



Ben's Pen

Fall/Winter Edition 2017 Vol. 2 Issue 1

a Publication by Franklin Middle students

WEB Leaders Ease the Transition to Middle School

by Abby Jefferys



As you may already know, WEB stands for Where Everyone Belongs. Our WEB program is designed to help the 5th grade students to feel welcome and get ready for their first year of middle school.

My experience as a WEB leader was the best. The first time we did an after-school activity was the Franklin Movie Night, which was so much fun. There were a lot of food trucks. My personal favorite was Lloyd's. The students were great. There were so many students there. It was a blast; the WEB leaders were working the games. There was pumpkin mini-golf, bowling, hula hoops, and tons more. I was working the pumpkin mini-golf game with my friend Sidney. We had a lot of fun. There were kids coming up and playing and they were so excited when they got the golf ball in the pumpkin. One person got a golf ball in a pumpkin's eye! It was so much fun to watch.

All the leaders got together with the students when we met last August. I am so glad that I got the chance to go and have fun with my friends and meet up with the 5th graders. If you are currently in 6th grade, I would highly recommend being a WEB leader for the incoming 5th graders next year.

I



My Heritage: India by Sriya Natarajan



Hey there! Whether you have a special name or a cool accent, we all have something unique and special about ourselves. For me, Sriya Natarajan, it is that my family is from a different country. My parents were born in India, and I have visited there many times. Being special in that way is very nice for me, and I embrace my heritage, even though I have a few quirks along the way.

The first thing people think about when they hear India is the Taj Mahal. But, there are many more interesting things.

The specific place that my family came from is Chennai. Chennai is in Tamil Nadu, India. What I feel is very unique about India is that it has **22** major languages, written in 13 different scripts, with over 720 dialects. That is very impressive to me. I myself speak Tamil and English, with a relative ability to write in Tamil.

India has many religious beliefs as well. We practice Polytheism, which means we believe in several gods. Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver, and Shiva the Destroyer and the Liberator. That is cool, and separates us from all the other cultures.

I am actually a vegetarian. Not all Indians are vegetarian, but Brahmins are, and I am one. We respect animals, and even pray to certain ones, like cows. The vegetarian diet is actually very healthy, and some people wonder about the protein intake. Nature has provided its own protein source that does not include murder of animals. Lentils are a great source of protein, and lentils are included in my diet and cooking.

I recently took a trip to India via the Emirates. It was a very pleasant flight. It is a bit humid in India, but it really depends on where you go. I got to travel to the tip of India, and to a few other places.

Cuisine! That is another really cool part of my culture. We make delectable sweets like Palkova, a milk sweet. We love to make chapati, made from flour. Sweet or savory, our food is delicious!

Culture for us is of utmost importance. We have plenty of fun, colorful festivals, like Diwali, the festival of light. This holiday is based on an old epic, where a god rescues a maiden from a demon. We light candles, make sweets, and adorn ourselves with new clothes and jewelry. It is very fun. We also have a holiday called Pongal, which is a harvest festival. We pray to the sun god and honor all the aspects and people who help grow food. We make a sweet and savory dish called pongal, and we perform pujas or rituals with cows to honor them.

We honor our history and heritage. There are many Hindu temples in the U.S., and we go to them.

You may ask, what makes our country and culture so unique. For one, the values we teach the young are important. We teach nonviolence, right action, seva or service, and going in the right path. Also, many concepts such as karma and reincarnation were developed by sages in India. Yoga was also started there. We are also part of the Non-Aligned Movement. In times of war, we do not pick sides. This is good.

So, as you can see, India and its many cultures and beliefs are very important to the world, and India itself is a beautiful place. I am proud to be an Indian.

Treats from Around the World

Enjoyed by the Multi-Cultural Club

by Blake Abbott



Have you ever wondered what the multi-cultural club is all about? I interviewed Mrs. Dawson, the club leader and one of the ENL (English as a New Language) teachers in our school. Here is what Mrs. Dawson had to say:

Q: What is the Multi-Cultural Club?

A; In the club, each month is spent exploring a new country or culture around the world. So far we have explored Mexico, where we made Guacamole, and then Italy, where we made a homemade pasta.

Q: What do you do in the club?

A: We do a variety of things like cooking, puzzles, and posters to show our learning. We meet people from around the world, listen to foreign music, and we also do arts and crafts.

Q: Why did you decide to make the club?

A: I feel that it is very exciting, unique and fun, and it is important to learn about other cultures, especially because America is a mixture of many cultures.

Q: What do you feel is important about it?

A: Seeing our similarities and celebrating our differences is very important to me.

Q: How can someone contribute to it?

A: Adults can share cultures and suggestions to us and promote cultural awareness, and students can contribute by actively participating in our activities and spreading positive cultural spirits.

