about our teachers, we want to see adults that we know care about us, and we want to feel like we can trust them without being judged. Though, this isn't always the case. They often don't have the full story of what could be causing a student to struggle. There are a number of things that cause mental illnesses, such as: trauma, family problems, grief, severe or long-term stress, and so many other reasons. Keeping these things in mind is important for people to do when a student is struggling. Most times schools may never know the

full story of why students could be acting out or having behavioral issues.

For this reason, it is important that teachers treat students with compassion. I'm not saying that there aren't teachers that don't; however, some of them need to change how they view situations, because they may never have the full story.

On the other hand, some might say that schools have tried to reach out or start addressing the issue of mental health. Many schools have started doing workshops and assemblies where speakers come in to talk to students. My school even started lessons on an online platform to teach

students more about social and emotional health. While all of this is true, it just isn't enough. This is because only certain students are taking those online lessons. Also, there is only so much that a student can get from a workshop or an assembly. Besides, those are more often than not half full of kids that don't take it seriously, while the other half are students that may be struggling.

As I stated before, teachers and faculty at school are some of the first line of defense for their students. This would mean that they should also be teaching teenagers about mental health and how to help them deal with it. There

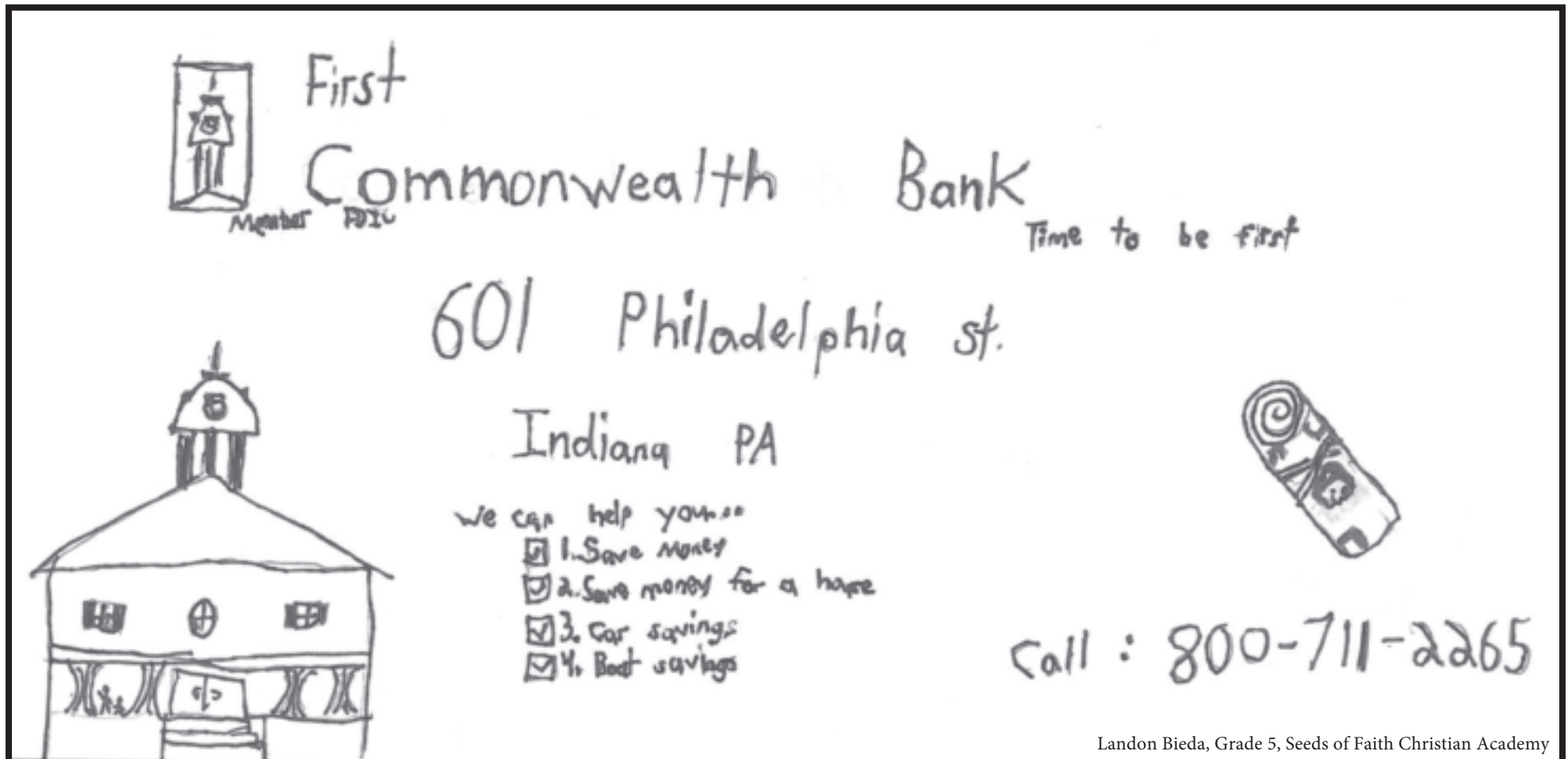
are others that think this is wrong because of the fact that teachers are not trained to do so. They also argue that they have a state-mandated curriculum to teach and that it takes time away from that to teach students about mental health. While all of this is true, mental health is still important and it needs to be made a priority.

Furthermore, being in a good mental state can often have great effects on how students do academically. Making sure students are okay and taking time to educate them on mental health issues, how to be aware of them, and how to handle them could improve how they feel in many as-

pects. One being that they would improve their performance in school, which may be something else most teachers are looking for.

All things considered, teenagers spend so much of their time at school, it is important to have mental health awareness and education be a part of the curriculum. Schools need to make educating students and faculty about mental health issues and how to cope with them mandatory, because of how much it could improve their lives.

Mental illness is just as important as any other illnesses. Just because you can't see it doesn't mean it isn't there.



Landon Bieda, Grade 5, Seeds of Faith Christian Academy

Writing contest for the best opinion column

The right to vote

The exact words of the 26th Amendment to the United States Constitution are, "The right of citizens of the United States, who are eighteen years of age or older, to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of age." What does that really mean, though? In short, this amendment is stating that any citizen of the United States of America that is 18 years of age or older will be allowed to vote. The age limit that the Constitution has set for American citizens may have made sense at one point in our history, but now, we are changing. America is changing. I believe that it is time to let America's 16- and 17-year-olds have a voice, as well, and that the official, legal voting age should be lowered from the age of 18 to the age of 16.

Many American citizens, at the age of 16, have more "adult" responsibilities than some adults may have. On top of going to school Monday through Friday, some individuals partake in sports, other extracurricular activities, and keep up a social life that is expected throughout high school. If you add balancing their grades and managing homework into the mix, upperclassmen of high schools all over the country are doing a lot more than someone older than them would ever think, maybe even more than the people over 18.

In addition, part-time jobs are also very common among high school students at the age of 16, and they usually earn around minimum wage. Just like any job, the government takes money from the paycheck earned, as an addition to their Medicare and Social Security programs. Now, this may just be the average and normal thing that every person has to go through, but is it right that the gov-

ernment should receive money out of a 16-year-old's paycheck, yet this individual has absolutely no say in who this government is and what they stand for? I don't think so.

These young adults that are working the part-time jobs have an income that is usually influenced by the government and their decisions on these matters. Whether it's their income or their paycheck deductions, these individuals do not have a say in any of it, and yet it is their lives. Another thing that makes 16-year-olds and adults very similar is their potential car insurance payments. It is a very ordinary thing for 16- and 17-year-olds to pay for their own car insurance, along with all of the usual car expenses, like gasoline and repairs. This is something that adults take on, as well.

If individuals this age can undertake all of these "adult" responsibilities, I think they should be able to vote, as an adult can.

This portion of the American population is the future of America. There are so many issues that are going on in the world today, such as climate change, racism and poverty, that this group of people is going to inherit from their predecessors.

Even so, they are living through it every day of their lives, right with the people over the age of 18. With the government making these primary decisions, and the adults deciding on the government, the 16- and 17-year-olds are left to just sit back and watch as the country decides how their lives are going to be lived in their future. Is that fair? Not only are they the future of America, in general, but also the entirety of the workforce.

If they haven't joined the workforce already, chances are that at some point in the near future, they will be getting a job and become part of America's working class. The government's decisions



AVERY FALISEC

Purchase Line High School
Grade 11

can sometimes have a very heavy effect on any job in the United States, whether it's a large full-time job or a small part-time job. Because of this, any person that is a part of the official workforce should be permitted the opportunity to vote in favor of their job.

Furthermore, in most states, the legal age of emancipation is 16. This means that at 16, a minor, under the right circumstances, can legally separate themselves from their guardians. If we are trusting working 16-year-olds to become a formal member of the American life, and we also trust them to be a part of the workforce, shouldn't we trust them to vote, too?

As of right now, especially with everything going on in the world, establishing a better America is one of the most important things that we can all come together to do. I believe that this could be possible with lowering the voting age.

Moreover, it is a proven fact that if you start something early on, it becomes a habit that you would continue to do as your life progresses. Who's to say that things aren't the same with voting? Voting needs to happen earlier, so that they are thinking of voting in future elections. Also, if we allow younger people to vote in elections, this would increase overall voter turnout, which is never a bad thing for the country. With a 16-year-old voting, this could also possibly influ-

ence a parent or another member of their family who doesn't annually vote, increasing the turnout even more. After all, family is always a big determining factor when it comes to voting.

Additionally, most high-schoolers right now are learning about their civic duty and responsibilities as a citizen in their school. Depending on the way you look at it, these students could possibly be more informed than some people out of high school, with the information being fresh in their minds. Earlier voting can only strengthen the civic side of education, as it will strengthen the entire country.

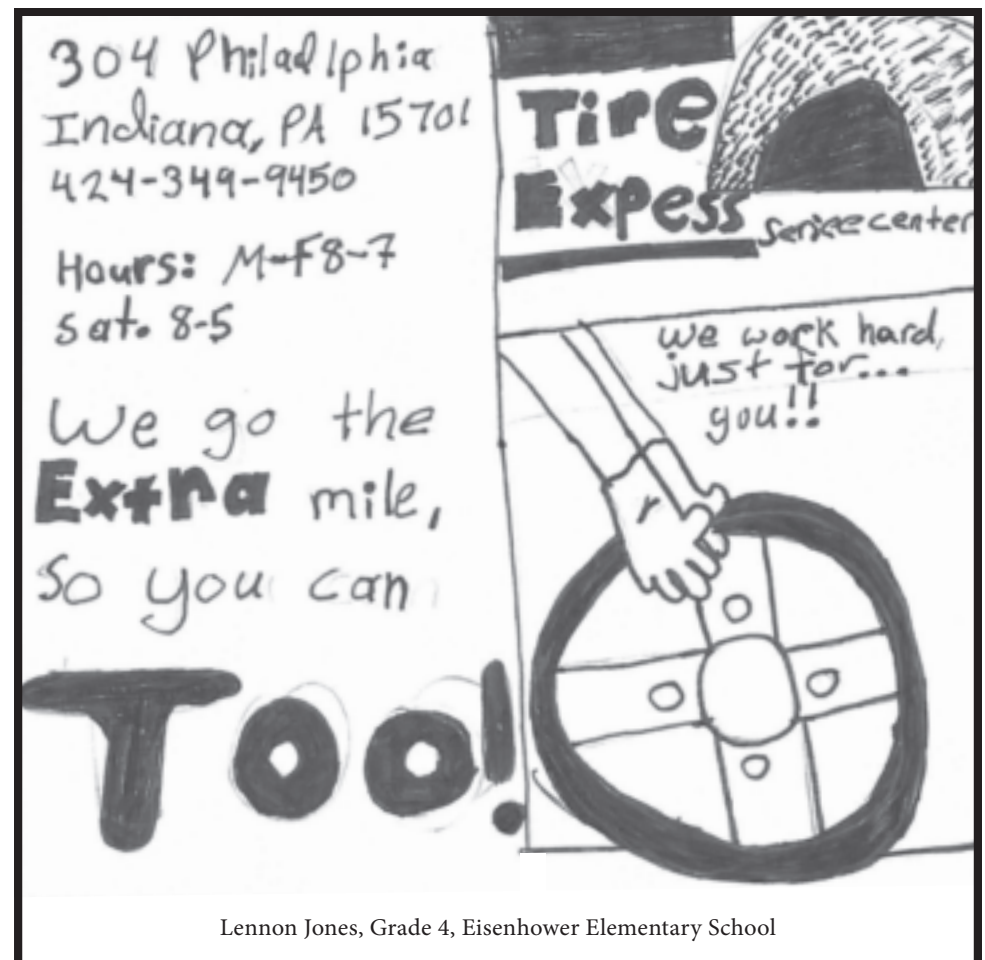
Some citizens may say that these 16- and 17-year-olds have much less life experience than adults, or that they are not as abundant in civic knowledge. While this may be true, we are forget-

ting about the majority of our American voters. Do we believe that every voter out there has done their research? Do we believe that every voter knows the current events of the world and how the elections will affect them? Others may even say that we shouldn't let them vote because their views and decisions will just be heavily influenced by their parents or however their family is voting in an election. Well, let's think about this again. Do we believe that every voter is not influenced by someone else's opinion on the daily? Not so much.

