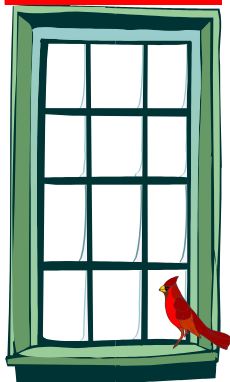


May
2011



MATOAKA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Bird's Eye View

From Our PTA President, Leanne Conrad

We are coming to the close of another school year at Matoaka! I want to take this opportunity to thank all of the volunteers that worked so hard to support the programs and events that the PTA sponsored this year. On any given day, you may have seen a volunteer putting up posters, distributing flyers in the teacher mailboxes, working in the book room or creating the living wedge. I also want to thank the staff and in particular Mr. Jacobs for letting the PTA be a part of the school. Amazing results can happen when parents and teachers come together to support students! Two staff members also deserve special recognition from the PTA - Matt Lawrence, the Head Custodian and Candy Slade, the Cafeteria Manager. It has been a pleasure to work with both of these individuals this year and we appreciate their support.

With that being said, don't forget about the annual Parent/Teacher Volleyball Game on Thursday, May 26th at 6:30 pm. The parents' team is coming back from last year's devastating loss to the teachers' team. It will be a fun

evening, so bring your families out to watch or play in the game.

Finally, you may be wondering what the PTA plans to do with the money that was raised at the Walkathon in March. A portion of the Walkathon funds paid for three computer program subscriptions for next school year, including IXL Math, Brain Pop and Study Island. The school is also using some of the funds to pay for new picnic tables. We also have money allocated toward Matoaka Field Day in June.

Good Luck on the SOLs this month and enjoy these last few weeks of school.

Sincerely,
Leanne Conrad,
PTA President

Can't hide that Cardinal Pride!

Calendar of Events

May	2-6	Teacher Appreciation Week
	19	PTA Board Meeting, 7 pm
	22	Deadline for June Bird's Eye View Newsletter
	26	PTA General Membership Meeting and Annual Parent/Teacher Volleyball Game
June	1	Bruester's Ice Cream Spirit Night

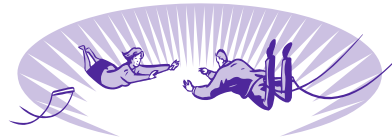


Walk-a-Thon Retraction

Our apologies to Ms. Moser's class who was omitted in last month's newsletter. The top fundraising classes were Ms. Moser's and Ms. Eaton's.
Congratulations!

4th Annual Matoaka Parent/Teacher Volleyball Game Thursday, May 26th, 6:30 PM

We are looking for parents to play in this end-of-the-year tradition.
Come to cheer or play!
Contact Christian Dunn at dunncleigh@yahoo.com or 903-4130 to sign up.



Character Trait of the Month:

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness means other people can count on you to do the right thing. I show trustworthiness when others count on me to do what I say I will do. I show trustworthiness by always returning items I have borrowed.

Newsletter submissions can be made via email at loralee13@verizon.net.
The deadline for the monthly newsletter is the 22nd of each month.

The PTA would like to thank the following businesses, organizations, and individuals for donating prizes for our school Walk-a-Thon:

Bikes Unlimited, Bruester's Ice Cream, Centerville Road BP, The Children's Museum of Richmond, Chipotle, Farm Fresh, Fresh Market, The Goddard School, The Graham Family, Groovy Geckos Comics, Harris Teeter, Hi Ho Silver, Loralee Clark, School Crossing, SHIP, Starbucks, Target, Virginia Aquarium, Virginia Living Museum, Virginia Air and Space Center, Wild Birds Unlimited, Z Pizza.

Thank you for supporting our school!



