

FINAL 1E  
BLACK



FINAL 1E  
CYAN



FINAL 1E  
MAGENTA



FINAL 1E  
YELLOW

3E OPERA DISTINGUISHES ITSELF FOR DISTINGUISHED VISITOR

5E TWO CHRISTINES GRACE FLORIDA STAGES

# TROPICAL LIFE Family & Values

The Miami Herald



SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2008 | EDITOR: TERESA MEARS tmeas@MiamiHerald.com | 305-376-3674 or 954-764-7026 ext. 3674 ND

## IN MY OPINION

### Music now really is the universal language

Some of us hum along to the radio while driving. Some of us sing in the shower. And a select few dare to warble to strangers during karaoke night at the neighborhood watering hole.

If we are ambitious (or delusional), we pine for a chance on *American Idol*. That's the Big Time. But I've never met a singer who dreamed of an intergalactic audience. Apparently we've been dreaming too small.

As you read this, the Beatles are singing in space. This week NASA beamed the group's 1968 song *Across the Universe* into the nether reaches of our heavens. Transmitted over the space agency's Deep Space Network, the song's trip marks several anniversaries: the 50th birthday of NASA.

The 45th of the network, which is a collection of antennas around the world that transmits and receives signals from distant stars. And of course, the 40th anniversary of the recording of the song.

NASA got a little help from its friends in this first-of-its-kind endeavor. It used a giant antenna near Madrid to transmit an mp3 version of the four-minute song. Four minutes is an infinitesimally tiny amount of time when you consider that the intended audience, Polaris or the North Star, is 2.5 quadrillion miles away. Yes, you read right: quadrillion. That means it will take 431 years to reach the star, traveling at the brisk speed of light.

Will the Beatles matter then? Wait. That's not the question I should be asking. What I really want to

•TURN TO ANA, 4E

## POP CULTURE

### (Anti)social networking catches on

BY SAM McMANIS  
McClatchy News Service

Fed up with Facebook? Miffed at MySpace? Or are you just annoyed at people who abuse alliteration?

If so, feel free to express yourself on a handful of antisocial networking sites, a curmudgeon's version of popular online places to collect "friends" and interest strangers in your tone-deaf garage band.

On sites such as Snubster.com and www.Enemybook.info, users can take a big gulp of Haterade and let fly. Instead of gathering friends, you can go all Richard Nixon and make an enemies list.

Snubster takes things a step further, allowing you to (a la Stephen Colbert) put people "on notice" or make them "dead to me."

In a way, this snarky backlash was inevitable, says Brian Choung, the 26-year-old software engineer from Washington, D.C., who started Snubster in 2006. It now boasts more than 16,000 users.

"It just seemed ridiculous and a platform ripe for parody," Choung says. "I decided that it would be an amusing exercise to develop a site that did the opposite. Really, it started out mostly as a joke and an exercise in web development."

"I guess it just caught on from there. People would go online to see why they were put on a list on Snubster, browse the site, get the joke and then make their own lists."

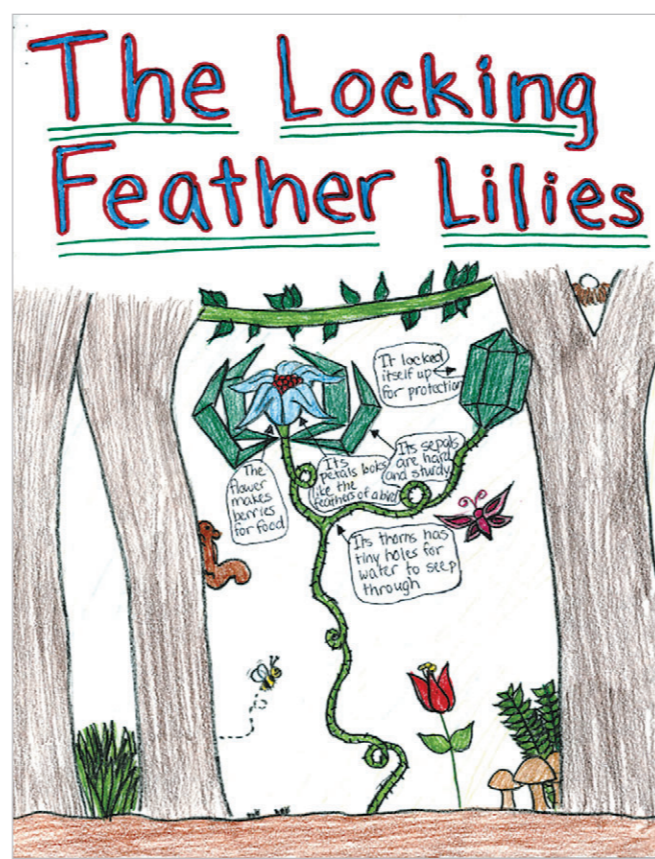
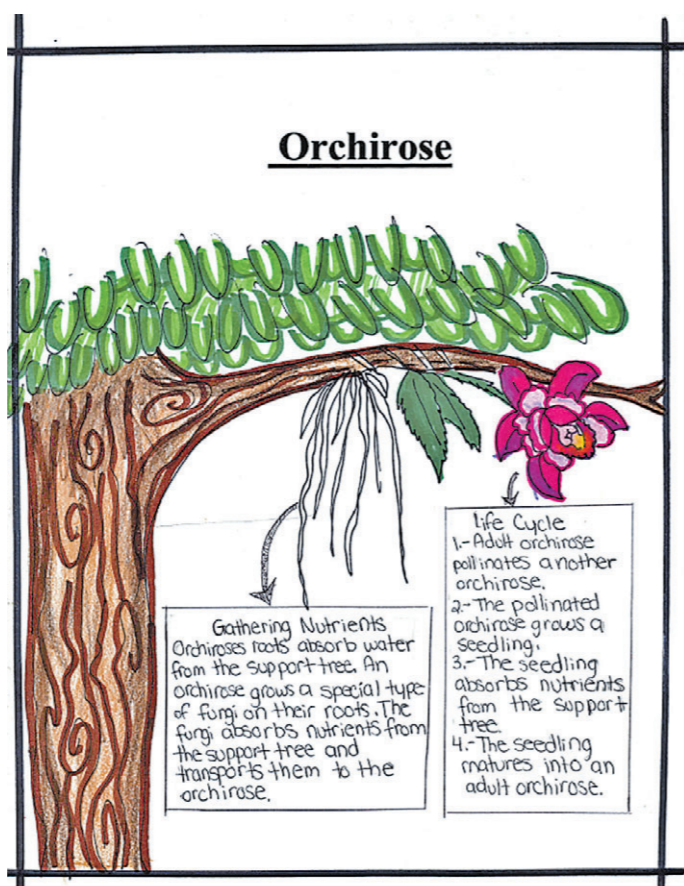
And, yes, Choung is quick to add, the site is a parody.

