



FINAL 4E
BLACK



FINAL 4E
CYAN



FINAL 4E
MAGENTA



FINAL 4E
YELLOW

NATURALLY CREATIVE

Students have their own designs on nature

*NATURALLY CREATIVE, FROM 1E

Arts Council, has served as a Challenge judge for four years.

The plant essays are "full of exuberance" and "so spirited," she says. "We look for students to be genuinely creative but also they need to understand what a plant is."

She and the other judges may be awestruck at what they find.

Veronica Davila of Aventura City of Excellence School invented the caramel flowers. Tahimi Perez-Burroto of Archimedean Middle Conservatory dreamed up the ocean-dwelling Aqua Marine plant, and Stephanie Reyes from Jose Marti Middle conjured the Medical Cactus to which she gave the botanical name *Medicus aculeata* ("aculeata" means "with prickles").

Rosa Acosta Sampson's mother and grandmother also are named Rosa, and her mother grows orchids, so Sampson, 12, combined the rose and the orchid to create the Orchirose, with a center of burgundy and pink and petals that change from light pink to the whitest white. "This new hybrid is made to survive any environment (except temperatures below 34 degrees Fahrenheit or above 110 degrees Fahrenheit)," she wrote.

LEARNING EXPERIENCE

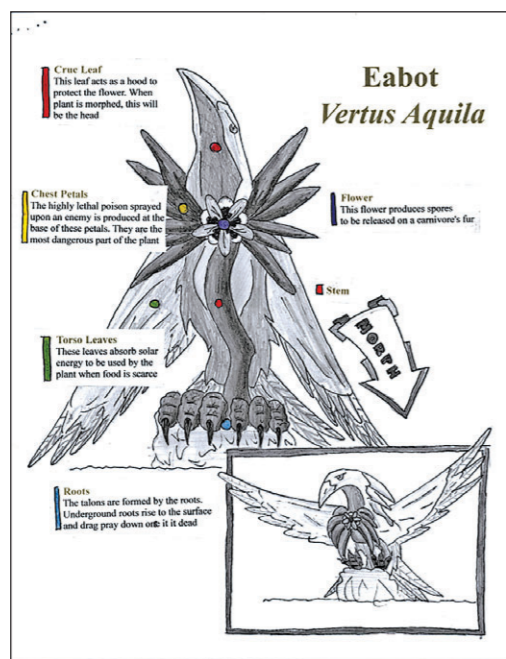
Acosta Sampson, in the seventh grade, wrote her essay in the Richmond Heights Middle School literary arts class, which participated in the Challenge event. She liked drawing the plant best but, she said, "I still liked writing because I learned about plants, and science is one of my favorite subjects."

Other imaginative entries include a cactus that grows leaves to shade itself; a fruit tree that combines flavors of strawberry, blueberry, boysenberry, raspberry, cranberry and blackberry; a fern



PETER ANDREW BOSCH/HERALD STAFF

INSPIRATION KNOCKS: Alan Aquayo found his inspiration at the movies, Griselda Torres closer to home. His Eabot plant can take the form of a predatory eagle. Hers feeds on everyday garbage, reducing pollution and slowing global warming.



able to survive in the Sahara Desert.

The sixth, seventh and eighth graders had to make up a scientific name and describe the plant's habitat, tell how it acquires food and defends itself. They were told to describe special adap-

tations and tell how the plant reproduces. They also were to include a drawing.

Annie Dheng, 12, from Youth Co-op Charter school, invented the Locking Feather Lilies, *Lilium Penna defendo*. Its petals, like feathers, attract birds that eat the berries

the plant produces. The birds then spread the seeds through their droppings.

"If anything harmful approaches, [the flower] quickly locks itself. The sepals are smooth, which makes it harder for the predator to bite," Dheng

describes. "When the predator is away, the 'cage' opens up to let the sun shine in."

Dheng, who lives in Hialeah, is in the gifted class at Youth Co-op, where teacher Carolina Hernandez says, "I thought this was a great way to bring together language art skills and art plus science." Before designing her lilies, Dheng said she "knew the simple basic stuff about plants, like they need water and to eat food." Her only experience growing a plant was in the second grade, when she grew a kidney bean for class.

At Kinloch Park Middle School, where the entire school participated in the Design a Plant contest, Griselda Torres created *Detritus transformis*, or Garbage Miracle plant. While she grows a few houseplants, Torres, 15, said the inspiration for her plant came from the fact that her family — two sisters, a little brother and her parents — fill a full bag of garbage every day. "I thought there's just so much garbage," Torres said.

Torres' plant obtains nutrients from garbage because it grows in dumps and landfills. It also neutralizes the smell and cleans the air, reducing pollution and slowing global warming.

Alan Aquayo, also of Kinloch Park, came up with a transformer plant after seeing a Transformer movie. Aquayo's *Verto aquila*, the eagle transformer, comes in four he-man versions in addition to the eagle, called Eabot. There's Berot, a bear transformer; Leot, lion; Planot, a plant, and Humbot, human. His plants transform into animals as a defense mechanism "in just under three seconds." The plants also have leaves that serve as solar panels to acquire energy when food is scarce.