Matoaka's Living Wedge

On Thursday, March 31st, Matoaka held a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the new "Living Wedge," Matoaka's new hands-on, instructional Nature Center to be used as an extension of the classroom from grades K-5. The "Living Wedge" is composed of live exhibits of animals, a resource library, touch tables, a planting table and countless visual aids to enable students and teachers to draw meaningful connections to the Virginia Science curriculum.



Inspired by the Virginia Living Museum, the Living Wedge was developed by a partnership between Mr. John Spence, the 5th grade science teacher at Matoaka, our school's PTA, as well as members of the community. Guests from the Williamsburg/James City County community and students were present for the ribbon cutting on March 31st, which was followed by an exciting live animal show by ZOO PRO ADVENTURES from Virginia Beach, featuring 15-20 different animals.





A Farewell to Mrs. Cahill

Mrs. Cahill is retiring at the end of this year after 31 years of teaching in Williamsburg-James City Schools. She has been at Matoaka since it opened its doors in 2007. Her philosophy is, "My dad always said to treat others the way you'd like to be treated."

Mrs. Cahill was born and grew up in Sammonsville, N.Y. and has lived in Fulton, N.Y. She has a B.S. Degree from SUNY Potsdam and her most recent educational achievement is receiving her National Board Certification in 2008. Prior to coming to Matoaka, Mrs. Cahill has taught at Fairgrave Elementary School (Fulton, NY), Berkeley Elementary, Bruton Heights Elementary, and DJ Montague Elementary. Mrs. Cahill is married to Mr. Tom Cahill, a retired Second Grade teacher from Norge Elementary School. Mr. and Mrs. Cahill have one son, Mathew, and one daughter, Brianne, both living in the D.C. area.

Mrs. Cahill's personal interests include walking, biking, doing puzzles, gardening, and traveling, especially to see her two children.

We will miss Mrs. Cahill and we wish her the very best.

Thank you Mrs. Cahill for your years of dedication to the children you've taught.

Ideas To Encourage Summer Reading by Liz O'Donnell (schoolfamily.com)

Children forget an average of two months' worth of knowledge during the summer if they don't engage in some kind of educational activity, according to the National Summer Learning Association. Luckily, with some simple strategies, you can avoid this so-called "summer slide." If you play it cool, and make reading fun instead of a chore, you can nurture a passion for reading in even the most stubborn child. Tap into your children's unique personalities and interests and create tailor-made summer reading programs just for them.

For the enthusiast: Perhaps the easiest way to get a child reading is to tap into his hobbies and interests. Provide them with reading materials on the subjects they love and they will be more likely to want to read. Don't worry about the format of the book. Comic books, novels, and encyclopedias are all okay as long as your child reads them.

For the movie buff: Try a similar approach with your child who loves movie—arrange a movie-viewing party for them with some friends after

they've read a book first. J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, and J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* books are all good stories that were made into entertaining movies. Either watching a movie based on a book or reading a book with a film adaptation provides opportunities to revisit the tale in another format. This combination sharpens both comprehension and decoding abilities, two of the most important skills for future academics, and for life.

For the social butterfly: Start a book club for your child and his friends. Give each child in the club a turn to choose the book and have them meet once a week for an hour to discuss what they've read. By keeping the discussion brief and providing snacks, your child will view this time as a fun, social time, not obligatory learning time.

For the achiever: Does your child love to win? Go ahead and tap into her natural competitiveness. Set goals for the number of pages read daily or the total number of books read each month and reward your child when she meets targets. Post her progress where she can keep track of it. Let your child choose the rewards so she has an incentive to meet her goals.

Family Time

Travel in the car a lot?
Planning on taking a trip this summer? Playing nature-themed bingo is one way to put your family's observational skills to work.