But, like many such jokes, it also sheds light on the inherent vacuity of

•TURN TO SNUBSTER, 4E

# NATURALLY CREATIVE

Students dream up plants that shade themselves, catch mice, even slow global warming



IMAGINE THAT: Rosa Acosta Sampson envisioned an orchid-rose hybrid, while Annie Dheng's lilies have petals that lock themselves around the flower when predators approach.

BY GEORGIA TASKER  
gtasker@MiamiHerald.com

If you were to create a plant from scratch, could you come up with something as creative as a caramel flower that produces chocolate-covered caramel balls in 28 days? One that originated in Hawaii but has been transplanted to Paris, where chefs use it to make delicious desserts and pastries?

How about an aquatic plant that gets food through photosynthesis and chemosynthesis? It also absorbs oceanic chemical pollution and releases cleansed particles that feed plankton.

Or a medical cactus with a goopy, runny substance inside that lowers human cholesterol, eases inflammation and protects us from oxidative stress?

As part of the 2007-08 Fairchild Challenge, 4,424 middle school students invented plants and wrote essays. From that abundance, 30

schools selected their best, submitting 84 drawings and "Design a Plant" essays for judging Thursday. Winners will receive certificates and points for their schools toward the bigger annual Challenge prizes.

The Fairchild Challenge, now in its sixth year, is an environmental outreach program that offers middle and high school students chances to participate in an array of competitions that revolve around science and the environment. Challenge events occur throughout the year and have included poetry performances, designing T-shirts, recycling programs and debates. The schools that accumulate the most points from top performances receive modest cash prizes for environmental programs.

Nan Wolcott, former interim provost of New World School of the Arts and chair of the Miami Beach Cultural



ROSA ACOSTA SAMPSON



ANNIE DHENG

•TURN TO NATURALLY CREATIVE, 4E

## MOVIES

### Does Hollywood ignore abortion issue?

BY JOSEPH V. AMODIO  
Newsday

Look up at the screen. Pregnant bellies are everywhere.

It began, more or less, with last year's *Waitress*, continued to *Knocked Up* and *Bella* and, of course, the sleeper hit *Juno*, which grabbed four Oscar nominations.

Last month, Ricki Lake's documentary on home births, *The Business of Being Born*, hit theaters. Even Chachi is in on the act, with his latest reality TV yawner, *Scott Baio Is 46 ... and Pregnant*.

Add to that the copious fawning over celebs and their "baby bumps" (Halle Berry on the cover of *In Style* magazine; 16-year-old Jamie Lynn Spears on the cover of everything else) and it's clear that the culture is in the grips of a "pregnancy moment."

But amid the chatter about hormones, ultrasounds and dilation,



NO QUESTIONS ASKED: In *Knocked Up*, an aspiring journalist (Katherine Heigl) finds herself pregnant after a one-night stand with a goofball (Seth Rogen). She may fret over her situation, but there's no question she's having the baby.

barely a word is uttered about ... the alternative.

In fact, despite the so-called "liberal Hollywood" stereotype, filmmakers seem eager to offer only plot lines in which a woman gets pregnant and has her baby. Audiences say "awwww," and all turns out well.

But abortion? Characters barely utter the "A" word on screen. In *Waitress*, Keri Russell's character cuts her doctor off before he says it; in *Knocked Up*, the closest they get is a wacky euphemism, "shmashmortion."

The avoidance is particularly logic-straining, given the circumstances of many of the characters: Save for Lake and her midwife-loving moms, the rest of these mothers-to-be are unexpectedly, unenthusiastically pregnant. The heroine in *Bella* is single and unemployed; in *Waitress*,

•TURN TO ABORTION, 2E