To repeat the 26th Amendment, the exact words are, "The right of citizens of the United States, who are eighteen years of age or older, to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of age." In America,

we do not hold our voters to any criteria, other than they have to be 18 years of age or older. That's it. The voters do not have to be informed whatsoever or anything, if they don't want to be. They don't have to limit themselves to the exposure of other's opinions at all. Why shouldn't we let these younger individuals, whose opinions are just as valid as an 18-year-old's, have the right to express them with voting?

In conclusion, for the reasons stated above, I believe that the voting age should be lowered to 16. This group of people has an equal amount of responsibility, are the future of America and, altogether, it would build the country up. Try imagining yourself as a 16-year-old during this day and age of America. Wouldn't you want to make a difference, too?



Lennon Jones, Grade 4, Eisenhower Elementary School

Writing contest for the best opinion column

Untitled

The distribution of a vaccine has been the moment most people have been waiting for since last March. However, ineffective leadership and a varied rollout mean that it will not be the triumphant moment many hoped it would be.

In Pennsylvania this disorder is best exemplified by the fact that in February about 30,000 to 60,000 second doses of the vaccine were misallocated as first doses across the state. Because there is no difference in makeup, packaging or dosage between the first shot and the second shot, many pharmacies did not realize that certain shipments of vaccines they receive were intended to be second doses and instead gave them to a new group as a first dose.

This has caused panic

around the state as shortages have made people unsure when their second dose will arrive and those attempting to obtain their first dose are faced with longer wait lists.

The PA Health Department has chosen not to disclose which pharmacies made this mistake. While it is understandable that they would want to not place blame on overextended pharmacies who received little instruction in the first place, it has only led to more confusion. The people who got their first dose from providers who followed directions will receive second doses with no interruptions, but there is no way for the public to know who those providers are.

Pharmacy systems are being flooded with calls asking about second doses, which only increases already strained appointment



HARPER WEHRER
Blairsville High School
Grade 12

systems.

A large portion of this could have been avoided if there was some kind of universal scheduling system, but as of yet this has not been provided.

Instead, each pharmacy must come up with its own system and run it themselves. This has led to the creation of many different systems, which makes it

difficult to know what each pharmacy needs and often excludes elderly people who do not have access to technology.

This is not the fault of individual pharmacies as many are not built for wide reaching vaccinations. It should instead fall on public health agencies to facilitate distribution as protecting public health and making sure that people have access to vaccines like this one is one of the reasons why they exist.

Pennsylvania is not the only state that is experiencing difficulties in vaccine scheduling, and a large part of this trend is that they are not getting proper assistance from the federal government. When the pandemic began in the spring, the government began looking for a scheduling program to help with the inevitable vaccine rollout that would be occurring sometime in the future.

The Trump administration eventually awarded a \$44 million contract to Deloitte, and has since become the object of ridicule. Many of the ideas behind this system have reportedly been stolen from a competitor, Tiffany Tate, who shared aspects of her idea after the CDC expressed interest in buying it. Tate has issued a cease and desist letter and is speaking out about this corruption.

Not only were her ideas stolen, her overall product was superior. She offered her system to the government at \$15 million, only about one-third of the price they had to pay for the Deloitte contract.

While most states are switching over to Tate's system, they must individually pay for it and seek it out

instead of it being provided. This is a perfect example of the inadequate preparation that the government underwent in the months leading up to distribution, but it shows that their focus was not on providing good support for the people who are giving the vaccine. They focused on the money, and it shows.

This is not the only time that the government dropped the ball on vaccine distribution. When President Joe Biden took office, he began publicizing the fact that he did not believe that the Trump administration was adequately handling the rollout.

When speaking to the National Institutes of Health, he said, "While scientists did their job in discovering vaccines in record time, my predecessor — I'll be very blunt about it — did not do his job in getting ready for the massive challenge of vaccinating hundreds of millions."

While there has recently been an order of another 200 million doses, the fact that they were not ordered earlier is a problem. These things take time to produce and ship, and the longer leadership waits to order them, the longer we will be without those doses. The fact that there will be such a delay in this order means that it will be much harder to meet Biden's goal of having 100 million people vaccinated by his 100th day in office.

An already strained and underprepared system is going to be put under more pressure to meet goals. Although this is a good goal to have and striving for things like this are the only ways that we will increase vaccination rates, the prepara-

tion should have begun much sooner.

However, it isn't all bad. Despite all of the issues the country has faced so far, as of Feb. 28, about 14.6 percent of the population has had at least one dose and about 1.6 million shots are being administered a day. According to Dr. Anthony Fauci, this combined with the falling COVID infection numbers shows that the rollout is "going in the right direction."

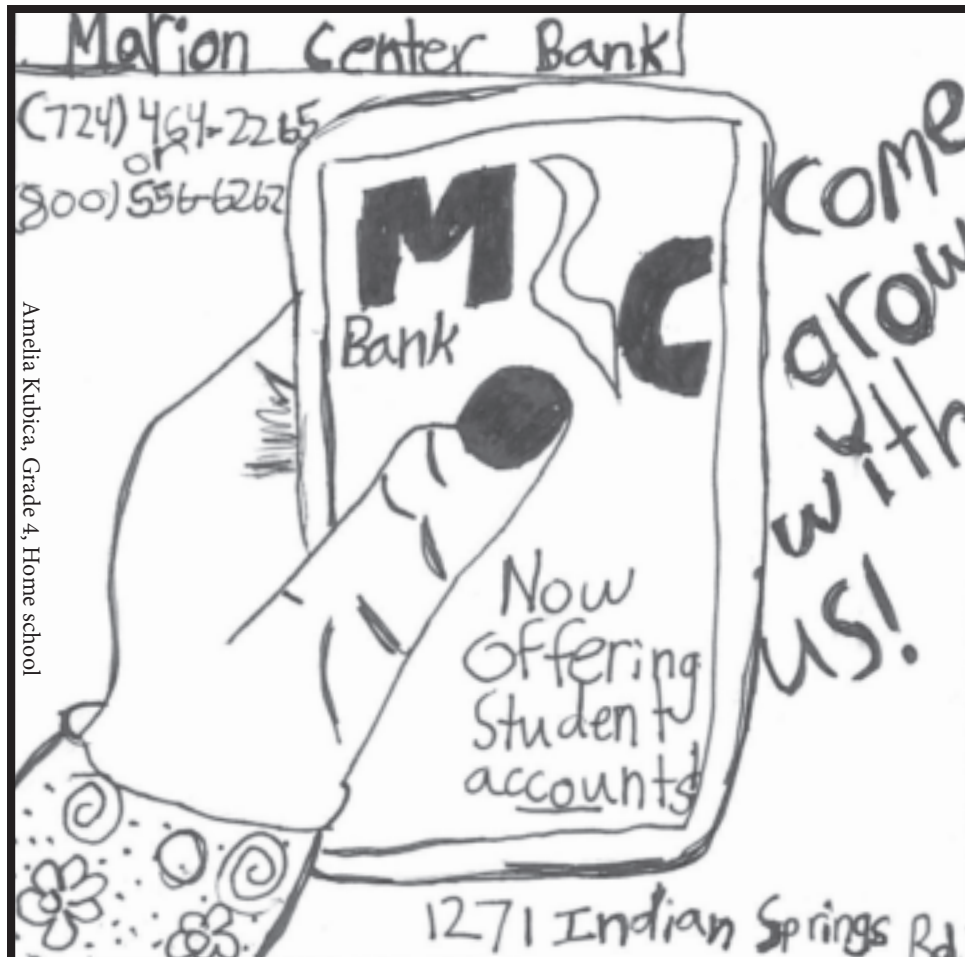
Polls have found that interest in the vaccine has been steadily rising since December, which is an amazing sign. It means that even if distribution is slow, herd immunity will be achieved faster because the public isn't going to have to be convinced to take the vaccine.

Another good sign is that new vaccines are being produced. Johnson & Johnson's vaccine was just given emergency authorization and it can be held at a lower temperature with only one dose. This will make distribution much easier and will bypass some of the major issues that we have been facing thus far.

The situation is not ideal, but we can still get through this. The U.S. has survived other pandemics and countless disasters in the past.

If we can all work together and do what we need to to keep everyone safe until the vaccine is distributed, we can get through this as well. We need to leave behind the chaos that defined the beginning of the pandemic and work on creating better, more efficient systems of distribution for the future. The tools are all there, we just have to have to use them.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This essay was written prior to the Biden administration reaching 100 million vaccinations before Biden's 100th day in office.



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Writing contest for the best opinion column

A parent's worst nightmare: the death of autistic children at the hands of police

Autism remains one of the world's greatest mysteries. Despite 1 in 160 children having autism (World Health Organization), no one has been able to successfully determine the cause. Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) refers to a spectrum, on which children and adults can be mildly or severely autistic.

Severe autism can manifest itself violently, with children or adults lashing out due to the disorder. It can also manifest itself in other sorts of mental disorders, leading the autistic person to be a threat to themselves. In those moments of fear, some parents are too afraid to call 911 for

help. The fear of their child will never be worse than the fear of losing them to the very people who swore to protect them.

Sept. 8, 2020. The Washington Post has an article on their website for that day, detailing how a police officer shot a 13-year-old boy with autism. The mother, Golda Barton, had dialed 911 because her autistic son, Linden Cameron, was having a mental health crisis.

The officer, a member of the Salt Lake City police, shot Cameron repeatedly after he started to run away. Cameron was unarmed, and ended up in the hospital "in serious condition with injuries to his intestines, bladder, shoulder and ankles," according to the article written by Tim Elfrink. He was a young, autistic boy in a crisis and he was shot



KAYLEE BECKER-GEORGE
Indiana Senior High School
Grade 12

by an underexperienced police officer.

Jan. 19, 2020. Eric Parsa was a 16-year-old autistic child who was suffocated in a parking lot by police officers. He enjoyed playing laser tag at the mall. After a game of laser tag, he started to have a meltdown. He was slapping himself and those around him, as well as biting his father. The laser tag

manager called the police.

Parsa was obese as well as autistic. Therefore, when the police did get him prone on the ground and hold him there for nine minutes, a part of which he was in a chokehold, breathing was already hard enough for him. They noticed that he had gone limp and rolled him onto his side. It was too late. They performed CPR on the scene, but performed it wrong. Parsa's parents watched him die.

Tony Canales, Kobe Heisler. The names don't stop at the people who got articles.

My little brother, Matthew, is severely autistic. He matches Parsa's description so accurately that for a scary second, I could have imagined it was him. My parents will never call the police for help during one of his meltdowns. So, who

are they supposed to call?

The truth is, the police aren't equipped to deal with autistic people. Police Academy training can last 13 to 19 weeks on average, and that is simply not enough. When calling 911, there is the fire department for fires, paramedics for health emergencies, and the police for everything else. We as a society need to divide the jobs of the police up to different state-funded organizations that actually specialize in their area. Mental health/autism experts should be called for mental health- and autism-related emergencies.

No one should have to fear calling 911 for help. With effort from the people and the government, we can lower or even eliminate the risk of autistic people being mistreated by the police.



JUSTIN REESE
Indiana Senior High School
Grade 12

**Income inequality:
The economic stratification
crippling U.S. workers**

Over one-quarter of Americans work for less than \$10 an hour, netting them an income below

See **REESE: 34**



Elle Griffith, Grade 4, Horace Mann Elementary

Writing contest for the best opinion column

Income inequality: the economic stratification crippling U.S. workers

REESE: From 33 the federal poverty line for an average family. These Americans have built the foundations and backbone of American society. These Americans are producing your food, serving your meals, fixing your car or, you could be one of them.

For several decades, now more than ever, the working class has been crippled by stagnating wages. Since the 1970s U.S. workers' wages have been slowed at a rate disproportionate to their productivity and overall economic growth of the nation.

This stagnation has created an economic dichotomy of the top 10 percent of earners taking home 50 percent of all income,

whereas the bottom 50 percent of earners take home scraps comparably. In 2015, the top 10 percent of earners averaged an income of over nine times more than the bottom 90 percent. Even more significant, the top 1 percent of earners averaged an income of over 40 times more than the bottom 90 percent.