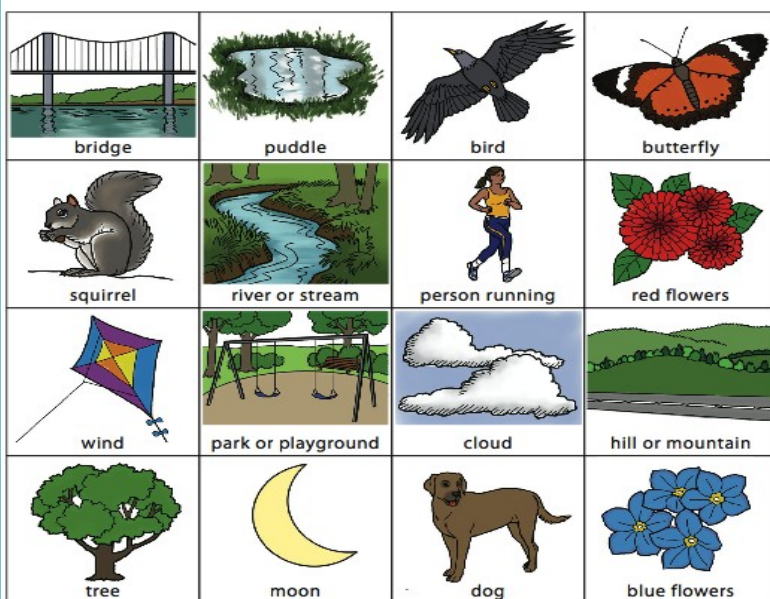
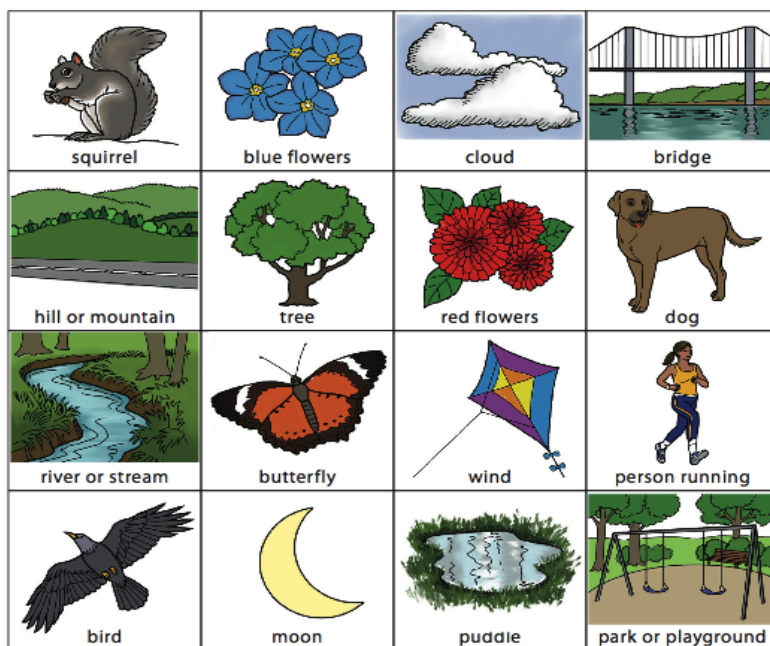
I've attached two bingo cards. To download all 4 cards from the National Wildlife Federation, go to www.nwf.org and type "car window bingo" in its search engine.

Keep the cards handy in your car and play one of two ways: Fill in a row of four that goes up, down, or diagonally OR fill the entire card. Use markers or stickers to mark off the things seen.

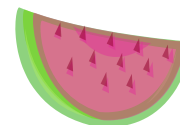
These objects are easy to see from a car, but you can play this anywhere! You can find templates for other bingo card by visiting

www.mes-english.com/flashcards/nature.php AND www.toolsforeducators.com/nature.php AND www.fun-stuff-to-do.com/travel-bingo.html

Happy Searching! What prize does the person who makes Bingo first get? To choose the radio station/next cd? To pick where to have the next rest stop or meal?



Feeding Ourselves, Feeding the Earth



With Summer approaching, you know we're going to be packing a lot of picnic lunches for day trips, meeting friends at the library and/or playground, or even just a nice afternoon beside the pool. I know we want to feed our kids healthy foods and it is just as important to teach our children about sustainability when picnicking. Here are some ideas for feeding our kids well and treating the earth well too.