Note from Ben's Pen: If you have some knowledge about a club or school sport, please consider writing about it so we can share your information.

5th Graders Experience "New Kid" at the Theater of Youth

by Eli North

The play *New Kid* was an interesting play. There were only 4 actors. The play was about a kid named Nicholas (Nick) coming from a different place called Homeland which was not in America. When he went to school in America he did not speak the same language as the other students. He had a hard time learning the language.

The other characters that are not from Homeland spoke gibberish so we would be in Nick's shoes, and we would understand what it feels like to try to learn a new language. Nick did not like trying to learn a new language, and trying to make new friends. His mom cheered him up and said you can learn English in one week, but it took him a little longer. His mom said you are going to like America, and it is going to get easier. Actually it was not so easy, especially in the beginning. There were many challenges ahead. I liked this play because it helped me to have an idea of what it feels like when you go to a new country and have to learn a new language, and a new way of doing things.



Students in Mrs. Majerski's, Mrs. Whitney's, and Miss Almeter's classes attend field trip to Old Fort Niagara

by Mrs. Zummo

The students, teachers, and support staff enjoyed fantastic fall weather as they walked around Old Fort Niagara, located in Youngstown, New York, on the shoreline of Lake Ontario. There were hands-on activities and live demonstrations. Old Fort Niagara includes 250 acres, with various buildings and facilities. If you have never been to Old Fort Niagara, it is definitely something to put on your bucket list. Visit <https://www.oldfortniagara.org/> for more information.



The Little Mermaid Jr.

The first performance will be for Elementary school on Wednesday, January 31.
The second performance will be a night performance on Thursday, February 1 at 7:00 pm.
The Middle school performance will be on Friday, February 2.
The last performance will be on Saturday, February 3 at 3:00 in the afternoon.

Come and enjoy this timeless tale!

Getting Ready for the Musical: The Little Mermaid Jr

by Myilah Baronecki

Getting ready for the musical is both fun and stressful. Having a few weeks to practice and put a show together takes hard work and responsibility. We have various meetings and rehearsals with cast. We will be able to get it all done including 3 groups of stage crew. It has been a real amazing experience being part of this production, when you get a main role it is a lot of preparation. I have the role of Ursula, who is one of the main characters. When you're done with the whole musical you are glad it is over, but then you think again and you wish that it wasn't over because we have become like a family, it is hard to leave each other because have come a long way, it is a moving experience that you will never forget.

Is your family starting to plan a vacation?

Read the articles below for some ideas for planning a trip.



Going Somewhere New

by Jacquelin Rodriguez

Two years ago I went to Ocean City, Maryland. We drove there. It took over an entire day. When we got there we got lost trying to find our hotel. When we found the hotel, it was HUGE! We had so much fun there. When we went to the beach we could not go in because there was a shark in the water. It was so cool I never saw a shark before. I almost lost my boogie board in the water. When we went home we watched a movie on my mom's computer. The next day we went to the pool, it was FREEZING! When we went back in we went by the heater to warm up. That night we went back to the pool but this time it was warmer. In the morning we went to "Ripley's Believe it or Not" (which had a fake shark made in the building). Inside, there was a car made of pennies. We actually saw a person with a split tongue (statue) that looked so cool. When we saw an alien statue we just stared at it. When we were packing up to go home I thought about the car made of pennies. It looked fantastic. I went somewhere new.

The warm weather and beaches: Boston vs. Virginia

by Sienna Peraza

If you prefer warm weather over super hot weather, and cities over suburban and rural places, you would probably prefer Boston. Boston is an amazing place that a lot of people like. One problem with Boston is that the beaches are populated and dirty, but there is a beach about an hour away that is very nice and clean even if the sea weed flowing in the water brushing on your legs is uncomfortable. If you prefer really hot places with sand that burns your feet you will like Virginia. Virginia has beautiful beaches with medium sized waves. Be prepared for the steaming hot weather and bring something to cover the heat when you are laying down on the beach if not you will probably have a sunburn. This is why you would pick Virginia over Boston or Boston over Virginia.

Cat and Dog Differences

by Sienna Peraza

Just imagine if your family was trying to decide whether to get a cat or a dog. How would you be able to choose? Here is some advice for you in case that ever happens.

If you don't like having to give your pet attention all day long or have all your stuff on the floor when you get home, you should consider a cat. Cats are calm creatures if you don't torture or scare them a lot. They will probably come and lay down on your lap. Cats are lazy food eaters when they grow up to about 2 to 3 years-old. But when they are kittens they will play.

