

## Social Studies Expo Tonight

### The News Digest

#### Raffle Ticket Sales Proceeds Go Towards "A Home of Our Own"

Parents, this year, the proceeds from the Winterfest Raffle will also go to our recently-launched Capital Campaign and applied toward acquiring and preparing "A Home Of Our Own" for the fall of 2010.

We hope for 100% participation and early sales. Remember, the idea is not that you buy the tickets, but that you sell them to others ... friends, colleagues, relatives. Of course, if you would like a chance to win, you should buy tickets too. We love having our parents win! The prizes are:

1st Prize: July 3-10, 2010, at Orlando Marriott Royal Palms condo with four, one-day, Park-Hopper passes to Walt Disney World properties

2nd Prize: \$250 12-Oaks Mall Gift Card

3rd Prize: \$100 Gasoline Card

Best of Luck to Everyone!

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The Upper Elementary class in Lansing

## Social Studies Expo Tonight

**Upcoming Events ...**

**FRI, Nov 13**  
**NO SCHOOL—Teacher Work Day**

**WED, Nov 18**  
**9:30 am, SST Open House & Tour**

**WED, Nov 25**  
**1:30 pm, Grandparents and Special Persons Afternoon**

**THURS - FRI, Nov 26 - 27**  
**NO SCHOOL—Have a Great Thanksgiving!**

Deadline: Fridays, one week prior to Thursday publication dates.

Email articles to:  
jroder@steppingstoneschool.org

cc:  
therbst@steppingstoneschool.org



The Upper Elementary class in Lansing



*Steppingstone is an independent state-approved 501(c)(3) non-profit elementary school (K-8) for gifted students. Steppingstone does not discriminate based on race, color, creed, gender, religion, or national or ethnic origin in the administration of any school policy or program.*

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## “Creating an Edge Effect”

Ms. Powell, Early Elementary

**A**re you on the edge? One could look at this in two different ways: on the edge of a scientific breakthrough or on the edge of “losing it!” In other words, are you managing your stress, or is it managing you? Stress begins in the mind and ends in the body; this is true for children as well. Sure, we all know what to do about it, but do we do it? I am guilty of overlooking the obvious: sleep!

Everyone needs at least seven hours of sleep (in the case of children, nine to ten hours is optimal). This is straight-through sleep in total darkness. Why, you ask? To replenish certain chemicals in the brain that help with efficient nerve cell firing that helps in learning and memory. Do not skip breakfast; it triggers cortisol release and could cause sweet cravings late at night; skip that bowl of ice cream! Do you crave a snack in the morning? Then, eat raw vegetables and save the carbs for breakfast.

Have you had a good laugh lately? Well, you should definitely try to work it into your day because it helps you breathe correctly and helps you relax. Simply put, oxygen calms the mind! Here is another good one—can you stand on one leg, with your eyes closed for a minute? You may want to practice this because balance helps to organize your brain and re-wire it. This is important for children because it helps them focus.

If you see my class doing the Cross Crawl or the Thymus Thump or Toning, you will know that we are balancing our brain waves, deepening our breathing, and reducing our heart rate for optimal learning. If you are interested, drop me a note for the selected bibliography on “Creating an Edge Effect” in your life.

—Information from Ann Anzalone, ISACS Conference 2009

## Typist of The Month

**T**his student typed the quickest without looking at the keyboard: Alaina Lurie.

## Making the Founding Fathers Relevant

Mrs. Hoff, Upper Elementary

**A** few weeks ago at the AIMS (Association of Independent Michigan Schools) Conference, I had the opportunity to hear the Honorable Michael Warren, a judge for the Oakland County Circuit Court. He posed a question to the teachers: Are the Founding Fathers and their first principles relevant to current events? He believes that the first principles are at the heart of the American experiment and sparked the Revolution, Civil War, and Civil Rights Movement.

In the next few weeks, the Upper Elementary will learn about what experiences shaped the Founders’ thinking about government. Students have already memorized the Preamble to the Constitution and will begin to analyze its meaning. We will engage in debates about what freedoms are important and necessary to maintain the freedom of the American people. We will also go back to our Founding Fathers’ First Principles and begin to apply them to current events.