- Stay close to home—you don't have to drive a long way to enjoy a meal outside
- Think seasonally—pack what's in season
- Minimize waste (stainless steel lunch wares; cloth napkins; cloth sandwich wraps; disposable plates/cups made of corn, wheat, or fallen leaves; steel or aluminum water bottles; bento boxes; silverware)

Lunch waste info: (globalstewards.org)

- ALUMINUM AND TIN CANS: In the time it takes you to read this sentence, more than 50,000 12-oz. aluminum cans were made
- BANANA AND ORANGE PEELS: Food debris in a landfill decompose only 25% in the first 15 years (try composting or vermiculture!)
- JUICE BOXES: Most inorganic trash retains its weight, volume, and form for at least four decades
- PAPER BAGS AND NAPKINS: It is estimated that 17 trees are cut down for every ton of non-recycled paper
- PLASTIC BOTTLES, FORKS, WRAP: U.S. citizens discard 2-1/2 million plastic bottles EVERY HOUR
- STYROFOAM: U.S. citizens throw away 25 billion Styrofoam cups EVERY YEAR and THEY WILL NEVER DECOMPOSE

—Loralee Clark

Thermos-ready Smoothie

1 cup frozen (or fresh) mixed berries
1/2 banana
1/2 cup apple juice
1/4 cup silken tofu

Combine berries, banana, apple juice and tofu in a blender; blend until smooth. (Don't tell them there's tofu in it and they'll never know!)

Nutrition Bonus: Protein, fiber, potassium, calcium, vitamin C, antioxidants.

(eatingwell.com)

Strawberry Cream Cheese Sandwich

1 tablespoon reduced-fat cream cheese
1/4 teaspoon honey
1/8 teaspoon freshly grated orange zest
2 slices whole-wheat sandwich bread
2 medium strawberries, sliced

Combine cream cheese, honey and orange zest in a bowl. Spread bread with the cheese mixture. Place sliced strawberries on 1 piece of bread, top with the other.

Nutrition Bonus: Vitamin C, Folate, Iron.

(eatingwell.com)

Ha, ha, ha!

Q: Why is the desert lion everyone's favorite at Christmas?

A: Because he has sandy claws!

Q: How does a lion greet the other animals in the field?

A: 'Pleased to eat you.!'!

Q: Why do bees hum?

A: Because they've forgotten the words!

Q: What kind of bees hum and drop things?

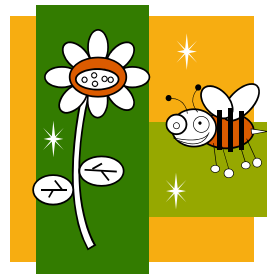
A: A fumble bee!

Q: What did the bee say to the flower?

A: Hello honey!

Q: What do you get if you cross a worm and an elephant?

A: Very big worm holes in your garden!



Fostering Resiliency: Strategies for parents

By Virginia Harvey, PhD, NCSP, University of
Massachusetts–Boston (teachersandfamilies.com)

"Into every life, some rain must fall. "
- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, 1842

As Longfellow implies, everyone faces adverse circumstances at some point in their lives. While we marvel that some people overcome seemingly overwhelming childhood adversity, resiliency is actually a normal trait that comes from inborn tendencies to adapt. If people's natural tendencies to adapt are appropriate, they can overcome even severe adversity. If not, problems can occur.

Since every life contains "some rain," parents should cultivate approaches and habits that increase resiliency in their children: the equivalent of umbrellas and waterproof shelter to withstand the "rainstorms" of life. Very often one resilient behavior affects more than one area. For example, regular exercise promotes good physical health, but it also decreases negative emotions such as anxiety, anger, and depression.

