

Write what you know

Gill students put thoughts about life onto paper



Keen interest: Heather Kress, a transfer student from Livonia, started at Gill the same week the writing program began.

*Life is a neverending waterfall.
Life is a piece of yummy bubble gum.
Life is a tree bent over for shade.
Life is a beachball cooling off in the middle of an ocean.
Life is a shining star in the middle of the earth.*

BY TOM BAER
STAFF WRITER

Yes, that's life as expressed — in writing — by Lauren Monterey, a fourth-grader at Gill Elementary School in the Farmington District.

Lauren and hundreds of her schoolmates were thinking about life and logging the results last week, as the entire school participated in the inaugural Writing Fair.

The event, sponsored by the school PTA, featured talks and workshops by children's author Carol Farley, book illustrator Linda Snavely and poet Therese Becker.

"The children have just been immersed in it," said Elaine Carlson, media specialist at Gill. She added that a week-long writing program, one of the school's "important goals," was popular with the youngsters.

"They've really taken to it," Carlson said. "They've gone home and written reams. And they've really taken to these people (guests). They applaud when one of them walks into a classroom."

Of course, children in the lower grades are too young to write, but they still participate by telling what they see in their hands. Other create and describe new animals such as a "dogasauri." The upper levels concentrate on the senses.

In Gloria Poehlman's fifth-grade classroom, author Carol Farley asks students for examples of similes, those figures of speech comparing two unlike things. "Happy as a jackal laughing at



Expert advice: Above, author Carol Farley encourages Nicholas Zyrar in Lynn Gumas' class. Mark Wilson (left) is also hard at work. At left, book illustrator Linda Snavely draws.

a deer," suggested one student. "As old as my great grandpa who's 93," added another. "As angry as my dad when he wakes up in the morning," said still another.

Said Farley to the kids, "It's fun to do similes because it makes you think. I like it when kids think."

Farley, who comes from Higgins Lake in northern Michigan, has been writing children's books since 1969. One of her better-known works is "The Garden Is Doing Fine."

Writing takes the same determination, skill and luck as penning lines for adults.

"I revise and revise and revise," Farley said. "You have to remember to look at the world through a child's eyes."

Well, see the world through Gill student Nick Pituch's eyes: *Life is a football game and I'm the only one on my team.
Life is a Halloween costume that you can't get out of.
Life is a mountain and you can't get to the top.*

Church to break new ground

Antioch Lutheran Church in Farmington Hills will celebrate Earth Week by breaking ground for a new wing and renovation of the existing church.

On Sunday, April 25, at 9:45 a.m. the entire Sunday school and both worship congregations will meet to parade around the outside of the church.

Leaders are the pastors, the Revs. Gary D. Johnson and Peggy A. Rose. Stops will be made at seven sites to turn soil. At the various sites diggers will include all children (with sand shovels) and youth, a charter member, and choir, evangelism, prayer, social ministry, and women's representatives.

Antioch, at the corner of 13

Mile and Farmington roads, has outgrown its present facility, the pastors say. Plans are drawn for additional classrooms, a larger fellowship hall and kitchen, and more sanctuary seating, as well as other changes.

The public is invited to attend the ground-breaking ceremony at 9:45 a.m. and worship at 11 a.m.



Proud artist: Canton Township resident Connie Lucas displays her painting which won first place in the most recent Farmington Artists Club Show.

Art club readies for spring show

Connie Lucas of Canton Township was the first-prize winner in the Farmington Art Club Fall Show.

Her painting is an example of the artwork available in the PAC spring show and sale to be held May 14-18 at the Spicer House in Heritage Park in Farmington Hills.

An opening reception is scheduled for 7 p.m. Thursday, May 13. At a time of life when many people become grandparents, Lucas started college and received her degree. She then went on to complete her master of arts in painting at Eastern Michigan University. It took her a total of 15 years to earn her degrees.

Lucas' work — "Threads of Memory" — was inspired by a drawing and art history trip she took to complete her master's degree in Italy. She saw a small mask shop in Florence that intrigued her. A man and his wife made hand-crafted masks, which they created from paper mache and hand-painted.

The masks have a medieval and Renaissance flavor that is unique. The border of postcards is from actual art works seen by Lucas on her trip.

The written postcards are of her personal experiences while there. The work is created in the de-

manding medium of watercolor. The work is rich with many layers relating to art history and visual play of elements within the composition between the masks and ribbon weaving throughout the work.

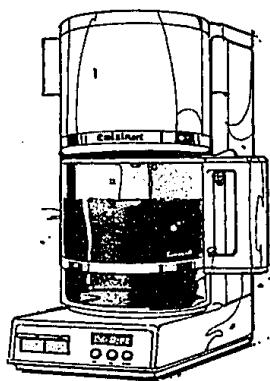
Lucas has been a longtime member of the Farmington Artists Club, Michigan Watercolor Society, Detroit Artists Market, and Ann Arbor Women Painters. She also teaches watercolor.

Her work is in many collections throughout the United States. She has shown her work in major cities statewide and also nationally and internationally.

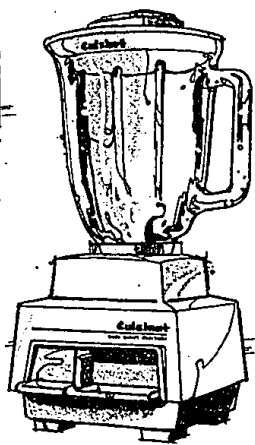
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