Carol Peckins, media specialist for Kinloch, has been coach and cheerleader for the school's participation in

the Fairchild Challenge. Kinloch has been the top-scoring middle school two years in a row, and the outdoor tables and benches near the school's butterfly garden were purchased with their award money.

Aquayo, 13, and in the eighth grade, researched carnivorous plants, said he "got interested in plants eating animals" and created his transformer plant. He wants a career in the arts, he said. "I draw a lot. I started drawing when I was 3," he said. "My mom got me a composition notebook. I guess she wanted me to write, but I started drawing instead."

KILLER DESIGNS

A fair number of the made-up plants turned out to be carnivorous. The *Duo-carnivoro-photo lilopado* adjusts to different water levels in the Everglades in addition to being carnivorous (by Kea Schwarz, Glades Middle), while the *Saracina muricator*, or Mice Chomper, tricks mice into falling into a pitcher of digestive fluids by disguising the fluids as seeds and kernels (from Karen Burgos, Glades Middle).

Matthew Elmore, who attends Devon Aire K-8 Center, imagined a worm-buster tomato, whose petals close and eat pests. "Watch out hornworms! Be afraid fruit worms! Sayonara slugs!"

The Everglades Bee Exterminator comes with a story written by Matthew Zabelinski of Devon Aire. The story is this: It was discovered by Charles J. Warner, who walked 18 miles into the Everglades while hunting. The carnivorous plant lives on mosquitoes, bees, grasshoppers, beetles and flies. The plant has appeared on *Oprah*, *Nightline*, *60 Minutes* and *20/20*. Warner was not so lucky. He died on Jan. 19, 2006, "shortly after his scientific find by touching the plant's stem without wearing gloves."

POP CULTURE

(Anti)social networking sites are catching on

*SNUBSTER, FROM 1E

social networking sites.

"More people I didn't really know were putting me

on their Facebook friends list," Choung says. "I hate the awkward social situation that is created by becoming 'friends' with someone online

that you barely know in person, but obviously a lot of people thrive on it.

"What puzzles me even more than these 'friend col-

lections' is all the effort to create 'personal profiles' and photos carefully picked and crafted to create a shiny persona online for all your new Internet friends to admire."

There's nothing shiny and friendly about Enemylist and Snubster, both of which, ironically, can also be accessed as applications on Facebook.

Snubster's litany of kvetches and snide remarks ranges from the obvious (President Bush) to the seemingly innocuous (people who floss at stoplights). Besides Bush, who's No. 1, the five most snubbed people or things include Scientologists, emo kids, MySpace and Paris Hilton.

Some get mightily spe-

Snubster's snide remarks range from the obvious (President Bush) to the seemingly innocuous (people who floss at stoplights).

cific, though. For example, a user named Meredith put "Kym" on notice because "She hasn't sent me more than one weekly e-mail although she promised to send me more this year yet still will use work as an excuse and I don't want to hear it."

OK, then. Choung says he had hoped social networking sites could have evolved into more meaningful dialogue.

"I just don't get it," he says. "It's the year 2008 — I thought the Internet could do

better than this. Ultimately, what are these social networking sites? A better way for teens to send smiley faces? A new way to anonymously snoop on people?"

And what of Snubster? Well, Choung thinks the negativity can be cathartic.

"A lot of time's it is liberating when you get to just vent about something that grinds your gears," he says. "And when people make connections with other people based on these real-life observations, I think it's something special."

IN MY OPINION

Music — the universal language

*ANA, FROM 1E

know does not require some highfalutin' debate about great work withstanding the test of time. More importantly: Won't the mp3 technology be a bit outdated in 2439? Do the residents of the star system own antennas? Do they have the ability to decrypt the format? Can they speak English? And if there's a problem, can they phone a call center in India for tech support?

Of course, these details are entirely superfluous when you consider the intent behind NASA's effort.

"At the moment we are sending up Morse code as a way of contacting aliens," Beatles historian Martin Lewis told the BBC, after securing permission to transmit the music into deep space. "Maybe we should

send them something a little more cheery."

Across the Universe isn't particularly cheery, I don't think, but it was, in its day and maybe now, too, something of a peace anthem. It's also a personal favorite of the Deep Space Network's program executive, a Fab Four fan.

To commemorate the event, Paul McCartney penned a short salutation to his new audience: "Send my love to the aliens. All the best, Paul." Yoko Ono, John Lennon's widow, gushed that it was the "beginning of a new age." Apple Records approved because it is "always looking for new markets."

Hmm. Is space the next China? Can we beam reruns of *Seinfeld* next?

In any event, despite some nagging doubts, or maybe

because of them, I braved the elements one night — it was a balmy 73 degrees in Miami — to imagine the Beatles' words floating way, way out there in space. NASA had asked fans to play the song at the same time the agency beamed it to the stars. To create a harmonic convergence, you see.

I did not detect any particular sort of harmony, but I couldn't stop the catchy chorus from looping over and over in my head: *Nothing's going to change my world, nothing's going to change my world.*

Yeah, right. I think we're being a teensy bit disingenuous thinking nothing will change the Polaris market if John Lennon ever makes it across space.

Then again, you and I won't be around to find out about it.

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