Positive attitudes: thinking positively, encouraging ourselves to try, being determined to persist until we achieve success, and applying a problem-solving approach when we encounter difficult situations. Positive attitudes reflect a sense of power, promise, purpose, worth, and "self-efficacy." Children with positive attitudes are optimistic. They believe that when they try they can learn, achieve in school, and have successful careers. They also believe they are capable of making friends. Parents and other adults play a critical role in helping children develop these positive attitudes. Many successful persons remember specific adults who gave them words of encouragement when they were young, resulting in the development of positive attitudes.

Positive emotions: love and gratitude also increase resiliency. Children need to be cared for, loved, and supported by adults at home, in the neighborhood, in school, and in organizations. Parents should remember to praise their children much more often than they criticize them, and every child should have at least one adult with whom they feel able to trust and confide. Every adult should strive to appreciate each child in their lives. Parents

should remember to praise their children much more often than they criticize them, and every child should have at least one adult with whom they feel able to trust and confide. Every adult should strive to appreciate each child in their lives. Parents and caretakers should deliberately develop their ability to be sensitive to the needs of each individual child and respond to those particular needs. Children who are cared for, loved, and supported learn to express positive emotions to others. The ability to receive, feel, and express positive emotions can buffer children against depression and other negative reactions to adversity.

Numerous harmful circumstances are caused by other people-sometimes by accident, sometimes through deliberate abuse or neglect. Learning to forgive others and oneself for playing a part in causing adverse circumstances fosters resiliency. Forgiving is not the same as forgetting, pardoning, condoning, excusing, or denying the harm that one person does to another. But forgiveness makes a person less angry, resentful, fearful, interested in revenge, or remorseful. It is neither possible nor appropriate for forgiveness to occur while the harm is still occurring. In forgiving, an injured person can develop empathy. Empathy can enable a person to accept imperfections in all people, including themselves. Forgiving persons choose to experience, appropriately express, and then let go of negative feelings of anger, guilt, and retaliation. All of these responses increase future resiliency.

Appropriate expression of all emotions: Resilient people appropriately express all emotions, even the negative ones. Parents and other adults can provide "emotion coaching." John Gottman at the University of Washington describes this coaching as: becoming more aware of emotions, recognizing expressions of emotion as an opportunity for intimacy and teaching, listening empathetically and validating feelings, labeling emotions in words children can understand, and helping children come up with appropriate ways to solve a problem or deal with an upsetting issue or situation.

Academic success: When children achieve academic success, they face all types of adversity more effectively. A lifetime commitment to education and learning results from success in school, which in turn results from an academic program that is at a level at which each child can succeed. Every child's school and after-school academic program should be designed based on a realistic assessment of the child's abilities.

Regular school attendance and homework

completion: Children need a quiet time and place to do homework for six or more hours per week. They also need parents and other adults to help them when they encounter difficulties with homework. This support can be at home, at school, or in another location such as an after-school care center.

Developing talents: The specific talent is less important than the feelings of joy and competence that result (playing a team sport, hiking, playing a musical instrument, dancing, drawing, art, creative writing, bike riding, computer programming). A talent results in an improved ability to deal with stress, a source of friendships, a positive method of self-expression, and the constructive use of time. Parents and significant adults play an important role in talent development by mentoring; that is, by providing encouragement, helping children set realistic and manageable goals, problem solving together, and finding ways to obtain necessary resources.

Network of connections: It is important to have several groups of friends and relatives. For example, elderly adults who have at least four different groups of friends and relatives with whom they feel connected, and whom they see regularly, are more resilient and have fewer medical problems. The same is true for children. Parents can encourage children to develop emotional attachments with relatives, with neighbors, with others who share their interests, and with other members of organized activities. Once a child has developed emotional attachments, it is important to

deliberately maintain them.