Research indicates that integrating subject matter with the student’s everyday world facilitates retention. The approach makes learning more meaningful and interesting.

## Mileage Club

October Top Runners

Early Elementary:

**Brittany Butler**—12 miles  
**Katarina Jevtic**—11 miles

Intermediate:

**Jake Lampi**—7.5 miles  
**Noel Dyde**—7 miles

Upper Elementary:

**Danny Mondrusov**—11 miles  
**Ian Gilmore**—8.5 miles

Pre High School:

**George Elias**—7.5 miles  
**Jamal Nichols, Melissa Wood, Tommy Collins**—5 miles

## Writing Poetry...

### It's Not So Easy

Mrs. Morse, Pre High School

**N**ext week, Steppingstone students will learn how to write poems and will create several different poems for consideration for the Writer of the Month award. The PHS students will be focusing on Origin poems—poems that tell the story behind a natural phenomenon.

I have always found poems to be difficult because they require that the writer condense a story into a few lines. Making sure that each line conveys a whole idea can be time consuming. Editing for rhythm, varying the length of lines, and making sure your idea comes across to the audience means that the editing process requires critical thought. The fact that they are shorter never means that they are less work.

To help your child get “in the mood,” share your favorite piece of poetry. When you go to the library to choose a Power Reading book, choose a poetry anthology as well (some of the classic writers would be helpful). Discussing the ideas behind the poems with your child will help him/her be ready to write their own.

## NEW STUFF!

Ms. Schultz, Intermediate Elementary

**E**very week, all students at Steppingstone engage in an opportunity to investigate, explore, and test a new science experiment. Discovery Science is a hands-on approach to the study of science. By asking students to practice the scientific method each week, our students are able to strengthen their understanding of deductive reasoning and critical thinking ... while having fun.

The week following the Social Studies Expo, the Intermediate classroom will be experimenting with some “new stuff.” This experiment will tap into the beginning phases of determining and understanding a chemical change. With materials like Polident tablets, water, and a timer, students will have the chance to witness a chemical change...right before their eyes.

I can’t wait to SEE their reactions!



## Congratulations Evan Houdek, Artist of the Month

I am pleased to announce that the Artist for the Month of October is a student in Ms. Morse's PHS class, Evan Houdak. Evan displays a sensitive control over the use of his materials, especially pastel and pencil, which is evident in his sketchbook cover drawing. During the study of contemporary artist, Elizabeth Murray, he drew a chair realistically and later deconstructed it. The chair in the drawing seemed to come alive with motion. Evan's enthusiasm for art projects is evident in all the work he produces.

Congratulations, Evan!!

## Congratulations Melissa Wood, Computer Programmer of the Month

Melissa Wood, from Ms. Morse's PHS class, is our computer programmer for the month of November!

Melissa earned this accolade by her steady application of ideas, problem-solving, work ethic, and her sparks of brilliance in all her programming efforts. She is currently working on "Gus," the gingerbread man, using "Blender 3D" animation software to bring Gus to life. This means that she has to draw a mesh representing Gus's skin, create color and texture for the skin, make an armature (skeleton), attach the skin to the armature, and then make the armature move in a life-like walking motion. Melissa accomplishes these tasks by following directions, working in sequence, solving problems one at a time, and being willing to start over when necessary.

Congratulations to Melissa Wood!

## Opera House Program

A brochure for the Shen Yun Performing Arts group will be in your child's planner today. They will be performing at the Detroit Opera House over our winter break. From their website and critical reviews, it is a spectacular program that highlights traditional Chinese culture. More information is available at [www.shenyunperformingarts.org](http://www.shenyunperformingarts.org)

## Congratulations Jacob Kahn, In The Spotlight for October

Congratulations to Jacob Kahn, an 8th grader, for being the recipient for the "In the Spotlight" award. Jacob was given this award for academic excellence and his sense of community.

Jacob always has something interesting to add to class discussions and is able to articulate his point of view in a rational manner. He makes cross-curricular connections in his writing on a consistent basis by drawing in other subject areas such as history or science when making his point. Jacob's assignments are always well-worded and often amusing, although appropriately so. He enjoys learning, often does extra research to find an answer to something that came up in discussions, and comes in the next morning to share his findings.