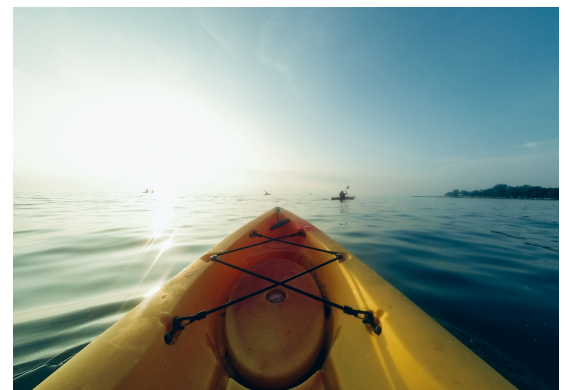
Do you want a pet that will play with you no matter how old they are? If you don't mind having a pet clawing at your door when you come home, you should consider a dog. Dogs will literally play with you during their entire lifetime. Dogs will destroy your house. I have a dog, and when we get home I see all of my stuff on the floor. Some things even have bite marks on them. However your dog will be so excited to see you that you will soon forget about any damage that was caused. Good luck in choosing a pet that is the best fit for your family.



Trying Something New

by Jacquelin Rodriguez

During the summer I went kayaking. Kayaking is something I have never done before. Kayaking is paddling on the water in a kayak. The first time I got in the kayak I fell out of it. The next time I got back in the kayak and the waves were crazy! Which made it very hard to control. I managed to not fall out but I kept getting stuck in the rocks. This experience was actually a lot of fun. Everyone I was with had a wonderful time. But sadly we had to leave since the weekend was over. Now I love to kayak, and we want to do it all the time. I had learned something new.



Students share their creative writing

by Blake Abbott

Have you ever wanted to be able to fly, be a secret agent or be the most popular person in your school? Sorry to break it to you, but chances are most of those aren't actually possible, but the closest thing you can get is simply making it up in a story. I'm Blake Abbott, and I am here to tell you the benefits of writing stories.

Writing stories can not only help your creativity, it can also help you express yourself, and in some cases, it can even help you haul through some difficult times. This is why I am sharing my creation with you about an extraordinary eighth grader named Alex.

Here is the beginning of my story; [the complete version is available in FMS Library](#).

It was a blazing June day in Phoenix, Arizona. The school fair was buzzing with cheap activities and stands supervised by teachers giving out warm water to the children. There was face painting, movie showings, popcorn, bounce houses, and all to celebrate the last day of school. That day it seemed like nothing could bring it down.

But boy, was it hot.

I remember the sun beating on my forehead. The breeze barely existing in the blue sky. Clouds speeding quickly through the atmosphere. The ground was dry, and even though everyone wanted to run around aimlessly, they knew their bodies wouldn't care for it. It was everyone against the heat.

One of my friends, Thomas, came to greet me with a smile.

"Hey, Alex!" he said. "Isn't this great?"

I had to admit it was pretty cool they set all of this up for us before vacation. There were tents and streamers hanging from the spotlights.

"I love all of the festivity and games!" he continued. "It was well worth the whole year."

"I guess you're right." I responded. Looking around, I began to remove myself from the conversation. It was getting hotter. The heat was almost unbearable. "Doesn't it seem a little too hot to enjoy all of this?"

"I don't think so . . ." Thomas responded. He was quiet for a moment, then he looked me in the eyes. "Okay, maybe a little."

"Listen, this is great and all but, don't you want to go inside to play dodgeball in the gym?"

"I guess." Thomas glanced towards the door. The concrete ramp was covered by a tree and the large brick walls that made up the school. "Oh yeah, and don't try the cotton candy." He got closer. "It tastes like dish soap . . ."

At the end of the day, we all met in the cafeteria to roast marshmallows around a small fire that the teachers had made. We went grade by grade, and when they picked eighth grade, Thomas and I rushed up the front.

Something looked funny about this fire, though. It looked more blue than red, but not too blue. It sizzled louder. I focused it down, It seemed to get hotter and hotter. The more I looked at it the more I kept focusing on it. Then . . .

Ben's Pen now has some helpful advice from the Falcon Friend. If you have a specific question for the Falcon Friend, put it in a sealed envelope labeled "Falcon Friend: school newspaper" and bring it to Mrs. Zummo during the newspaper club meetings, which take place on most Thursdays in the back of the library after-school. A few questions will be selected to go in our newspaper. Priority will be given to questions or issues that are common for some students.

Dear Falcon Friend,

I have a problem with getting projects done on time. I get most of my homework done on time, but when it comes to projects, I always wait until the night before. What should I do?

-The Project Procrastinator

Dear Project Procrastinator,

One of the best things that you can do is write the project down in your agenda. When your teacher tells you about the project, immediately take out your agenda and write down the day the project is due. Then go to the week before it is due in your agenda and write it again. That way you will open your agenda and see that the project is due in one week.

Another thing that you can try is take post-it notes and write when your project is due on them. Put them somewhere that you will look every day like your room, or your locker. I hope this helps.

-Falcon Friend



Franklin Funnies