Structure and clear expectations: a careful balance of rules that require children to be considerate of themselves and others is important. Children do less well when there are too many rules, too few rules, or inconsistent rules. They need to know what is expected of them, what behaviors are acceptable, what behaviors are not acceptable, and the predictable, appropriate consequences of failure to abide by the rules.

Helping others: can take many forms: elementary students can read to first graders in school; adolescents can work in the town food pantry or help build houses for Habitat for Humanity; young adults can serve as mentors for children and adolescents.

Peace-building skills: Learning how to be appropriately assertive without being aggressive can also foster resilience. Children who know how to be assertive are least likely to be victims of bullies. They are also less likely to stand by and observe while others get bullied. And, finally, minimizing exposure to inappropriate entertainment also strengthens social competence. Violent TV shows, movies, and video games significantly increase violent responses by children and adolescents. This, in turn, reduces their resiliency.

Medical care. Vaccinations, vision and hearing evaluations, and seeking medical care for illness increases resiliency by improving school performance. Short-term medication, such as anti-depressants or anti-anxiety drugs, can be helpful in breaking the cycle of negative emotions. Long-term medications, when appropriately prescribed and monitored for disorders such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or seizures, are essential for the resiliency of individuals with chronic conditions.

Exercise: even walking or bicycling a half hour three times a week, not only improves resiliency and physical health but is extremely helpful for emotional health. Individuals in the habit of regular

exercise, and who have a type of exercise they enjoy, are in a much better position to deal with the anxiety, anger, or depression that can result from adversity. Parents and older siblings should encourage children who are disinclined to exercise on their own to exercise regularly with them.

Adequate sleep: With longer work hours, increased number of activities, and attempts to spend family time together, it can be challenging to ensure that children obtain the necessary 9-10 hours of sleep each night.

Positive stress control: The most important way for parents to teach children to use positive stress control is for the adults to use and demonstrate positive stress controls themselves, such as meditation, controlled breathing, yoga, exercise, developing talents, and other "relaxation responses." They do not abuse alcohol, tobacco, or drugs to reduce stress.

Resiliency can be fostered by many different approaches, and can be improved at any age. Not all of the approaches and habits that foster resiliency are necessary, and very few of us can practice all of them. However, the more resilient approaches and habits a child, adolescent, or adult maintains, the better their ability to weather whatever life brings. The following are potentially helpful resources:

Benson, P. L., Galbraith, J., & Espeland, P. (1998). What kids need to succeed: Proven, practical ways to raise good kids (revised.) ISBN: 0915793784.

Brooks, R., & Goldstein, S. (2002). Raising resilient children: Fostering strength, hope, and optimism in your child. ISBN: 0809297655.

Goldstein, S., & Brooks, R. (2002). Raising resilient children: A curriculum to foster strength, hope, and optimism in children. ISBN: 1557665990.

Gottman, J. M., Declaire, J., & Goleman, D. P. (1998). Raising an emotionally intelligent child. ISBN: 0684838656.

(edited for content, Lorelee Clark)

Earth Corner: Alien Visitor

Alien Visitor



You are the commander of a space ship from a far away planet. This is your first visit to planet Earth and you must report back to your homeland about what you see. You are able to zoom in on all areas of Earth and see all the unique and wonderful characteristics of the planet we call home.

Briefly describe, in point form, what you think is the
Top 10 List of Things that Make Earth Unique.