While the wages and benefits of the middle class have remained stagnant, the earnings of the top 10 percent have increased drastically. From 1978 to 2018, the executive pay of CEOs increased by 940 percent, whereas the wages for workers increased by only 17 percent. In 2018 more than 50 corporations reported pay gaps between

CEO and workers larger than 1,000 to 1, meaning every dollar earned by a worker equates to \$1,000 given to a CEO.

The American government and economy have been unfair to the middle and lower classes that have been paying into the system with little to no benefits. Corporate subsidies and tax breaks have stolen from the deserving middle class and have given to the top 10 percent of earners who need it least.

The idea of trickle-down economics where corporations will take excess funding and tax breaks and devote it to workers is flawed, as is seen by the inordinate increase of CEO compensation.

Deregulation of corporations has allowed for the top 10 percent to get an upper hand. Lobbying of the government through political action committees and organizations has corrupted the system of checks and balances between the government and businesses. Corporations have been allowed to slash salaries, entrapping workers in a system of wage slavery with unlivable pay and benefits.

As pension plans are phased out and replaced with 401K, workers are liable for their own retirement while corporations shirk the responsibility for their workers. The American people want corporations to invest in workers, not CEO compensation packages,

stock buybacks and dividends.

The government should provide its citizens with the resources to curtail the outrageous income inequality; this means education and employment training, through a "college for all" plan that would make public universities and colleges tuition-free. This could easily be paid for through a Wall Street speculation tax on stock trades and a fee on both bonds and derivatives. This would not only provide equity to education and create a minimum standard, but it would also make Wall Street pay its fair share.

Corporations with high CEO-to-worker compensation gaps should be paying corporate tax rates. The revenue

for this could pay to eliminate medical debt, but most importantly would send a message to corporate America to stop paying workers inadequate wages while CEOs receive outrageous compensation packages. Income inequality and the stark stratification that has entailed has been crippling U.S. workers for decades and it's only getting worse. It is time for workers to unite and transform the government and economy to work for all, not just the top 10 percent.

The middle and lower classes have been paying into the system for decades, and it is far past time for them to receive what they are owed for their investment.



'What is the best way to solve differences?'

Everyone has opinions or certain beliefs, and we express them on a daily basis. Sometimes our opinions or feelings about a subject can cause disagreements or arguments with others. This year, the third-grade students were given the question, "What is the best way to solve differences you have with someone?"

**EAST PIKE
ELEMENTARY**

(Diana Bennett)
BAYLEE ADDERLEY

Sometimes we don't always agree. It is okay not to always agree, but how do you solve that problem respectfully? Listening



See **ADDERLEY: 35**



'What is the best way to solve differences you have with someone?'

ADDERLEY: From 34

to each other makes each person feel like their voice matters.

When someone has a problem and they don't know what to do, I talk to them and we solve the problem together.

Being respectful is important because actions speak louder than words. It can hurt their feelings and it can also affect their respect for you.

So, you can see, I solve differences by listening to others, problem solving them, and being respectful.

W.A. McCREERY
ELEMENTARY

(Alyssa Phillips)

MASON MILLER

Be the pacifist. Be the one to walk away from the fight or argument. No matter what, try to be the one to end the fight, not to start it.

It's also important to listen to what they are saying, not to just assume you are right.

If you have any anger from the fight, try to keep your mind off it. Maybe do a hobby or a sport.

You could do something relaxing or something you like. Maybe talk to someone. Whoever you had a fight with, you could talk it over, discuss a hobby or a sport. Spend time with family or whatever cools you off.

Try to know more about the person, know what you two have in common. Maybe start a chapter book, or a collection, or a game you also could do. Do something hard, something fun like cooking, art and building.

The things are endless of what you could do, just whatever works for you to solve your differences.

HOMER-CENTER
ELEMENTARY

(Nicole Neal)

AUBREY HENIGIN

Hi, my name is Aubrey! I have a question for you. Have you ever had a difference with somebody? Well, I have! The best way to solve a difference is by taking turns. For example, one time my mom had to go to the bank, and we mostly get lollipops. There were three lollipops. (There were three lollipops because there was one for me and for my two brothers.) Then I got super happy! Do you know why? Because there was my favorite flavor,

it is called blue raspberry! Then my little brother (Ezra) saw that I had it and he said,

"No, I'm having it!" We both fought over that lollipop! I got furious. I just wanted to take that right out of his hands. Then I yelled, "STOP, I need to think!" angrily. And like I told my brother that I needed to think, I stopped what I was doing and I thought. Then I remembered that I had the blue raspberry lollipop the last time we went to the bank. So I told him sorry and my little brother forgave me, so I gave him the blue raspberry lollipop. There are many ways to solve differences, and this one was my way to solve my difference.

The following are entries from the participating third-grade classes.

BEN FRANKLIN
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

(Edward Kocinski)
WREN WHITACRE

Have you ever had a difference or a problem? One time I had a difference with my brother. He and I wanted to watch a movie, but he wanted to watch a different

movie. I had some other movies in mind but he said no to all of the movies. I thought about the movie he wanted to watch. I realized I liked that movie too, so we decided to watch that movie.

One way to solve a difference is to watch something else we both like, which means to compromise. Compromising is helpful because it makes sure you both get what you want.

Another way is to solve the problem! One way to solve the problem is to let mom or dad pick the movie. You don't even have to watch a movie; you could play a game.

I feel happy when we compromise and when we find something to watch, and that is how I explain a difference to you.

CHLOE KELLAR

Have you ever had a problem with someone? I will give you some tips on how to solve the problem. You can compromise. If you are fighting at VPA and you want to draw and your friend wants to play a game, you can play a game for half of VPA and draw for half of the VPA. When you compromise you will feel accomplished and it solves the problem. You can also stop, make a plan and go. First, stop fighting with the person. Next, make a plan. Then go and do the plan. Here is a story of mine. Me and my older brother were fighting because I wanted to play on my gymnastics bars and my brother was in the same room playing with his cars. I started to ask him to leave but he would not. He went to go to the bathroom. So I quickly moved his cars out of the way. He was mad at me. I thought of a plan. We were in our living room so I told him that he could go in my clean room. Then he was happy. I feel like solving problems takes work but all turns out good.

See **THIRD GRADE: 36**



'What is the best way to solve differences you have with someone?'

THIRD GRADE: From 35

RYKER MAGLIONE

I don't like to argue but sometimes I do. What I like best is when I fix it. Here are some ways I like to solve my problems. I say sorry because they might accept your apology. They might be your friend again. You might get over it and play together.

Another way I solve my problems is when I am more responsible. It will be more helpful because people won't get upset to start with. A person may join in and help you. Do what you're told and maybe the adult might give you more responsibilities that you like.

Here's a story of a problem I solved. So one time I was arguing with my mom because I wanted a piece of chocolate and she said no. I yelled a little bit at her. After

a few minutes I said sorry and she forgave me. She gave me a small piece of chocolate. I feel happy and grateful that my problems are fixed.

**(Laura Lansberry)
FAROUC HARANDE**

Have you ever solved a problem with a friend? Well here is some information or advice for you. You can solve a problem with someone by showing kindness. A way to show kindness is by saying, "Are you okay?" or including them in a game, and show good sportsmanship.

Here are some examples. First, you should go and ask them what is wrong. Second, try and think of a way to cheer them up or fix their problem. Third, once you have it in mind try it out. If it works good then you are done. But if it doesn't work go to the person and try and talk it out.

Now you know how to cheer somebody up when they are sad or have a problem.

RYDER ALTMAN

Have you ever wondered how to solve a problem with someone? First, you can solve a problem by staying calm. Next, you can talk it out and help the person. Last, you can apologize to the person and ask what the person wants to do and include the person into your game. These are the ways you can solve a problem with someone in good ways.

PIPER KUZNESKI-ALLEN

Do you know how to solve a difference with someone? Well, maybe if you read this, you can have some ideas. The best way to solve a difference with someone is by talking with them and try to work it out.

You can ask, "Why are you being mean, is everything OK?" You can tell the per-

son, "Can we talk this out?" You can say, "Are you OK, I'm sorry if I said something wrong?"

Now it may be easier for you to solve a difference with someone.

**(Angela Petroff)
ADDISON CRONAN**

You are different! You can like different things. Stand up for yourself and you be you! Stand out in the crowd. However, if you are experiencing differences with someone, like if your BFF is mad at you because you are making a poster and you want to use blue and she wants to use red, give her your reasons for using the color you selected. You could sit down and talk about it, find each other's problems. Listen to each other.

In addition, another good example is, say you are on each other's nerves because you spend too much time together. Think about taking a break from each other.

Lastly, if your friend wants to have pizza for dinner and you want to have Wendy's, talk about it. Decide maybe when the last time you had pizza was.

Next time you have a problem, keep this in mind.

JADEN BELL-AMOS

What do you think about differences? I think the best way to solve differences is to talk about your problem

with someone. If you talk it out you don't have to fight.

For example, if you're fighting with your sister you can talk to her about what's bothering both of you. We can play a game together and we won't have to fight again. Then we can figure out not to fight.

So in the end, you might fight with a brother or sister, but you can still get along.

PARKER MILLER

Do you have a brother or sister? I have a sister. She and I fight a lot, but we find out how to fix it. You might even have a problem with a friend. We listen to each other's problems. Here is an example.

Say that you're at VPA playing battleship and your friend has one ship left. You hit it and he said you cheated. Then you said no. You and him are made at each other. He said let's listen to each other's problems. You find it and fix it. That was an example of a problem. That is how they did it.

Here is another way. You are at the beach and your friends are playing with you. Another kid comes over. He said, "Can you stop?" You ask what is the problem. He said, "You were splashing water on me." You said, "Well, sorry," and you stop. That was a nice way to do it. I hope these will be good solutions for you.

**(Shannon Redinger)
MADELINE SCHAEFFER**

Here are some of the best ways to solve differences, you ready? The best way to solve differences is to try to talk it out and see what you have in common. One good way to solve differences is to see what sports you like, singers, and food. Another way to solve differences is to talk it out. You can do this by joking around. One last way to solve differences is to befriend them. If you do this, you will accept your differences. Those are the best ways to solve differences.

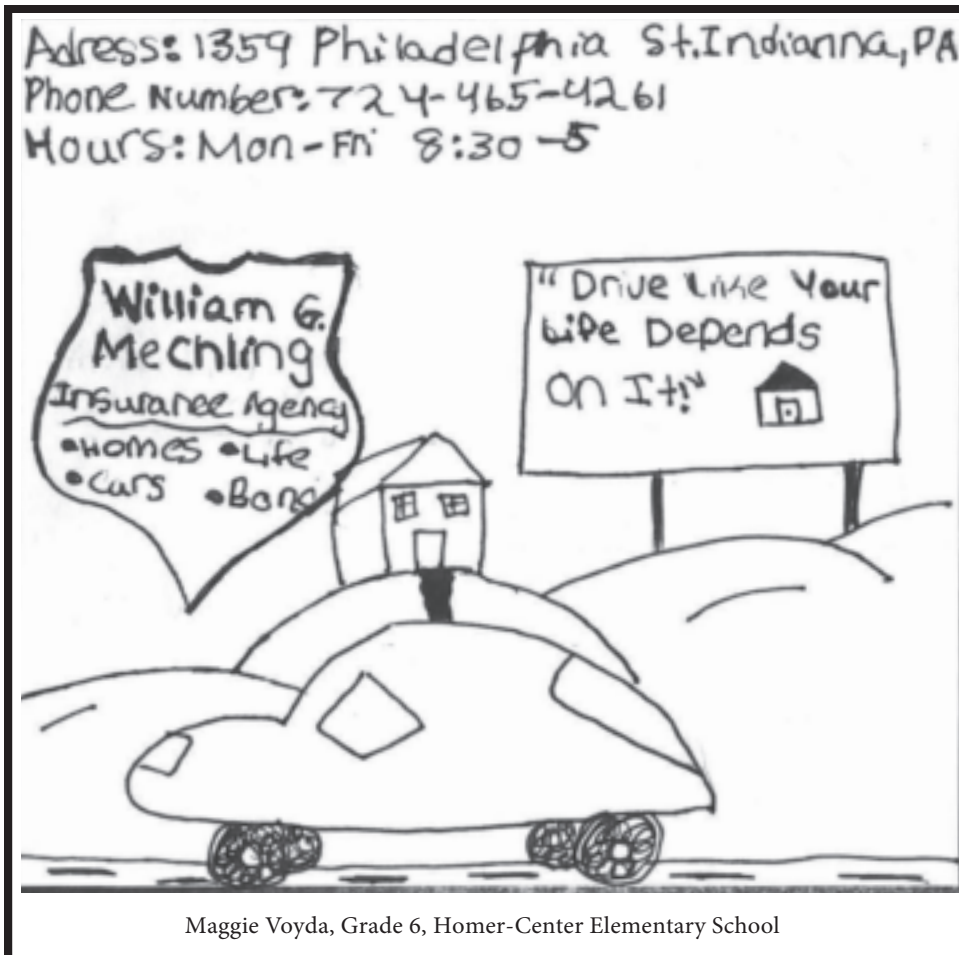
MARCO SCARDINA

Have you got in a fight with someone? Read this. It has three things you can do. The best way to solve differences you have with someone is to try to come to an agreement. If you both want something, you could share. If someone is arguing in a mean way, you could tell them how you feel and ask them to stop. If you are wrong, stop and say sorry. If you try to come to an agreement with someone it will help your problem!

