

Give creativity a hand



Simple elements make a landscape

Heather McKay, 17, shows that a little light and some imagination can go a long way in producing a clever photograph. The image earned the Buckingham Charter Magnet High School student an honorable mention in the photo-journalism category of The Reporter's Campus Star student journalism competition. Heather was a student in Jared Austin's class at the time she entered this into the competition.

Improving access to Web sites

By Alexia Jentgen
2nd Place, Feature Writing
Division: 5-6

Are you having trouble with a subject in school? Well, thanks to Barry Rico, a digital education specialist, some of your troubles may soon be solved.

This past year, he was hired as a digital education specialist for the Vacaville Unified School District. For about 10 years before, he was a digital education specialist, and worked as the computer lab teacher at Cooper Elementary School, fixing computers and creating the school's Web site.

He builds Web sites as a hobby. Some of the Web sites he maintains are his parents' art Web sites, Ed Finkas' photography Web site, the Vacaville Unified School District Web Index and the Vacaville Public Education Foundation site.

Do the names InfoCentre, Ed1stop, Edusoft, Renplace, and the VUSD Web Index ring a bell? Those are the sites you can visit while you're on the Browns Valley Gateway page. All the computers in each classroom have a link to get onto the Browns Valley Gateway.

Other than those sites, the new Gateway page also has a page where teachers can read their e-mail, and a page showing the list of upcoming events in the school district.

Mr. Rico said, "I thought that it would be much easier on students and teachers if those sites were in an easy place to find."

The first Gateway page took eight hours to make. After the first one was done, he said the rest were made by choosing different colors and the banner for each school. Many of the links also changed for each school so that each link would be connected to the correct AR quiz list, Info Centre library, library card catalog, and the school home page.

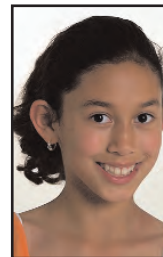
Mr. Rico updates the main links and design on each page but the school's librarian, principal or secretary can change the text in the school news scrolling text box in the middle of the page.

The VUSD Web Index has its sites sorted by school subject, so students and teachers won't have to spend a lot of class time searching the Internet for answers.

The Ed1Stop portal lets students and teachers access some sites that would normally cost money to visit. The list of those sites for students, are Brain-Pop, AP Multimedia Archive, United Streaming, and Recipes4Success. There are about 12 other sites, but those anyone could visit without going to the Ed1Stop Portal. While in Ed1Stop, you can access thousands of video clips, images and articles.

Ed1Stop also has what are called Student Bookmarks that can be created by teachers. The Student Bookmarks direct students to certain Web sites, which can be accessed at any time on the Internet by using the teacher's "student" password. The Ed1Stop Portal is the only part of the Browns Valley Gateway that can be accessed at home.

To get to Ed1Stop, you go to www.ed1stopnet, and then you type in your password. Now you're ready to start learning!



Alexia

Family helps her cope with MS

By Mariellen Hofland
Honorable Mention, Feature Writing
Division: 5-6

Multiple Sclerosis, also known as MS, is one of many terrible diseases like cancer.

Sometimes it gets bad enough that your arms and legs won't move, and if they do move, it's just barely.

"The nerve from the brain to the muscle is damaged from the MS. So, in other words, the brain can't talk to certain muscles," says Jackie Hofland, a 15-year victim of this disease. "MS isn't the same for everyone though, because it effects everyone differently."

Mrs. Hofland found out that she had MS in May of 1992. She knows at least seven or eight other people who share this day-to-day trouble, and it isn't easy.

"It's hard to move my arms and legs, and my muscles and body are spastic. My body tires out easily too," she explains.

Mrs. Hofland hates other people having

Little things can help make a big difference

to help her so often. It's hard to do much by herself though, so she is thankful for all of the help her family and the other people around her give. She also hates getting tired so quickly, as well as not being able to walk and drive.

Mrs. Hofland, and most other people with MS, lose important abilities, such as being able to reach for things and staying awake while working.

"It's even getting hard to lift things with my arms, and it is hard to get in and out of bed, or even turn over," she states.

Mrs. Hofland's family says Jackie still thinks that she can make a difference everywhere, or at least with her family. She tries her best to prepare decent meals for her family, keep her house clean, and helps them with things like homework.