In addition, Jacob promotes a sense of community in the classroom and the school at large. He is respected by other students. Jacob is always willing to help others, is friendly, and thinks about how he can be a good role model - and then acts upon it. He is able to see points of view other than his own and actively affects a change in attitude when needed.

It is the staff's pleasure to give Jacob this award, and we look forward to seeing what he'll do in the future!

## Congratulations Allison Epshteyn, Writer of the Month

Congratulations to Allison Epshteyn, 7th grader, for winning the Writer of the Month award for October. The "genre" for this month was Creative Writing. Allison's story was chosen because of her well-thought-out plot, which went from beginning to end smoothly. There were no loose ends, it had a satisfying conclusion, and it was interesting to read all the way through! In addition, Allison's character development was excellent - her characters were consistent and well-developed. Great job, Allison!

### ADMINISTRATION

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Special Programs Director, & Office Manager	Sandra Blay
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Intermediate Elementary	Janelle Schultz
Upper Elementary	Linda Hoff
Pre High School,	Keiko Morse
Faculty Chair	
AIMS/TSC Representative	Carol Powell

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Japanese	Mieko West
Spanish	Ana Maria Gonzalez
Mandarin Chinese	Hong Lin
Computer	Dr. Reef Morse
Extended Day	Mary Gage
Fencing	Jerzy Radz
Performing Arts	Kathy Nellett

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**The Twin**  
**by Allison Epshteyn**  
**Age 11**

Prologue~~

As I walked off the plane, one thought was going through my head. I never thought this would happen. I couldn't, wouldn't, greet my dad happily. He didn't deserve it. The flight to Miami, Florida, was not pleasant. How could I be happy when my parents, who had been together for 15 years, suddenly divorced? I never heard them fighting, but I was positive it was my dad's fault. How did I know that? My mother would cry when she heard my dad's name. Now he had a new family, the people he divorced my mother for, and I was going to visit them.

"Jamie!!!" I turned around and saw my dad standing there waving his arms at me.

"Hey, Dad," I said, hoping he wouldn't catch the fake enthusiasm in my voice. He didn't.

"Happy 15<sup>th</sup> birthday!!" he said, holding up a huge present.

"You didn't have to," I said, shyly.

"Of course I did! I'm your father after all." He said, a huge smile on his face. Though, I didn't want to do this, I said it anyway.

"Well, you're not much of a father when you leave your daughter and your wife for some stupid family!" I stormed out of the airport. It was warm, and I felt overdressed in my white hoodie, and jeans. My brown hair was kept in a ponytail.

"Jamie!" I heard him scream. I just walked farther away from the airport. I would never be Jamie Banks after this day. I would just become a hobo and take on my mother's name, Kennedy. I liked that better anyway. From this day forward, I would be Sara Kennedy.

~Ten Years Later~

"Hello, Officer Kennedy," every officer seemed to say to me. I was now one of the best detectives in the country. Everyone seemed awed in my presence, except me. I liked my job, but all this attention made me nervous whenever I was stuck with a junior officer.

"You have been assigned to a new case, Sara." I turned around to see one of my closest friends, the police chief, Vanessa Matthews. "Here's the file. You're searching for a girl named Jamie Banks. Her parents have tried every police station in the country. Now for their last chance, they're asking for the best of the best. You."

"Wait, Jamie Banks? 15 years old when she went missing?" I asked her.

"Yes, who else?" Vanessa asked, looking puzzled.

"Uh, never mind. Gotta get started. Bye!" I ran off to my office. My office was clean, except for my desk which had many files and pictures strewn about. I sat down and started to look through the file. I couldn't believe I was searching for myself! I didn't bother looking through the file. I already knew all this stuff about myself.

“Sara, your clients are here,” I heard Vanessa say, as she opened the door. Two people walked in, and I almost cried. They were my parents, and they weren't fighting!

“Hello, I'm Ben Banks and this is my ex-wife, Lisa Kennedy. Our daughter disappeared ten years ago. She was 15, and she came to visit my new wife and me. She ran away when she saw me,” my father said.