ARYA LIVINGSTON

Have you ever fought with someone? The best way to solve differences you have with someone is by being nice to them. You can ask

See **THIRD GRADE: 37**



Maggie Voyda, Grade 6, Homer-Center Elementary School



Giada Colinet
Grade 4
Blairsville Elem.

'What is the best way to solve differences you have with someone?'

THIRD GRADE: From 36 them to please stop it, they are causing a problem. You can talk about your differences. You can talk it out. These are ways you can solve differences with someone.

(Dawn Shaffer)
ALIVIA LARRIMER

Have you ever been in a fight with family or friends? Well, read my story! The best way to solve differences with someone is to do what they want for 5 minutes and do what you want for 5 minutes. One time me and my sister wanted to play outside, but I had to clean my room. So we cleaned my room for 5 minutes and we went outside for 5 minutes. Once me and my friend were arguing about what is the best sport and I said horseback riding, and they said, "That's not a sport." And I said, "Yes it is, it's what you think and I'm okay with that. Let's talk about what you like for 5 minutes and what I like for 5 minutes." So my strategy is to do what someone wants for 5 minutes and do what I want for 5 minutes.

ALEXA DREW

Hi, if you have a difference with someone, here are a few ways to solve them. I tell them it's OK you don't like that thing I like. We can like different things. Here's an example. Once, one of these girls in my class said my sweater was ugly. Well, I felt sad and I told her, "Well, I like it and that's OK." So then she said, "Fine, you can like it but it's bad fashion." I said, "OK, you can think that. I like it." Example #2: Another time when my friend said she didn't care that I was excited. She said, "Stop bragging to everyone." I said, "Well, you're the only one that I have shared it to," so I said, "Please be nice to me, you're the only one that knows about this so you can just stop being rude to me." Example #3: Another time is when my friend was saying she wasn't playing that

board game. She said LoLs are stupid. I said, "OK, well, I think they are fun. What board game do you want to play?" She said, "I'm just going to play that game on my phone." I said, "Well, my mom said take a break from our phones." She said, "Well, I don't want to." I said, "OK, we can play 5 minutes then play a board game, OK?" "OK!"

Well, it's OK if you have other solutions; you can use either one!

ANA MATOS

What if you and a friend get in a fight, what do you do? The best way I solve differences is ... I compromise. Sometimes my brother and I fight about who is the best kid, so I said we are both the best. Once my brother wanted to lightsaber fight and I wanted to frisbee, so we frisbeed for a bit and lightsaber fought for a bit. Once me and my brother wanted to play different games, so we played both. So this is how I compromise.

**BLAIRSVILLE
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

(Brittany Marshall,
Period 1)

NEVAEH LACKEY

The best ways to solve your differences with someone are keeping your opinion to yourself because sometimes it's better to keep it to yourself so you don't have to fight about it.

Another way maybe you could try each other's opinion, and if you still don't like theirs, it's OK. Just don't say anything rude about it. Just simply say, "I still don't like your opinion, but you may not like mine, and that's definitely fine. We all have our opinions."

LONDON GUYAN

The best way to solve difference you have with someone is, for me:

1. Talk. Because if you can talk about it, you can expand your communications so you can understand why you have differences better.

2. Separate. If you separate, you can take a breather

and calm down.

3. Apologize. When you are done with the last two steps, you apologize to your brother or sister, then go on with the rest of your day.

AVERY SHANNON

When I try to settle something with someone, I like to talk it out so I know what is wrong. I like to do what the other person might want to do. I like to take a walk to calm them down.

I like to read a book together. I like to play something with them. We can watch TV together.

We can go to a lake and go on a boat. We can lay on the grass and look at the sky. There are so many ways to settle something with someone.

(Brittany Marshall,
Period 2)

GIANNA CORRIDONI

The best way to solve differences with someone is you can have a conversation. When two people want to play together and one wants to play a game outside and the other wants to play an indoor game, you can have a conversation to help to see what one can go first or second.

Another way is to talk and have a deep breath. Get out of your fight with talking about your feelings.

MYLA GASTON

A long time ago my brother and I were sitting on the couch and we were really bored so my brother came up with an idea to play a board game. So we both went upstairs, got board games that looked fun and gathered up our family and started to decide which game we wanted to play — a bunch of different ones.

But we couldn't figure out which game to play first. So I decided we should play rock, paper scissors to figure it out. So we made groups and my mom ended up winning. And that's how we figured it out.

LIAM SKILLINGS

You do what you want to do and the other person does what they want to do. Like when I want to read

but my sister wants me to play with her, so I tell her to play while I read.

First one thing, then the other. For example, I wanted to play on the Pac-Man, but my sister wanted to play Scrabble, so I played Pac-Man, then we played Scrabble.

**CALVARY BAPTIST
ACADEMY**

(Lyndsey Nicholson)
TRENT RATTIGAN

Some ways to solve differences are to speak kindly and do nice things for others. This Bible verse will let you know how to solve differences: Ephesians 4:32 — "And be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

So next time you have a difference, remember to speak kindly and look to do nice things for others.

AVERIE ROBERTSON

We all have differences with others. We should be nice and we should not talk mean to others about our differences. One day, I found a wolly worm and put it on a picnic table and went to go find a stick. My friend found it and took it. I did get mad but let her keep it. Luke 6:35 says, "Love your enemies and do good." To solve differences, to be kind.

EAST PIKE ELEMENTARY

(Diana Bennett)
ZOE COOPER

Have you ever disagreed with someone? It's not fun, but you can find ways to solve your differences. A small compromise can be an easy way to give both of you some of what you want. You can't always get everything you want. Listening to each other can make differences in life easier if you really listen. You can

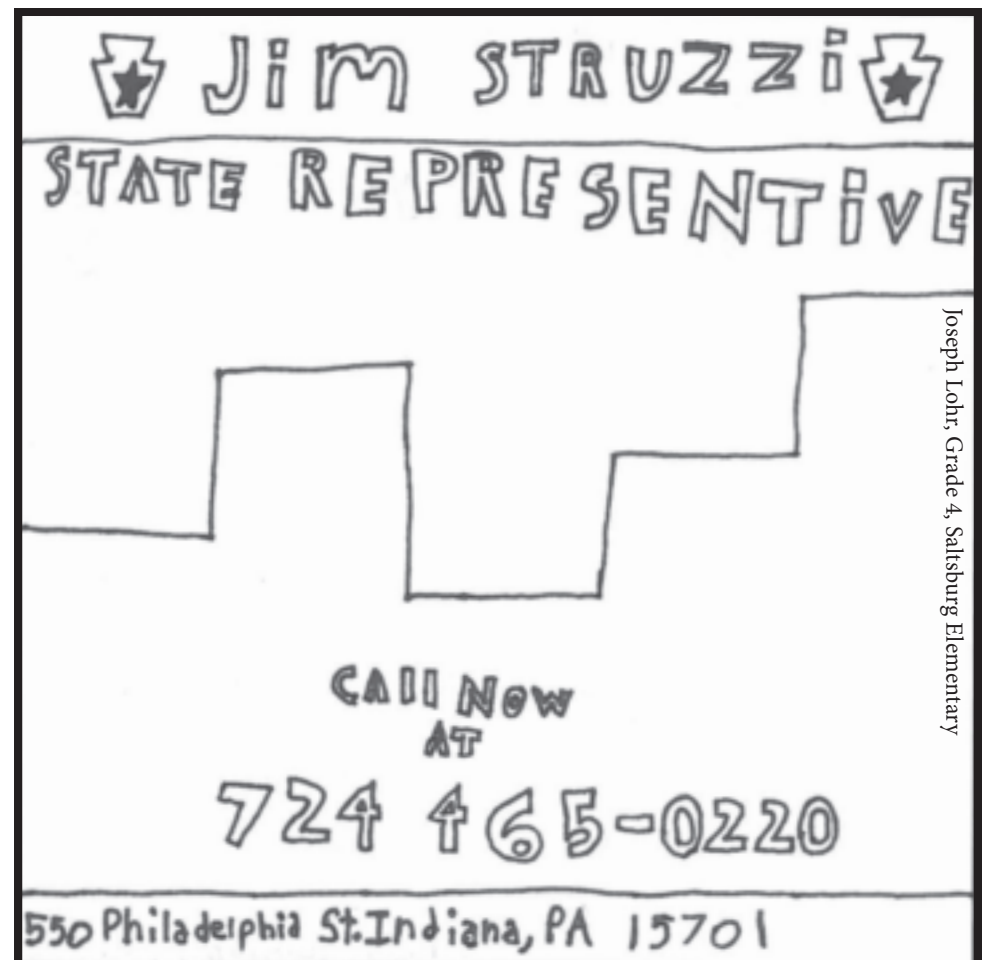
share your ideas and they can share theirs too. If you change the subject that doesn't mean you will never go back to it. It just gives you time to think about it and then you can go back to it in an even better way than before.

As you can see, the whole world is always different than you every day. There are so many ways to solve it. Try to use kind words instead of fighting and wanting it your way and only your way.

ELIZABETH GAWEL

Have you ever disagreed with someone? What is the best way to resolve that difference peacefully? There are many ways but here's one I like. It is saying your opinion kindly. It might not be the best one, but hearing each other can help you get a new perspective. Another way is listen to each other. It

See **THIRD GRADE: 38**



‘What is the best way to solve differences you have with someone?’

THIRD GRADE: From 37

can make someone know their voice matters. One more is to keep an open mind. Never come already thinking that your idea is the best. This brings us to our conclusion. There are many ways to solve differences, and these are just a few. Always remember to say your opinion kindly.

MACY EVANS

All people are different and have different thoughts and feelings. That sometimes gets in the way of friends and families. When you run into a difference with someone, think about it. Their idea might be smart, and you might think it is a better idea. If you have a difference with someone, keep an open mind. Listen to their idea and don't just always think your idea is the best. If your difference is not important, you can

just change the subject. But if it is something you have to do, changing the subject is not a good idea. These are just a few of the many ways that you can solve differences and problems.

(Heidi Higbee)

JALIAH DEATON

This is how you solve differences with someone. You can try and think of fair and good solutions for it. You might say on this day I pick what game we have, then the next day you can pick. Or you might say how about we play this for a little, then we play that. You should not be mean when it comes to solving differences; you should be kind about it and caring. Think about how the other person feels. If the other person doesn't like the idea, maybe find an idea you both like. If it is hard to find an idea for you and the person, you can ask for help; one of your teachers

or classmates might help. I hope you found new ways to solve differences and learned about it.

CAMERON GROSE

I have a friend and we do everything together. We play, sleep and laugh. But one day we entered a competition. It was a book competition. We had to create books. We also got to choose partners. I chose her and she chose me. We started right away. I wanted the book to be about fairies. She wanted it to be about mermaids. We both decided that we would make our own books. I went to my mom to talk to her about it. She said that “maybe we could make the book about fairies and mermaids.” I went to her house to apologize and tell her mom's plan. She agreed! The book was a success! We got first place and all because we worked together!

HUNTER TAYLOR

Here are some of the best ways to solve differences you have with someone. You should compromise, NOT fight. For example, you could say, how about for 15 minutes we play soccer and for the other 15 minutes we can play on the playground. Does that sound like a good solution? You should always make a solution instead of making a problem, because that could cause your friendship to break. This is how I would compromise instead of making a big fight.

**HOMER-CENTER
ELEMENTARY**

(Nicole Neal)

WILL FARABAUGH

A difference is when you have a lot of disagreement with someone. I know I had a disagreement with someone. It felt disappointing. The best way to solve a difference with someone is to compromise and talk it out. For example, one time I had a difference with someone, it was my brother and I. We were at an arcade and we had to split \$20. There was a game that gave you 500 tickets and it cost \$20, but my brother wanted to play this game that gave you 200 tickets and it cost \$10, so we had a big fight in the middle of the arcade. I said, “We can take turns,” and my brother said, “Yay, sure,” and we took turns playing the same game that my brother picked. There are many ways to solve a problem and this is how I solved my problem.

CHRIS BEAUDOIN

Do you have differences with someone? With a sister or a brother, a friend? For example, one time I had a problem with which food place we were going to. I wanted Wendy's and my brother wanted Burger King. I thought our parents should decide. The best way to solve a difference with someone is asking a parent to see where we go. The solution was to ask a parent.

Our parents decided to go to Wendy's, so we went to Wendy's.

