



**bulgarian
creative
writing
competition**

May, 2014
Volume 1, Issue 2

2014 Bulgarian Creative Writing Competition In Review

BCWC 2014 a Success!

The end of April marked the successful conclusion of the fourth annual Bulgarian Creative Writing Competition in English. This year's contest began in December, when registration was opened to all state-run public schools. Students from private schools participated independently of ranking but in 2015 the competition will be open for them as well.

At the same time, CorPlus, the BCWC's host organization, undertook an online fundraising campaign via the Global Giving Foundation. US Embassy in Bulgaria provided a small grant. Thanks to generous donations from various friends of CORPlus Foundation in Bulgaria and USA, CorPlus was able to use the funds raised to accommodate the fantastic number of registered schools—180 in total—43 more than in 2013!

From these schools, almost 4000 motivated students from grades 6 to 12 partook in the writing of English-language essays on February 11th and 12th. Local teachers collaborated to make the organization and running of these sessions a success, helping not only with the administration of the essay writing, but also serving to encourage and inspire students to develop both their English and creative writing abilities.

After these sessions, regional and national judging sessions were held with the help of dedicated volunteers, teachers, specialists, and native speakers. In the end, of 112 finalists, 21 national winners (3 from each grade level) were selected for their imaginative works, and invited to the national awards ceremony in Blagoevgrad on April 26th.

We at CorPlus would like to congratulate all students for their participation in the 2014 Bulgarian Creative Writing Competition, and we look forward to reading your works again next year!



2014 BCWC in Numbers

5500 participants registered,
4000 essays submitted, 180
schools participating

Regions with the highest number of participants – Plovdiv – 502, city of Sofia – 346, Blagoevgrad, Varna and Burgas – 200.

Regions with the highest number of national qualifiers – Plovdiv – 24, city of Sofia – 11, and Burgas and Varna – 8.

Schools with the highest number of national qualifiers – „Plovdiv“ Language School in Plovdiv, 4th Foreign Language School „Frederic Joliot-Curie“ – Varna, „Geo Milev“ Language School – Burgas, and „Yordan Radichkov“ Language School –

*To read all of the essays from this year's winners,
visit BCWC's website:
<http://www.creativewriting-bg.com>*

6th, 7th and 8th Grade Winners

6th grade

Maria from Burgas, first place, Paola from Sveti Vlas, second place, Boris from Yambol, third place

This year, our 6th graders were provided with some very interesting topics. Two of our winners chose the same theme and wrote a letter to themselves from the perspective of their favorite pairs of shoes. Maria's favorites – red high heels called Haily – went on a trip to Alaska and won an Oscar while on Naomi Campbell's feet. Paola's shoes have different names – Goody and Thalia, but similar taste – they don't like polka dots and their favorite color is dark purple. Our third place winner chose another topic and imagined that he is a tree. Boris told us the life story of a 74-year-old tree whose life was saved by his owner's sons to be reborn as a human being in a world full of lies and corruption.

7th grade

Simona from Plovdiv, first place, Ralitsa from Sofia, second place, and Reni from Karlovo, third place

In the seventh grade category, our first place winner, Simona, treated us to a complicated, fun story telling us what happens when you open your freezer and find out that it has become a passage to the North Pole. She went there to find a scarf with glowing letters that belonged to a wolf called Saber and saved him and his friends. This experience helped her become a better person and to realize that we can't keep killing our nature and the animals. Ralitsa sat down for a dinner with her family and suddenly the main course – a chicken called Roger – started talking to her about his strange family - a marshmallow brother, a lollypop mother and a chicken father – and his pet – a rainbow colored unicorn. In her thoughtful, touching essay, Reni compared the old times when people used to send letters, write songs and poems for their girl while nowadays girls feel happy if they get a "ur hot :)" text from a guy, who can't even spell correctly.

8th grade

Ivona from Ruse, first place and Dimitar from Yambol, second place, Helena-Sofia from Haskovo

Among the 8th graders, students were pressed to show their originality with several challenging topics. When Ivona opened the front door she discovered a parcel on the step. It was full of magical colorful fluid and each time she touched it it was making a different figure that illustrated different parts of her life. The experience Dimitar had was even stranger – he woke up one morning and found that a horn has sprouted from the center of his forehead. His parents told him not to worry as it is what happens to men in their family in puberty but obviously his neighbors didn't think the same so he got arrested and some mad scientists tried to cut the horn off. If you were wondering where socks go when they disappear, Helena-Sofia has the answer for you – they go to the magical island called "The land of the socks" that has two parts – a big one where only clean socks go and a "dirty and smelly" one for the dirty socks.