Mrs. Hofland's MS affects her whole

family. Her husband, two children, mother-in-law, and father-in-law are constantly pitching in to help a little bit here and there. Some of just the smallest things help Jackie, including dressing her, helping her cook, reaching for things, opening envelopes, writing down phone numbers or notes, transferring her from place to place, and such. Even small prepared meals help.

"I'm not asking for a pity party, but like my daughter says, the reality is, it's not a fairy tale, things don't get better like magic!" Mrs. Hofland exclaims. So, for now, she intends to try to look on the bright side and see that at least things aren't any worse.

If you would like to learn more about MS, or find help for a friend or family member, go to: www.nationalmssociety.org or call: 1-800-FIGHT-MS (1-800-344-4867).

The author is a sixth-grader at Tremont Elementary School in Dixon. She is a student in Peggy Stone's class.

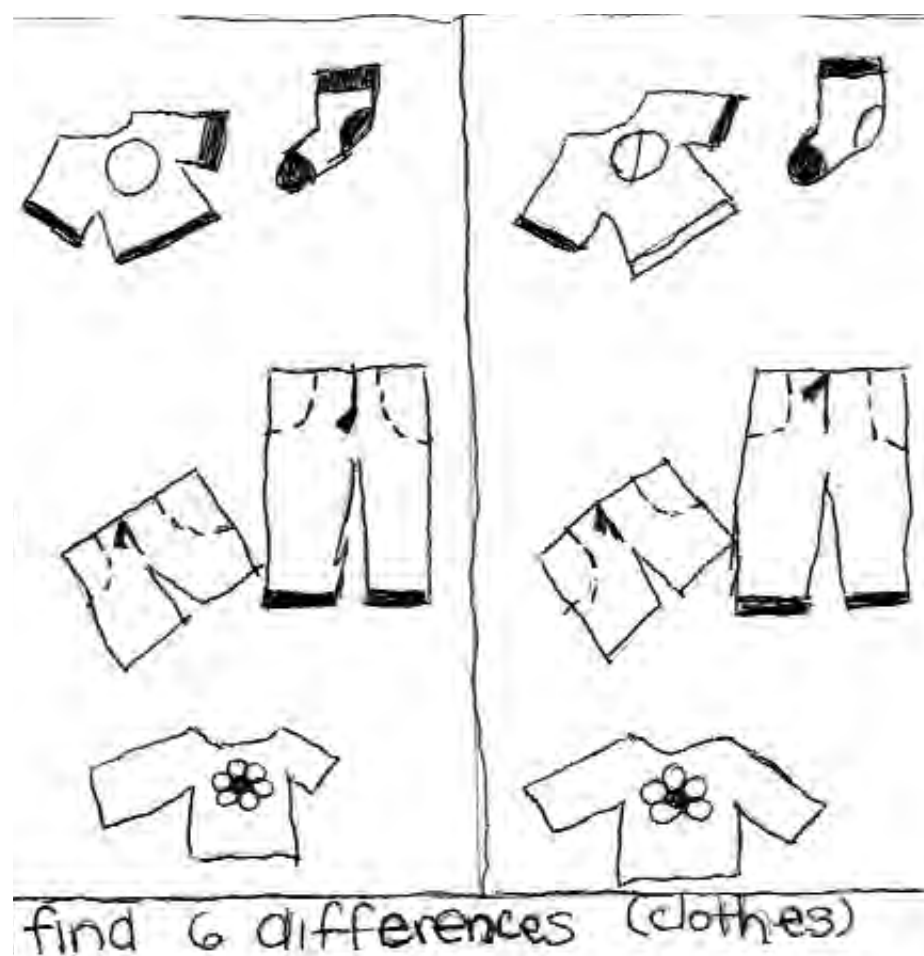
The author was a sixth-grader in Vicki Nixon's class at Browns Valley Elementary in Vacaville when she submitted this essay.

Design-an-Ad winner



This advertisement for Kappel & Kappel Inc. earned Kyle Wren an honorable mention in the Design-an-Ad contest in The Reporter's Campus Star student journalism competition. Kyle was an eighth-grader at Vaca Peña Middle School in Vacaville at the time he entered this in the contest.

Puzzles, Games, Comics winner



This puzzle designed by Brittani Klindworth earned the Notre Dame School student an honorable mention in the Puzzles, Games and Comics contest of The Reporter's Campus Star student journalism competition. Brittani was a student in Mrs. Jenkins' class when she entered this in the contest.