“Sir, I promise I will find your daughter. I am after all, the famous Sara Kennedy.” I told them. Even though I acted confident, I was so nervous inside.

“You look like my daughter,” my mother suddenly told me, and I hoped she would drop the subject.

“Well, I'm sorry that my appearance brings sad memories to you, but we must get started,” I told them.

“I live in Orlando, and I met her at the Orlando Airport. Can we start there?” my dad asked me. I lived and worked in Miami, so driving to Orlando for a couple of hours would be no problem.

“No problem, sir. Let's head on down to Orlando.” I walked to my shiny new blue Audi, and decided to let them drive with me.

“You guys can drive with me,” I told them. I was still wondering if I should tell them or not – that I was the daughter they'd been looking for all those years. I was kind of surprised they didn't stop. I mean, they used thousands of police stations who couldn't find me. It was a surprise they didn't ever give up. I decided to tell them later, hopefully at a better time.

The ride was uncomfortably quiet, except for the frequent sobs of my mother. My father was seemingly quiet which was unusual because he was almost always talkative, even at the saddest moments.

“We're here, at the airport,” I told them a couple of hours later. “But, just to warn you, I don't think we'll find out anything here, after all. I - I mean, she did run away ten years ago.” They just nodded.

The airport was busy with people running around. There was also a loudspeaker that was announcing a flight leaving to Phoenix, Arizona. I noticed one girl crying, she looked about five. I told my parents I would be right back and went up to the girl.

“Hello. My name is Officer Kennedy, and I'm a police officer. Where are your parents?” I asked her and sat down next to her.

“I don't know!!!” The girl burst into tears.

“Hey, it's okay. What's your name?” I asked her.

“Angie Michaels. My parents went to the bathroom and never came back. I've been sitting for an hour. We came here for a vacation to Disney World,” Angie told me, as she calmed down.

“Angie!!!! We're sorry we're late. Your father wanted to buy some candy for you.” I looked up to see a smiling woman running down to her. I left and waved good-bye to Angie.

“That was a nice thing to do,” my mother told me when I returned.

“I hope no one will ever have a family like I had,” I told my mom, frowning.

“Your life was bad?” My father asked.

“My parents divorced when I was fifteen, and I have something else to tell you-”

“Dad! Dad! It's you!!!” A girl who looked like me and seemed my age ran to hug my father.

“Jamie!!!!” My father announced, hugging her. I looked at the girl who was smiling happily.

“Um...I found your daughter, sir. Thank you, I'll send the bill later.” I stiffly walked off. This couldn't be happening. I was their daughter, not whoever that girl was! I would have to find out who that girl really was. I jumped into my Audi and drove off. I stopped at my house.

My house was quite big, probably the size of a mansion. It was right on the beach and had tsunami proof everything. I took the key out and walked inside. My bedroom was on the third floor so I took the elevator to get up there. My bedroom was clean, and as I jumped on my bed, I cried. For the first time in ten years, I cried. I never knew I missed my parents so much until today when someone claimed to be me. I decided to go to bed and figure it out tomorrow.

The next day, it was bright and sunny, and a perfect day to go to the beach. Since it was Saturday, I wasn't surprised to see so many people there, but what ruined my day was seeing my father, his new wife and “Jamie.” They didn't see me, so I decided to go find my friend Alexis who promised to be here today. I found her.

Alexis was sitting on a beach towel watching the waves, her long auburn hair tied up in a bun, and she was wearing a pretty sundress. It was blue with black zebra stripes on it. I was dressed exactly the opposite of her. I was wearing jean shorts and a yellow t-shirt. My brown hair was down. I couldn't believe she could stay so pretty.

“Hey, Lexi, let's go swimming?” I asked her. She took off her Dior sunglasses looked at me strangely and nodded her head.

“Come on!!!” I pleaded.

“No, thanks. I have to look pretty for the fashion shoot today, and I don't want to come in with gross wet hair.” Lexi was a supermodel so it wasn't surprising she was going to a fashion shoot.

“That's what a hairdryer's for.” I told her.

“Wait, wait, wait. You told me yourself you don't like swimming so what's the big deal, Sara? I mean, what's wrong?” Lexi looked at me her green eyes full of concern. Lexi was the only one who knew what I did when I was fifteen, would understand, and so I told her what happened. She nodded sympathetically when I was done.