CASSIDY HENRY

Have you had a difference with someone? I have and I felt sad, upset and mad. The best way to solve a difference with someone is by talking about it and taking turns. For example, one time Maddie wanted to be my partner and Taylyn wanted to be my partner, so they started fighting only a little bit. I felt very bad about it. I did not want it to happen. Then we started taking turns. Maddie suggested we start taking turns, so Maddie will go with me today and tomorrow I will go with Taylyn.

(Lauri Shoup)

MASON KUNKLE

The best way to solve differences between my brother and I are to share by taking turns. You can take 5 minute turns at a time. The best way to solve differences between my cousin and I are to do both swimming and play hide and go seek. Always take turns!

KE'HIWA EVERETT

There are many ways to solve a problem with someone. Let's make an example. My family was trying to figure out what should we have for dinner. My family said, “We can have Taco Bell.” But I said, “No, we can have Burger King.” So we decided we can just go to Arby's and eat Taco Bell another time.

FALLON MARRA

There are many ways to solve a difference you have with someone.

This story is about my sister. When Ava is too loud on a FaceTime with my friend, I will talk it out and tell her to show respect. If she does not listen, I will leave the FaceTime.

**PURCHASE LINE
ELEMENTARY**

(Leslie Hanley)

REESE MAHAFFEY

It is great to solve differences with someone. The first way to start that off is

to apologize. Apologizing doesn't mean someone's wrong. Being open to other people's ideas will also help a lot. Next, it would be great to talk to the other person and work out a compromise with them. If the other person gets mad again, give them some time to cool off. Finally, try each other's ideas and activities. If you try the other person's idea, you might like it. These ideas for solving differences are brilliant.

COLE SUNEALITIS

There are some great steps to solving differences with someone. First, I apologize to the person. Apologizing is a great way to start getting rid of that difference with that person. Next, I would let the person have some space. Letting the person have some space will let them calm down. After that, I would talk to the person. Talking to the person will help him or her understand how I want to end the problem. Finally, I would compromise. Compromising helps the person and I put our ideas together. Ending the difference is better for both people.

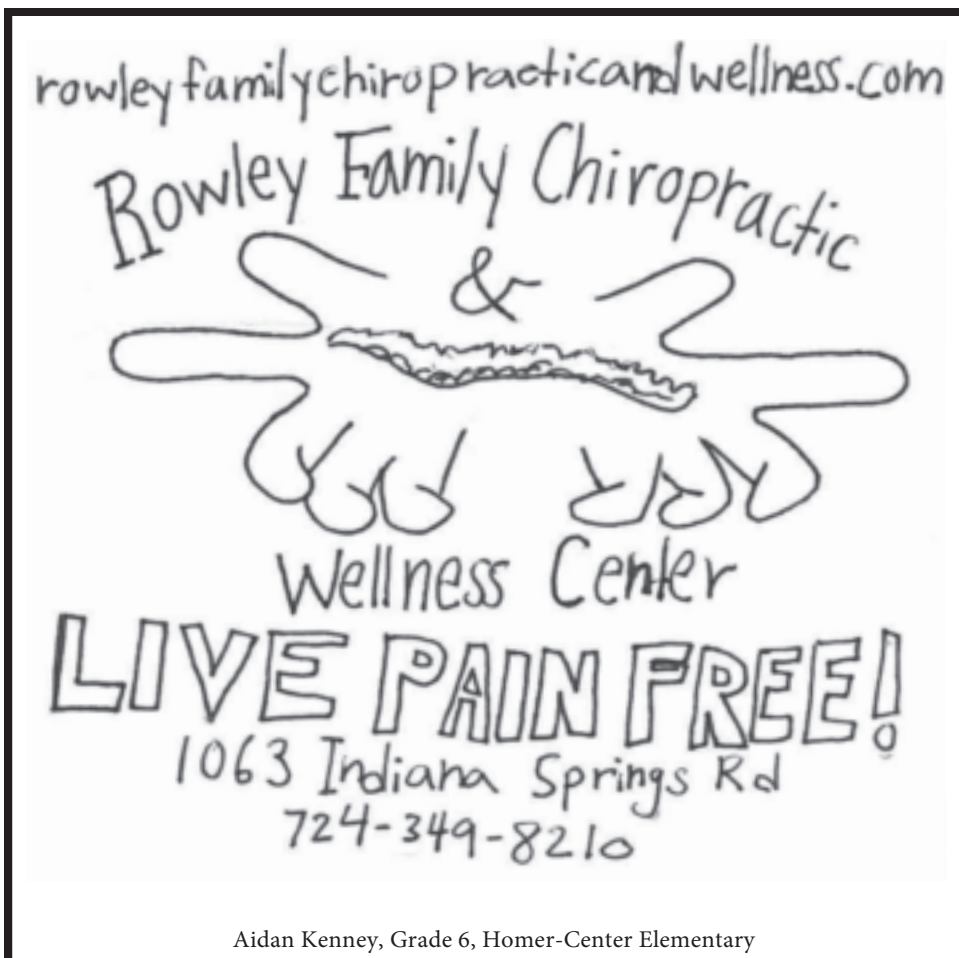
LOGAN GEE

This is the best way to solve differences with someone. Apologizing is good; it does not always mean admitting to being wrong. The second thing to do is try to work out a compromise with him or her. After that, maybe try something the person likes to do. That is an easy way of solving differences with someone.

**(Robin Laney)
ERIC FREEMAN**

The best way to solve differences is to compromise. You can compromise by doing the same thing. You want to play basketball and your friend wants to play too; that is compromising. You can compromise by working as a team. You can compromise by being yourself in basketball. This is how you compromise.

See **THIRD GRADE: 39**



Aidan Kenney, Grade 6, Homer-Center Elementary

'What is the best way to solve differences you have with someone?'

THIRD GRADE: From 38

RICHARD ANDERSON

The best way is to talk it out and be nice and calm down. You would walk away from them, then in a bit you will calm down then you can come back. Be nice and play the other game after. Then the two kids that didn't get along, I hope they get along now.

ELLWOOD LAMKIE

The best way is to add your ideas together. If at all possible, mix your two ideas together. Sometimes it makes a fun game like Hide 'n tag or HopBall! You can tell your friend you want this to happen but it cannot work. In that case, change your idea to something different. Your friend may not want to do this, so do his idea or persuade them to do yours. This is the best way to do it!

(Kerri Mountain)

MICHAELAH STRONG

How to solve differences. This is one of the best ways to solve your differences with your friends or family. There are also many more ways to solve the problem. I think this is one of the best ways out of all of them, though. One problem I have is sometimes my cousin wants to jump on the trampoline and I don't because it's usually snowing or raining when she wants to jump on the trampoline. I always talk to her and say I think it's too wet and slippery to jump on the trampoline. One other thing I might say is, "It's snowing! If we do tricks on the trampoline, we're gonna fall and get hurt. The snow gets in our pants, coat or shoes and we get frostbite or just get really cold, maybe even get sick, so that's why I don't wanna go outside and jump on the trampoline." My problem works because I think now when it's raining or snowing she will not ask to jump on the trampoline. That's why I think my problem works. I feel great. Now she doesn't ask to jump on the trampoline again when it's

raining or snowing. I think she learned her lesson from jumping on the trampoline when it's raining or snowing.

MATTHEW LAVENDER

This is how to solve a problem. By talking to the person about it and working together to come up with a better thing to do and play. Sometimes I get in a group and I have an idea. Someone thinks they have a better idea than me! So, we get in a fight! Then we share our ideas. We think of whose is better and we both agree, and it works. We both were happy we figured out how to solve it. Then we always wanted to be in the same group. That is how I solve a problem.

DESTINY BARGER

This is a way to solve a problem that I think is the best. I think the best way to solve a problem is to talk to the person about it. Once my sister and I had to work on a project for church. My sister wanted to make a memorial sculpture, but I wanted to make a God sculpture. So I talked to my sister about it. Talking about it really helped, because when we were talking about it, we decided to make a memory for God sculpture. So I think talking about a problem is the best way to solve a problem.

JAXSON ROMAGNA

This is how I solved a problem. I solved a problem when my brother and I were fighting over the remote. I solved it by saying that he could watch his show first, then I could watch my show after him. That is when I solved a problem.

RAYNE ELEMENTARY

(Renee Tiesi/
Lauren Bytner)
MIA STROUSE

This is how to solve conflicts. 1) Talk to each other about your feelings. 2) Find out what is causing the problem. 3) Apologize. 4) Don't end the conflict without saying "sorry." 5) Be nice. 6) Try to talk it out. 7)

Compromise. 8) Take deep breaths. 9) Get somebody to help. 10) Have fun together and try not to get a bad temper.

This is the best way to solve conflicts with someone.

BRYNLEY BREISCH

The best way to solve differences with someone is to listen to each other's ideas about how to solve the problem, and do some of each. First, I will be calm and relax. Second, we will both share our feelings and our ideas with each other. Then, we will come up with a solution that we agree with. We will use rock, paper and scissors. Finally, we will both go one with our day because we figured out our differences.

AIDEN STONEBRAKER

The best way to solve differences with someone is take leadership. Also, don't say any bad words. Do not listen to bad stuff about you. If the fight gets too bad, ask someone for help. Pay attention to the other person. Put yourself in someone's shoes. Talk it out. This is how I would solve differences with someone.

GABRIALLA GALORE

I think the best way to solve a conflict is to stop and think. First, you need to stop fighting or stop harming. Next, you need to think before you say something hurtful. Some people during a conflict may say hurtful things and probably hurt the other person. Then, talk about how to solve the problem. Finally, get along. In my opinion, I think this is the best way to stop a conflict.

(Lisa Nelson/Renee Tiesi)

CHLOE BREWER

The best way to solve problems you have with someone is to ask an adult to help you talk your problem out. For example, if you were playing outside with your friend and you're collecting things for a poster and your friend wants to use acorns for the outline and you want to use leaves instead, you might

get really angry. And your friend might get angry too. The first thing you do is to stop and listen to why your friend wants to do something that you don't. If it gets out of hand, get an adult and they will figure it out.

MICHAEL BARTO

The best way that you can solve a difference with someone is to ask them first to calm down and also calm myself down too. Next, we could talk it out and listen to each other. Then we can come up with a compromise without yelling and being nasty. The last thing I could do is ask for help if the compromise doesn't work.

MIA RHOADES

What is the best way to solve differences you have with someone? I would grab two pieces of paper. Then my friend and I would write our favorite things to play.

I like Legos and my friend likes action figures. I want my friend to play Legos, but my friend doesn't. Then I'd have an idea to say to my friend. Let's build an action figure Lego house. Problem solved! This is the best way to solve differences when playing with a friend.

COLTON NEESE

If I get in a conflict with someone I would be kind and politely say, "Can you please let me have the ...?" Or I would try to reason with the person. If the person would try to get physical I would walk away.

In my opinion, this is the best way to deal with conflicts.

ST. BERNARD REGIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOOL

(Vera Leonard)
RORI ALLEN

The best way to solve differences you have with

someone is to communicate with them. You can also take turns or you can simply tell them what you like about them. You can do something with them too. Another good way is to say what you both like.

Thank you for reading my story.

ETHAN HOFFMAN

The best way to solve differences you have with someone is to get to know them. Try to find things that are not different between you and that person. Once you've done that, try to make friends with that person. This, in my opinion, is the best way to solve differences with someone.

SPENCER BACHA

The best way to solve differences you have with someone is to use your voice kindly, and say, "Just because we like different

See **THIRD GRADE: 40**



Claire Stanley, Grade 6, IJHS

'What is the best way to solve differences you have with someone?'

THIRD GRADE: From 39 things does not mean we cannot be friends." This is the best way to solve differences with someone.

NATHANIEL REINARD

The best way to solve differences you have with someone is to try to communicate and compromise. Soon you may find something you both like and you will get a better relationship. This is the best way to solve differences with someone.

SALTSBURG ELEMENTARY

(Monica Deloreto)

ELENA RUBIN

The best way to solve a difference I have with someone is I can give in and do what I want to do the next day. One day I was arguing with my mom because I wanted a puppy, but my mom said no because

we already have a dog. But I said, "Why can't we have two dogs?" She said, "Because you do not take care of it." I said, "I will take good care of it, I will feed it, and I will walk it." Then she said, "You do not need a dog." But then I said, "Please." She said, "Well then, after the dog we have passes, you might be able to get a puppy!" I said, "It will be sad after the dog we have dies, but OK, thank you." That was my best way to solve a difference with someone.

SOPHIA SCHULTZ

The best way to solve differences you have with someone is to ask what they think first on what to play first. We both like to play with Barbies and baby dolls. But Malee wants to play Barbies and I do not want to play Barbies. I want to play baby dolls, so we don't

know what to play. We try to think on what to play, we figure out what to play. We are going to play baby dolls. That's my way to solve the differences with someone. I have differences with my best friend Malee when we play together.