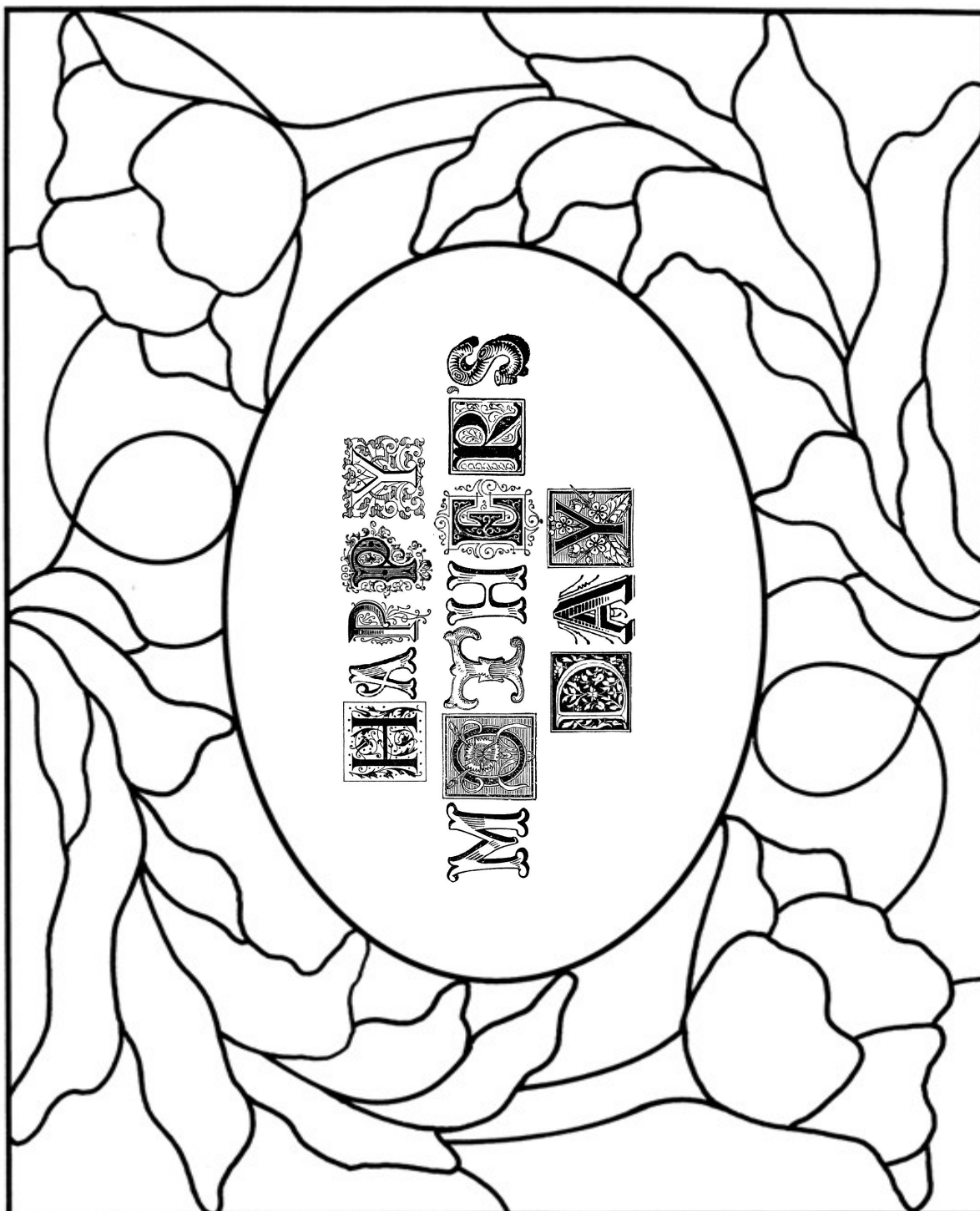
What makes Earth different from the other planets?
What would you see as you zoomed over the planet?
What would be the most important things you would need to share with the people on your home planet?



Copyright 2010—Addie Williams

Crafty Kids!

Create a beautiful Mother's Day card by printing this out and coloring in the letters. Print it out on card stock and write a beautiful note to your Mom on the back.



My Spring gift to you: a game you can print out and play with any number of people, for varying age groups. Make sure to print both pages and line up the game board.

If you don't know the answer to a question,
what a good reason to go to the internet or library to find out! Have fun!

—Loralee Clark

SPRING GAME!

**Roll the dice to see who goes first;
use any marker you'd like and have fun!**

