2012 marked the 28th year for the Kansas City Branch's Shakespeare Competition. This Competition is designed to develop students' speaking and critical thinking skills while they explore the beauty of the language and the timeless themes in Shakespeare's works. By preparing a monologue and sonnet for public presentation, students bring Shakespeare to life in their own way and learn to express his works with understanding, clarity and feeling.

This year's Competition had seventeen students competing for the coveted First Place Prize...thanks to the hard work and dedication of Dan Bukovac, our Director of the Shakespeare Competition and the Shakespeare Committee, Ben Martin and Debbie McArdle, who worked with the schools to encourage them to participate and give guidance on setting up the in-school competition--particularly for schools participating for the first-time. This year also marked another first--we had our first homeschool student participating in the Competition. The Heart of America Shakespeare Festival sponsored a competition for homeschool students.

The Heart of America Shakespeare Festival again generously donated a scholarship to the Shakespeare Exploration Advanced Camp as part of the prize for the First Place Winner. And, we are always grateful for the support of the K.C. Public Library for the use of their Plaza Branch facilities and their promotion of the Competition.

For an unprecedented third year in a row, a student from Olathe South High School, Olathe, Kansas, captured First Place. Elizabeth Hix, a senior at Olathe South, impressed the judges and captivated the audience with her performance of Viola from Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* and her recitation of Sonnet No. 147. Carmen Ortiz from Piper High School, Kansas City, Kansas, won Second Place and Mark Carlson from St. Thomas Aquinas High School, Overland Park, Kansas, won Third Place. 185 Kansas City-area high school students performed in ESU Shakespeare competitions at their schools this year.
FOR STARTERS
Immerse yourself in water awareness

World Water Day is Thursday, and a local nonprofit wants to help provide access to safe water and sanitation in Africa, South Asia and Central America.

“We’re really in Kansas City because it’s a representation of who Kansas City residents are: caring and innovative people,” says Erin Swanson, marketing programs manager for the nonprofit organization.

Almost 1 billion people lack access to clean water, while 2.7 billion don’t have access to a toilet, Swanson says. “With the World Water Day event, we’re getting the community involved in the work we’re doing on a global scale.”

So what can Kansas Citians do for World Water Day?

• Buy jeans. Levi’s WaterLess jeans reduce water usage and have saved 172 million liters of water, according to store.

• Dine out. During World Water Week, some local restaurants will participate in the UNICEF Tap Project. Patrons can donate $1 for the water in their beverage, which is $1 toward a tap in a school.

• Use less water. Challenge yourself to take a 5-minute shower instead of a 10-minute shower. The water in your toilet is cleaner and warmer than what almost a billion people have to drink, so we should conserve what we use, Swanson says.

• Campaign online. Build awareness through social networking, start an online fundraising campaign, change your Facebook photo or Twitter background or send your suggested solutions or donations to Water.org.

• World Water Day 2012.

• World Water Day 2012.

An extra credit endeavor grew into a love of Shakespearean lexicon for Olathe South senior Elizabeth Hix. She enjoyed creating a character for her sonnet performance.

“-mouthed” is a longer word for the term “mouth.” Elizabeth Hix, a senior at Olathe South High School, started performing Shakespeare solo, first for a theater class assignment and then in English class. That was before she heard of the...
DEAR ABBY

Mon, Mar 19, 2012

DON'T LOOK TO WIFE FOR VALIDATION

JEAN PHILLIPS

Dear Abby,

We have been married for 20 years, and the last 10 years my wife has gained 60 pounds. She has tried several diets and jogging, and has lost and gained weight many times. She never really feels good, and she is constipated. She doesn't seem to care. I'm at a loss for what to do. Do you have any suggestions?—Anonymous.

DEAR ANONYMOUS:
The most I can do is encourage your wife to contact a dietician. Many people do not have the skills or knowledge to plan a diet that is healthy and palatable. A dietician can help your wife develop a plan that is realistic and sustainable.

BILLY GRAHAM

DEAR JENÉE:

I have never had sex with a woman, but I am curious about same-sex relationships. I have a friend who is gay, and he has introduced me to some of his friends. I am fascinated by their lifestyle, but I am also concerned about how others will react. I don't want to be perceived as being gay, but I am also interested in exploring my sexuality. How can I navigate this situation without causing harm to myself or others?

JENÉE: E-book form keeps the cover hidden

Jeanne Phillips

DEAR ABBY

Mon, Mar 19, 2012

HEAL A TROUBLED MARRIAGE

Dear Abby,

I have been married for 20 years, but my husband and I are constantly arguing and fighting. We seem to argue about everything, and I feel like we are going nowhere. I love my husband, but I don't know how to make things better. Do you have any advice for me?

DEAR BILLY GRAHAM:

I have read several of your books, and I have found them to be very helpful. I am currently going through a difficult time in my life, and I would like to get your advice on a matter that is very important to me. My husband and I are considering getting a divorce. We have been married for 20 years, and we have been through a lot together. However, we have been struggling to make things work, and we both feel that it is time to end things. I am not sure what to do, and I would appreciate any guidance you can offer.

BILLY GRAHAM

Sat, Mar 17, 2012

HIX: Her sonnet isn't 'love-oyve'

Her sonnet isn't 'love-oyve'

DEAR ABBY

Mon, Mar 19, 2012

ENTERTAINMENT BRIEFS

Get your CW ... now

The CW said last week that it would begin making episodes of its prime-time series available online six weeks after the shows premiere. The network said the move would allow consumers to catch up with the stories and follow the plots, even if they don't have cable, and it would also give viewers the chance to watch their shows whenever and wherever they want.

"Consumers have been telling us that they want the ability to watch their shows whenever and wherever they want, so we're bringing the shows to the people," said Sam Haskell, CW executive vice president of marketing and business development. "We've been talking about how to get this to them, but now ...