(Jen Surratt)

EZRA NOVOM

The best way to solve differences you have with someone is to either compromise or discuss the problem with them.

Let's say you want to play Battleship but your friend wants to play Sorry. Instead of fighting, you could compromise by taking turns. You could also compromise by playing a totally different game that you both like.

But what if somebody hits you? You shouldn't tell on him or hit back. You could talk about why he hit you.

Ask him what made him do it. You might say, "I wouldn't want to hang out with you if you would hit me!" You could tell him what you would feel and ask the person how he would feel if you hit them.

I think these are a couple of good ways to solve differences with somebody else. Compromising and discussing the problem are pretty good ideas. And if these ideas don't work, you could always talk to an adult.

WALTER VUCKOVICH

The best way to solve a difference with a person is to find something that we both like to do. Me and my friend Mason have a difference. My friend Mason wants to play baseball but I want to play on his trampoline. So I think we will take turns playing. We will play

baseball first, then we will play on his trampoline. So this is how we solved our differences.

ODIN JILES

The best way to solve the difference between me and my dad is to compromise.

If my dad says to clean my room I will get my tablet. When I am done I will get my tablet and my room will be clean for my dad.

If my dad tells me to pick up dog poop he will pay me. When I am finished I get money and he gets a clean yard.

In conclusion, the best way to solve the difference is to compromise.

PATRICK WALIZER

The best way to solve differences with someone is to take turns. Taking turns is fair. Being fair is important because it is kind.

It is also kind to share be-

cause it is equal.

In conclusion, the best way to solve differences with someone is to take turns.

UNITED ELEMENTARY

(Mary Carpenter)

LILLY HEMING

When I disagree with someone, I can be kind. First, I can say, "Can you please give that back to me? Please and thank you." Then, you can be friends with them and you can be nice to them by playing with them. Finally, how you can be nice to them is you can say, "Can you please play with me?" Hence, you should be nice when you disagree.

MADISON PENROSE

When I disagree with someone, I can be nice to

See **THIRD GRADE: 41**



Alec Yanoschick, Grade 4, Horace Mann Elementary

'What is the best way to solve differences you have with someone?'

THIRD GRADE: From 40 someone. First, I can say please, thank you, you're welcome to friends. Additionally, try to be kind to people you see and play with them. Finally, do things you both like and share a snack. Hence, these are the ways to make friends and be nice to someone.

DANNER SHANK

There can be a lot of ways to forgive when I disagree with them. To start, when I disagree with a friend I can go to his house and help them with something. Second, you can ask him to come to your house and play with toys and then play on your trampoline. Finally, when you are done playing, you can make dinner for him and let him help you make dessert. To end, these are some reasons how to make a friend.

(Mary Douglas)

BARRETT SHEASLEY

My cousin and I are different because every time I come over to his house we get in a fight over nothing. The solution was after we stop playing we get bored and start playing again.

My cousin likes wolves and I like Nerf guns, and every one minute we played guns my cousin says let's play wolves, then we get bored. The solution was to play a hunter game where I was a hunter and he was a wolf.

JACKSON BEAVER

When me and my brother fight over something that we both want. When me and my brother start a fight and get yelled at. To not get yelled at by my mom and dad, we stop fighting and say how about we share this thing. It is kind to share with family and friends.

DEANA STIVISON

My friend likes a different thing than me. My friend likes to play with cars and I like to color. My friend and I color cars. I like cats and my friend likes dogs. We told each other about cats and I told her about dogs. And

that is how we got along.

(Aimee Erwin)

ELLA BARBUS

In my opinion, the best way to solve differences you have with someone is to talk about it them, find a way to work it out. If it's your fault, apologize and give them at least a day to forgive you. If you're in an argument and it gets bad, tell your parent/guardian, ask them to help you work it out. That's my opinion on the best way to solve differences you have with someone.

SYLVIA DILLNER

Here is how to solve a difference. If you have a difference, for example, you want to play but someone else wants to clean the house, solve your difference by: First, think about if your idea would be better or if the other idea would be better. Then, if you have decided the other idea is better, try it. Sometimes if you cannot solve your difference that way, pick something other than playing or cleaning the house or whatever you are trying to solve. After that, do a whole different topic like drawing, building or bird-watching. Finally, you could do something on your own and come back to it later. That is how you can solve a difference.

AVA LICHTENFELS

This is what I do when I try to solve differences. First, I try to work it out by talking about what we are disagreeing about. Next, I talk about the differences that we have and that it's OK to be different from someone. Then, try to get on the same page with who you are disagreeing with. Finally, talk about something that you can agree on. That will always make things better. I do this when I try to solve differences.

NOAH CHICHY

Solving differences is easy when you're not angry. Example: When me and my sister don't agree, I'll go play a game or read. Then, we agree on what we do. When we do agree it's easy be-

cause we easily solve problems.

Another example: Me and my friends sometimes don't agree at recess when we play games like tag, red-light green-light, and hide and seek. We will try to agree and solve problems but sometimes we play lots of games in one game.

This is what I would do if I was solving differences.

W.A. McCREERY ELEMENTARY

(Alyssa Phillips)

KENLI SHANK

Crash, boom, bam! You don't want to solve differences that way! These are some ways you can solve your differences. Some ways are to ignore them and walk away because when you ignore them and walk away, they have no reason to yell or fight with you. Another way is talk it over. When you talk it over, you can come up with a solution to fix the problem. Also, you can read, run, nap, scream in a pillow and even do a little bit of meditating. When you do any of those things you can release anger and stress. You can also do things together, like coloring and playing basketball and baseball, because when you do things together you both can forget what you were fighting about and have fun. Another way is to do things that you like to do. What I like to do is basketball, softball, baseball, and my favorite thing to do is hunting. If you do things that you like to do, you will feel good. These are some ways you can solve your differences without yelling, screaming and hitting.

MADELYN LOUGHRY

My sister and I have been having lots and lots of disagreements. I said to my mom, "What can I do to stop us from fighting?" She gave us lots of ideas to help us from fighting. One is that we could take a walk together and that we also can play outside together. Also, she

said that we could take a nap. I said that will not work because we do not like to take naps. One more thing that she said was to take a walk away and to read a book. I tried all of those solutions and it worked! They all help us get along.

SILAS POLLOCK

There are lots of ways to solve differences. When I have a difference with someone, I usually walk away and a little later I talk it over. Sometimes when I am angry, I go take a nap or in the summertime I would go outside. Sometimes I just ignore the fight or problem. Also, I read a book. You can even take a bath. Some other things you can do are meditate or do some yoga. You can even punch a bag or scream into a pillow

to release stress or anger. Those are some things that you can do to calm down from a problem.

(Libby Smathers)

KENZIE KEITH

The best way to solve differences with someone is you can scream into a pillow, ignore them. Get a stress ball, or slime would work too. How about talking about it? Try doing yoga. Be fair, if you are fighting or arguing about a toy, put the toy away and find something else to do. If it is something you can split in half, split it in half. Those are some things that will help solve differences with someone.

CONNOR COMBS

When I get angry, I meditate for an hour. The best way I can solve differences

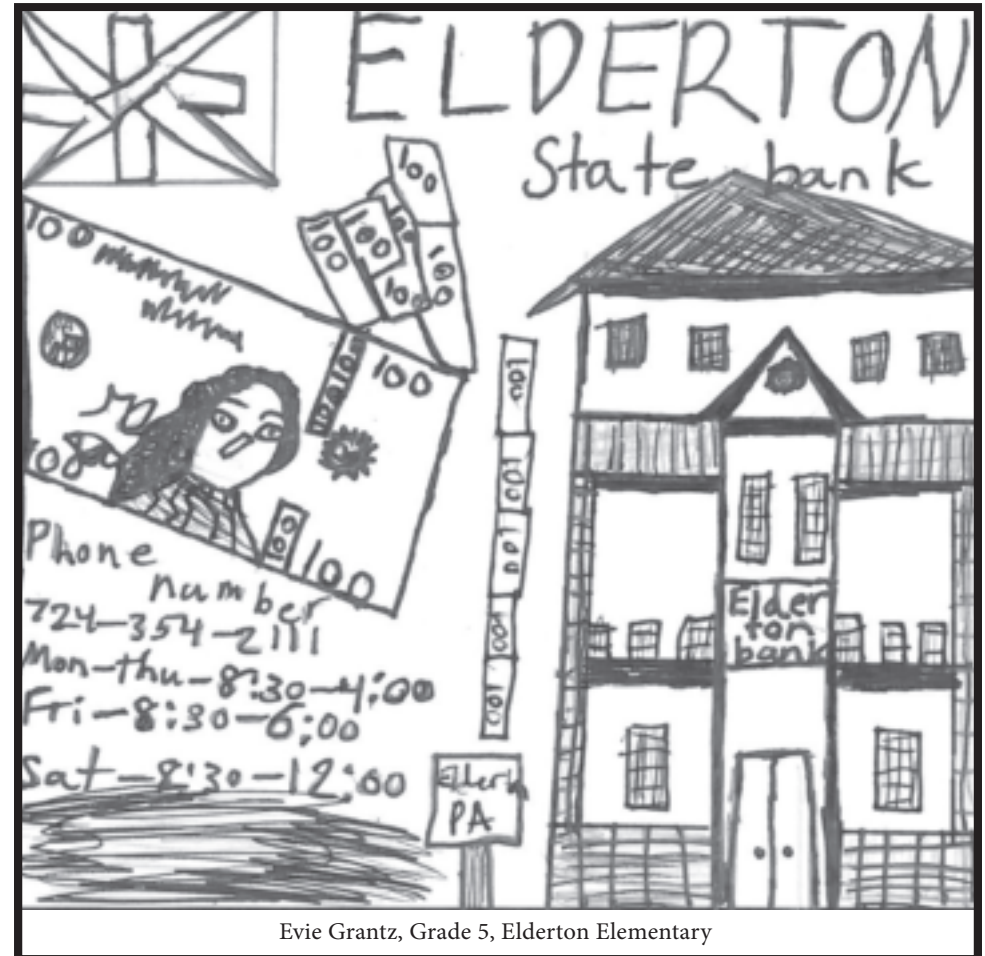
I have with someone are to change the subject or compromise.

I also try to stay calm when they get angry. If there is an argument, I will try to stop it. If me and my sister don't get along then I try to make a solution to the problem.

JACOB ARMSTRONG

What is the best way to solve differences you have with someone? I think you should be the bigger guy and do what you need to do. You could walk away. You could ignore it. You could also talk to a grownup, or talk about it later. You also can come up with a solution.

If I was really mad, I would push a punching bag. You could scream into a pillow, or you could meditate.



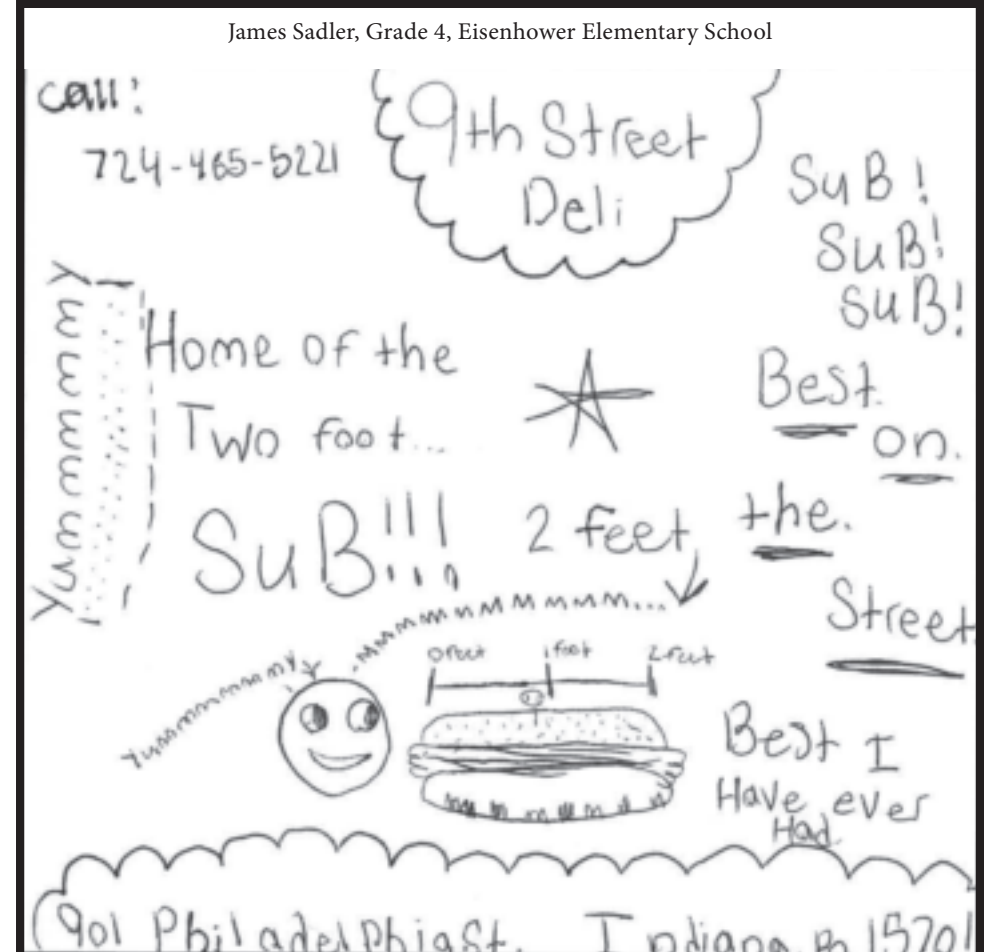
Evie Grantz, Grade 5, Elderton Elementary

Saturdays are leisurely! Our Leisure section is made for Saturdays.