9th, 10th and 11th Grade Winners

9th grade

Nadezhda from Plovdiv, first place, Boryana from Plovdiv, second place, Gabriela from Harmanli, third place

Nadezhda told us about an old but very beautiful lady – she is very confident, brave, sometimes mean but always with a reason. She gets sick, angry, tired, happy - just another woman that we must treat with the respect she deserves. If you still haven't guessed – this is nanny Rain. Boryana and Gabriela chose the same theme and imagined that they had a full-length mirror that talks to them. Boryana talked to the person she always wanted to be – prettier and better – but soon realized that both she and her other self don't have the most valuable thing – freedom. Gabriela asked the old question “who's the fairest of them all” to hear from her own reflection that she is like “a cryptic book and yet so easy to read”.

10th grade

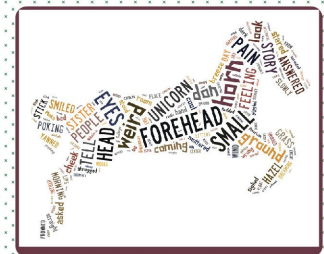
Anita from Varna, first place, Ivanka from Panagyurishte, second place and Stanislava from Kyustendil, third place

In the tenth grade, all three winners chose the same intriguing topic: Is the fish mute or does it not speak because it knows everything? Anita told us the fascinating story of the little green fish Burton that used to have all the knowledge in the world and the key to every single secret or mystery but also a big mouth and a generous heart. Because he started sharing all his secret knowledge with humans, they became lazy, stopped searching the truth and lost the desire to learn things themselves. This made God take Burton's voice. Ivanka's fish Emelda Fisher was curious and stupid enough to ignore some warning signs and was cursed to be mute in order to keep the secrets she has discovered. Stanislava's story is set in the deep and endless Cosmos – the fish was there from the very beginning, swimming in the just-born waters of the clean ocean... It saw everything... It lived everything. It never speaks, but knows it all.

11th grade

Tsvetelina from Razlog, first place, Eleonora from Varna, second place, Teodor from Ruse, third place

Both Tsvetelina and Teodor imagined that they are alien invaders but their characters are very different – Tsvetelina told us about an alien that came to the Earth because she was having the intention to learn about people. She wanted to observe humans and try to be like them as they were her idols and their planet was her dream destination. She has never meant to take over the Earth, she actually wanted to offer them the ability to take over her planet! Teodor's alien, on the other hand, invaded the Earth with a mission to take it over and enslave its inhabitants but the ruthless battles with natives of Siberia made him immediately regret his decision and he abandoned his mission. Eleonora chose a completely different topic and told us in rhymes about a terrifying dream – initially, when her freckles faded away she was happy without them but day by day another feature of her face disappeared and in the end she wished that her soul was also gone.



12th Grade Winners

12th grade

Maria from Burgas, first place, Paola from Sveti Vlas, second place, Boris from Yambol, third place

Two of our 12-grade winners chose the same theme and imagined what it will be like if they could read people's minds. Believe it or not, they both agreed that they prefer to live without this gift as it may easily turn into a nightmare. **Dima** asked herself:

*But if you embrace this gift
won't it make you want to hit
everybody who has lied
even once before they died?*

Dimitar weighed all the pros and cons and also decided that he didn't want this superpower as life is good enough as it is. It sounds good in theory, but he felt like he will go crazy in less than a week, after having to process and filter so much useless information. **Monika** had another dilemma – to choose between travel forward in time to the future, or backwards to the past. 60 minutes were not enough to make up her mind so she got captured into a time trap where now was yesterday and tomorrow was past.



Iliana from Blagoevgrad received a signed copy of the book “Cold Snap” and 100 USD donated by the book’s author – Cynthia Morrison Phoel.