"I don't know what to do. I mean, that girl looks exactly like me! The only possible reason would be that my twin sister didn't die at birth."

"You had a twin sister?" she asked me.

"Uh, yeah. When the doctor took my sister and me away, he only came back with me. He said she died," I told her.

"What if the doctor gave her to a different family? That could have happened." Lexi told me.

"That could have happened, but why would he give her to another family?" I asked Lexi.

"Easy. Money." Lexi told me, and I nodded and decided to leave.

I got up and walked to my car. I climbed in and drove to my office in Miami. One of the officers opened the door, and I walked straight to my office. I opened the computer and looked through the files. I got one match for Kara Banks. It said she "supposedly" died, but the police had thought the doctor gave her to the Lisbon family.

"Lisbon. I think I'm going to visit them." I ran out and got into my car. I knew they lived in Tampa, so I drove there. They lived in an enormous house, and as I rung the doorbell, a maid opened the door. I told her I'd like to talk to the head of the house. She nodded, and I followed her upstairs. She opened the door to an office and quickly left. I went inside.

"Hello, Jamie. I was waiting for you." I saw a man who looked about 50. He was sitting at a desk, in a black swivel chair.

"How do you know my name?" I asked.

"I have spies. They told me you would visit," he told me.

"I have a theory that you paid a doctor to adopt my twin sister and tell my parents she was dead," I told him, wondering what he would say. He seemed calm, which quite surprised me, because he seemed like the angry type, with his bushy eyebrows and scowl.

"So, what if I did? You're not the police." He looked at me his eyebrows raised.

"That's we're you're wrong. Your spies have gone wrong somewhere. My real name is Jamie Banks, but I'm known now as Sara Kennedy, one of the world's leading detective's." I smirked, and he stood up in surprise. "Now, tell me the truth. Did you or did you not adopt my sister and tell my family she was dead?"

"Y-y-you have no proof or right to arrest me!!" He screamed.

"I have proof and a right. Now give me the money you stole from my family!" I calmly stood there, waiting for his response.

"How'd you know Kara and I stole money from your family?" Mr. Lisbon still stood angrily, but seemed a little calmer than before.

“Why else would you use Kara? I'm not stupid you know. My parents are pretty famous photographers and make a bunch of money. You're rich yourself, but why not get richer? You sent Kara to pose as me, their long lost daughter. She asks them for some money. They give her a bunch of money. She pretends to put in the bank, but actually sends it to you. One more thing, sir, you're under arrest,” I held up handcuffs and locked them on his arms.

“Fine. I'll go with you quietly, but your parents will never believe you're actually Jamie Banks,” he told me, and I just smirked.

“Oh, believe me they will.” I called my office and told them to send some officers. In an hour they brought a couple of officers and I left.

I drove to a quiet neighborhood where I knew my parents were staying. I drove up to their house and rang the doorbell. My mother answered, her wispy black hair fluttering around her face.

“Oh, hello, officer. Is something wrong?” She asked me, and I nodded and walked inside.

“May I speak with Ka-...I mean, Jamie?” I asked her, and she nodded and took me upstairs. I entered her room (my old room) and sat down on the bed. Kara waved to me briefly before turning back to do something that looked like college homework.

“Kara, I know who you are, and I'd like to say we arrested your adopted father, Mr. Lisbon. Your father returned all the money to me, and I shall be the one giving it to my parents. You can surrender quietly and live a normal life or not and be arrested along with your father,” I told her. She looked alarmed and quietly nodded.

“I didn't want to steal money from my family. When I found out what a real family was like, I really didn't want to help Mr. Lisbon. I wanted to live a normal life with my real family. I'm really sorry.” She looked sincere.

“Ok, but you must tell our parents who you really are,” I told her. She nodded and called my mom up.

“Mom,” she said, “When I was born, I had a twin sister named Jamie. My adopted father kidnapped me and paid the doctor to tell you I died. I'm Kara Banks, and this officer is the girl you've been looking for. This is Jamie Banks.” My mother looked from me to her and hugged us both, and our family lived happily ever after.