PHOTOGRAPHY HONORABLE MENTIONS



At left, Madison Bence, Indiana Senior High School, Grade 11. Above, Danielle VanHorn, Indiana County Technology Center, Grade 12



PHOTOGRAPHY HONORABLE MENTIONS



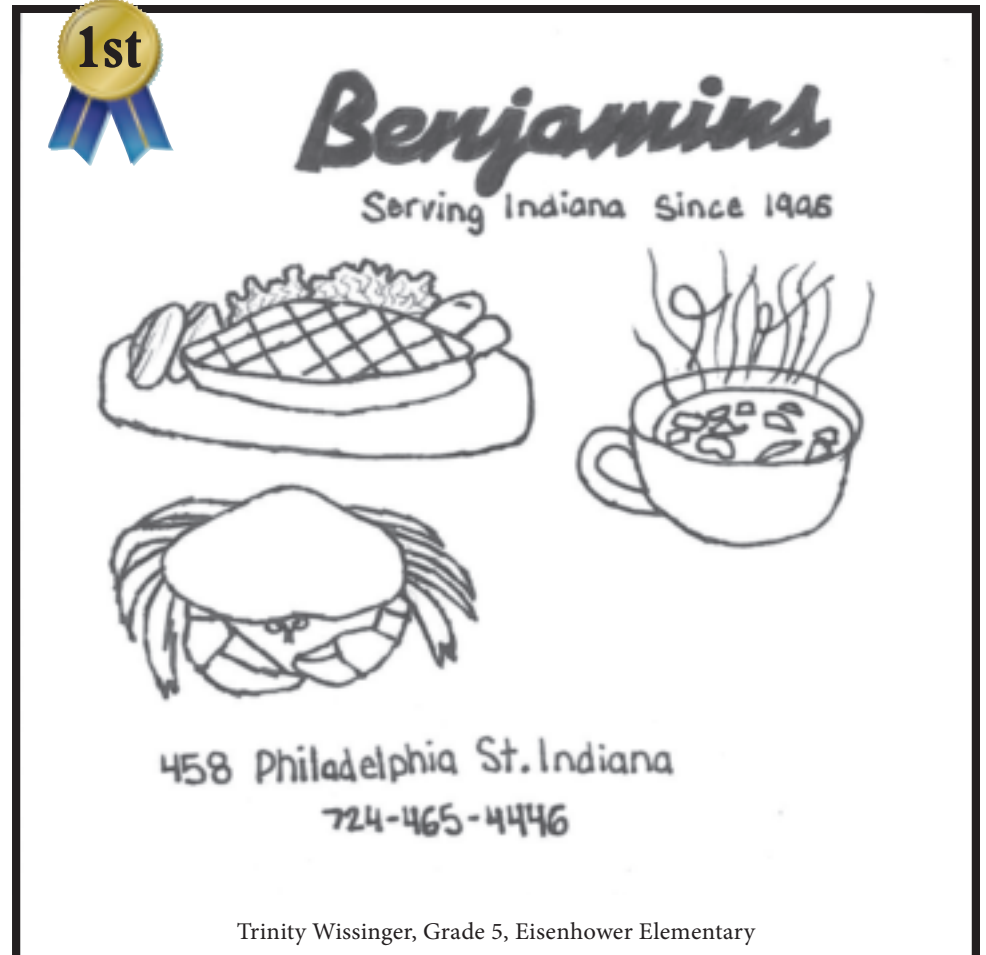
Brady Yard, Saltsburg High School, Grade 12



Brianna Sirochman, Indiana County Technology Center, Grade 12



Pazley Bradford, Grade 4, Northern Cambria Elem.



Trinity Wissinger, Grade 5, Eisenhower Elementary

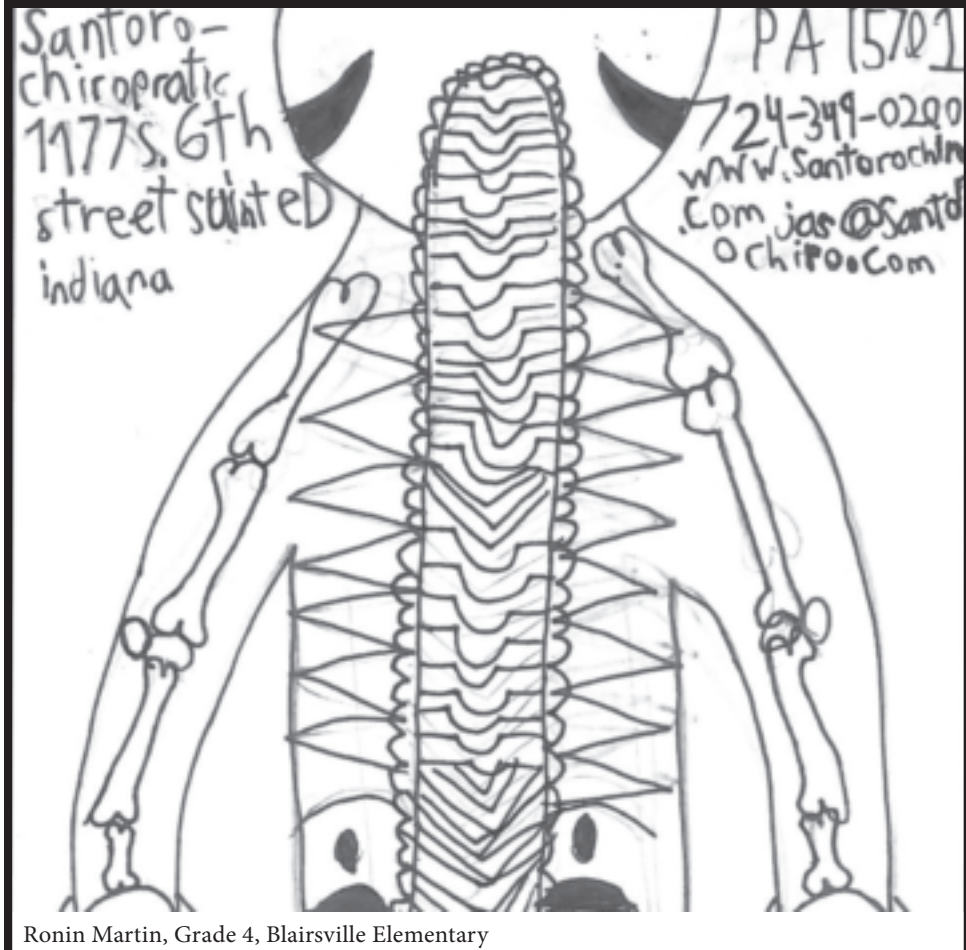
PHOTOGRAPHY HONORABLE MENTIONS



Gavin Prebish, Indiana Senior High School, Grade 12



Sarah Love, Indiana Senior High School, Grade 12

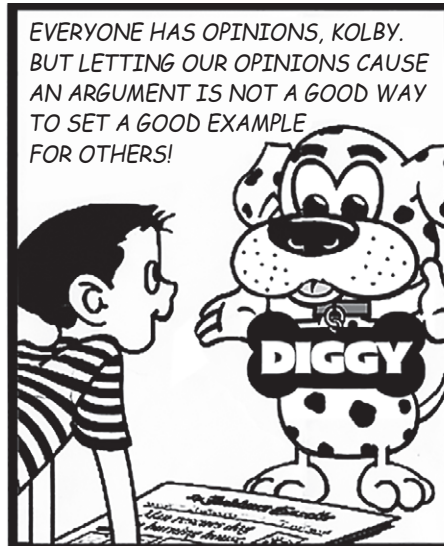


Ronin Martin, Grade 4, Blairsville Elementary

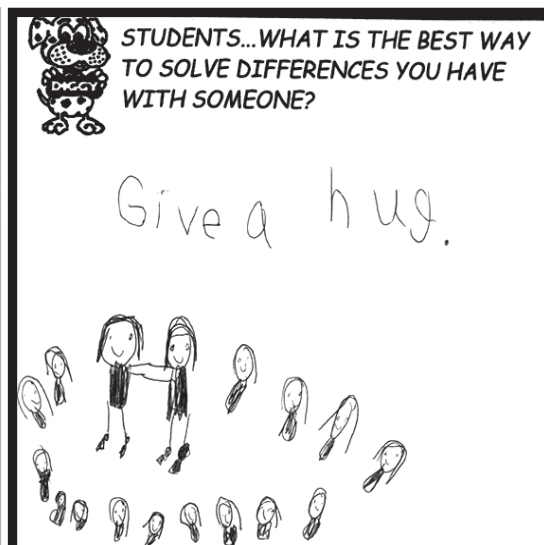
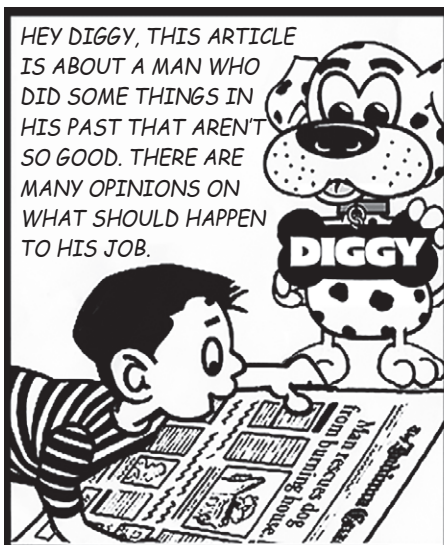


Giada Colinet, Grade 4, Blairsville Elementary

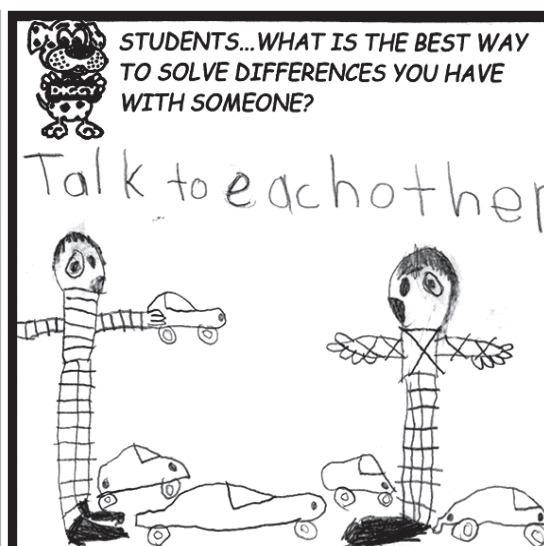
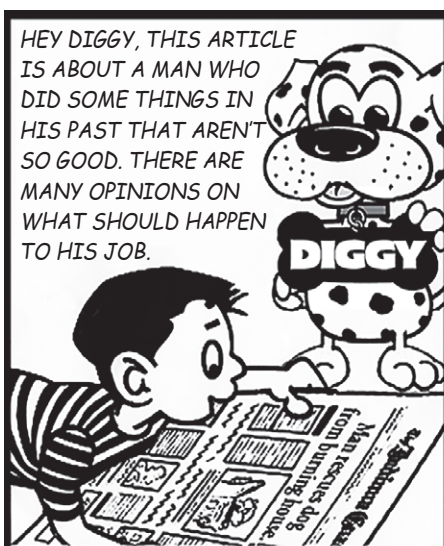
Kindergarten classic comic winners