*Ugly face is what
I don't want to see,
when I look at a photo
they've taken of me.*

*Cause no matter how perfect
your thoughts really are,
no one would listen
if you don't have a charm!*

*If it sounds egoistic,
I'll tell you it's not.
It's just that I love
my looks quite a lot.*

*And if I can be even prettier
than I am now,
I will make it happen,
no matter how!*

Special Award—Iliana from Blagoevgrad

“What a pleasure it was to read this year's essays. Essay after essay, I was so impressed with the level of ambition: these writers did not choose the easy path. Rather, they aimed high. Humor. Complicated ideas. Delicate moments. These essays showcased complex and shockingly good writing--all in a second language, no less!

But often, the very best writing looks easy, and this was the case with this fantastic poem. Line by line, stanza by stanza, this poem flowed seamlessly and built beautifully--all the way through the funny final line. I loved the poem's economy, its wit, and the ways it took me by surprise. The irony here is that, even though the speaker would prefer beauty over brains, clearly she is sharp as a tack.

When I read the poem to my children (ages 4, 7, and 9), they said, “Read it again.” Now, my daughter is memorizing it to share it with her fourth grade class. Iliana, we're the first members of your fan club. What an honor to read your work!”

*Cynthia Morrison Phoel
Former Peace Corps Volunteer in Pravets
1994–1996*

A day in Blagoevgrad

Before the national award ceremony on April 26 all national winners and their teachers were invited to attend a seminar in creative writing facilitated by Professor Michael Cohen from the American University in Bulgaria and Mariela Hristova – editor-in-chief of the university magazine „Fly in the Head”.

The students, together with their teachers and some parents, also had the opportunity to have a guided tour around AUBG Skaptopara campus.

During the award ceremony in the evening the students from the Broadway Performance Club at AUBG performed some dances from this year’s musical show “All Shook Up”.

Some of the national winners also had special performances during the ceremony and proved that they are not only excellent students and creative writers but also talented singers, musicians and artists—Simona from Plovdiv, Tsvetelina from Razlog and Monica from Vidin sang songs, Nadezhda from Plovdiv and Iliana from Blagoevgrad read poems and Ivona from Ruse had a digital art presentation.



Two special awards were generously provided by the American University in Bulgaria – a 3-week summer camp and a summer SAT course.

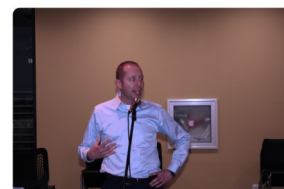
National Award Ceremony

The award ceremony for the 2014 BCWC was held on April 26 in the Skaptopara campus of the American University in Blagoevgrad.

The ceremony started with some opening remarks by Dimitar Tsekov – COR-PluS Executive Director, followed by addresses by Richard Damstra – U.S. Embassy Cultural Attaché, Galya Nikolova – representative of the national competition jury, and Boryana Shalyavska – Director of Admissions at AUBG. During her speech Ms. Shalyavska announced the two special awards generously provided by the AUBG – a 3-month summer camp (Nadezhda Metodieva from Plovdiv) and a summer SAT course (Anita Katsarska from Varna).

All national winners and their teachers received certificates, books in English as well as prize packages provided by Express Publishing, KLETT, Macmillan and Microsoft Bulgaria.

It was a great pleasure to gather such a group of talented young people together to give them the recognition they deserve. It is our hope that these prizes and this ceremony will encourage all students to see that thinking “outside the box” is a valuable skill.



2014 BCWC Faces



CORplus Foundation

1 Geneva St.
Fl. 1, ap. 1
Sofia 1142
Bulgaria
Phone: +359 2 423 73 93
Email: info@corplus.org
www.creativewriting-bg.com



Special thanks to...

- ☞ **Participating schools and local contact teachers**, for their coordination and enthusiasm.
- ☞ **The U.S. Peace Corps**, for starting this project as a small, volunteer initiative, and helping it grow to what it is today.
- ☞ **The U.S. Embassy in Sofia**, for their continuing support
- ☞ **BCWC's donors on Global Giving**, for their support and financial contributions
- ☞ **Express Publishing, KLETT, Macmillan and Microsoft Bulgaria the American University of Blagoevgrad**, for providing such a vast array of quality, useful prizes for the winners
- ☞ **Our regional and national judges**, for their long hours of hard work reading thousands of essays
- ☞ **The Bulgarian Ministry of Education**, for their support and promotion of BCWC 2014
- ☞ **Professors Michael Cohen (AUBG) and Mariela Hristova (AUBG)**, for facilitating the winners' writing workshops