EAVIONNA DAVIS
Calvary Baptist Academy

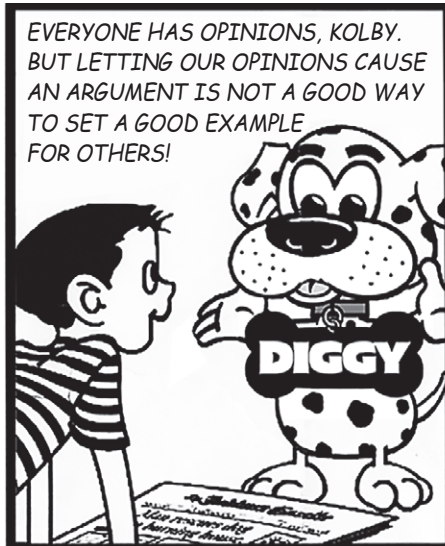


EMMA HOWELLS
Purchase Line Elementary

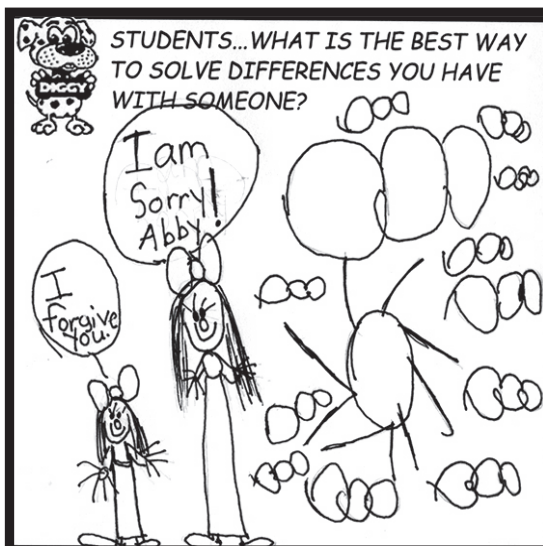
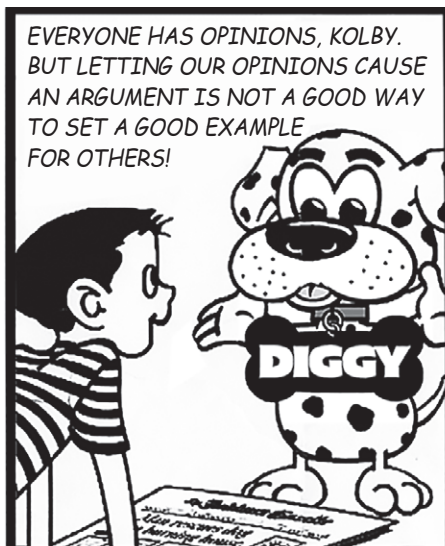
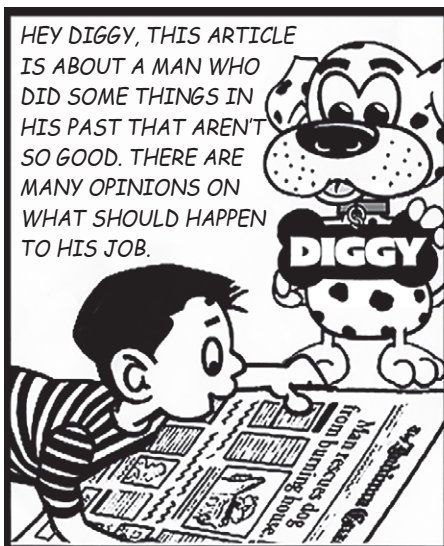


JEROD SANDEEN
Homeschool

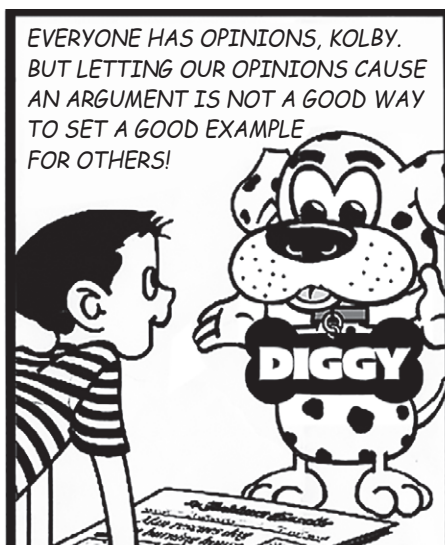
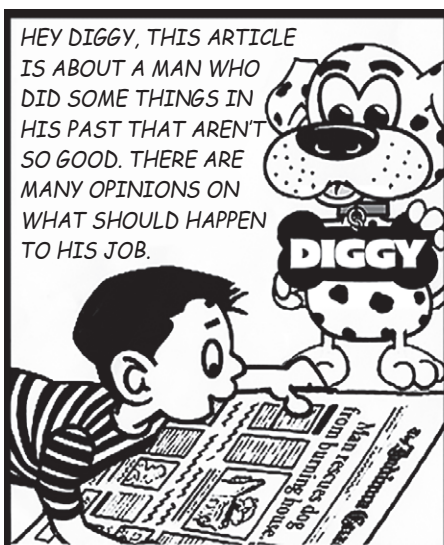
First-grade classic comic winners



CONNER UNRUE
Ben Franklin Elementary

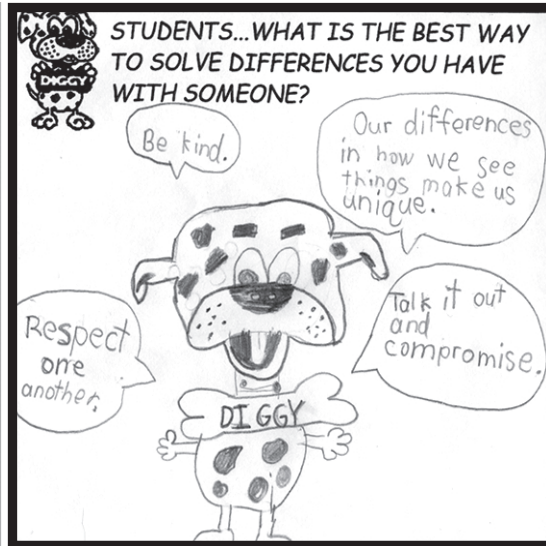
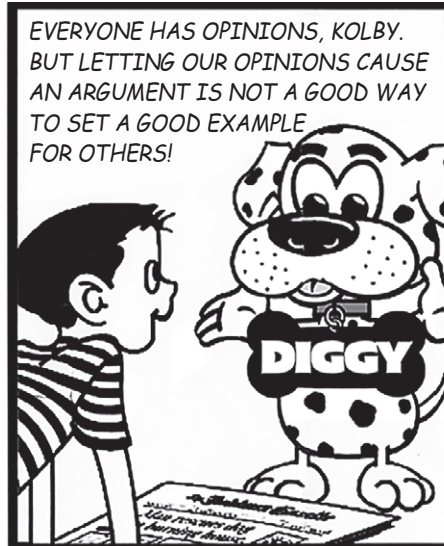


RAYA EDWARDS
Calvary Baptist Academy

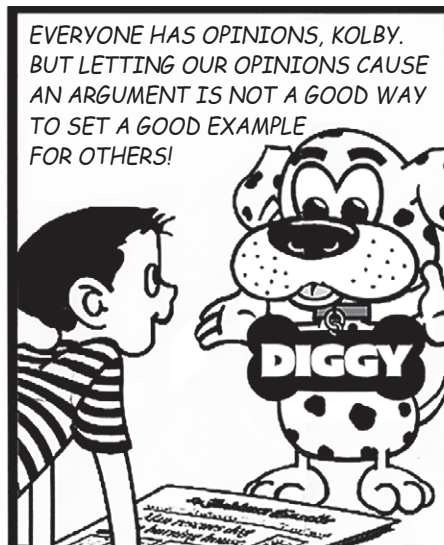
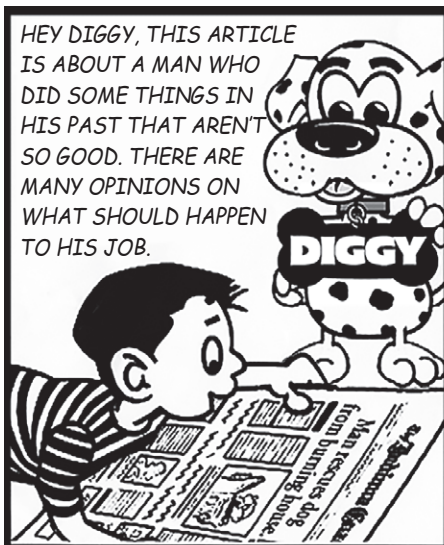


ABIGAIL SAUERS
Purchase Line Elementary

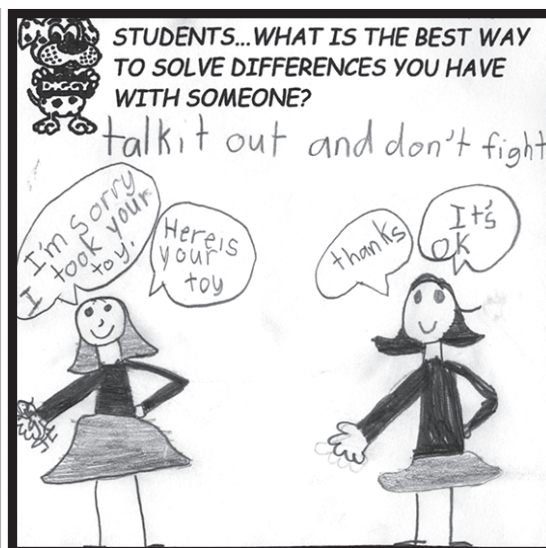
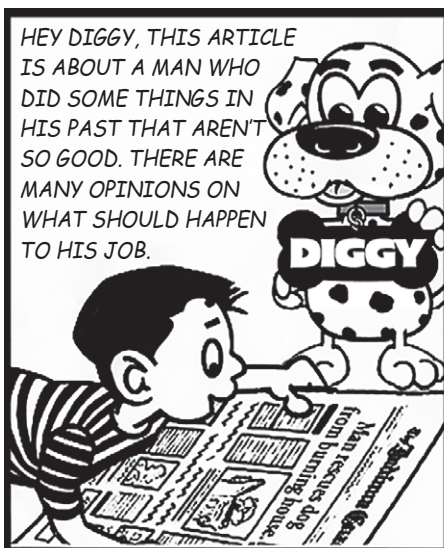
Second-grade classic comic winners



LAYLA SMOCHEK
Rayne Elementary



EMMA KASS
Ben Franklin Elementary



ADDISON HOWELLS
Purchase Line Elementary

THANK YOU

2021 N.I.E. PARTNERS

YOU help make this program a success!



- 9th Street Deli
- Affordable Interiors
- Allied Milk Producers
- Audiological & Speech Associates
- Benjamins
- Brush Valley Tire
- Cake Shotts
- Cavalancia Orthodontics



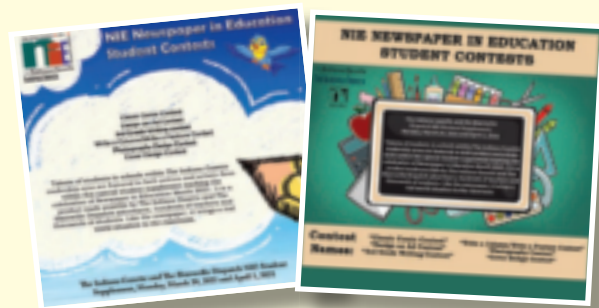
LEFT Cover Design Contest submission by Brianna Sirochman
RIGHT Cover Design Contest submission by Hailey Schrecengost

- Charlsons Furniture
- Colonial Motor Mart
- Colonial Toyota
- The Dan Smith Candy Company
- Delaney
- Diamond Drug
- Elderton State Bank
- Environmental Pest Management
- First Commonwealth Bank
- Fisher Furniture

- Freedom Chrysler Jeep Dodge Ram
- Glenn Bush Ford
- HobbySpeed.com
- Indiana Audiology
- Indiana County Chamber of Commerce
- Indiana County Humane Society
- Indiana County Solid Waste Authority
- Indiana Eye Care
- Indiana Floral
- Indiana Regional Medical Center (IRMC)
- InFirst Savings Bank
- Kits Brokerage
- Lias Tire
- Lucy Rae
- Luigi's Ristorante
- Luther Ford
- Mahoning Physical Therapy
- Mains Chiropractic
- Maple Valley Personal Care



LEFT Cover Design Contest submission by Rebecca George
RIGHT Cover Design Contest submission by Natali Brink



LEFT Cover Design Contest submission by Shylina Parson
RIGHT Cover Design Contest submission by Sophia Sigworth

- Marion Center Bank
- McDonald's
- Miller Pumping & Heating
- Mohawk Lanes
- Mosaic Wealth Consulting
- Naser Foods
- Oak Grove Realty
- Pudliners Country Corner
- Putt Real Estate
- RC Indoor Archery Range
- Rowley Family Chiropractic
- S&T Bank
- Safe Buy Home Inspection
- Santoro Chiropractic
- State Rep. Jim Struzzi
- Sue Hewitt Dance Studio
- Tate's Supermarket
- Tire Express Service Center
- Turnt Training Barrel Horses
- Upstreet Financial Advisors
- William G. Mechling Insurance Agency