

*Editor, Times-Dispatch:*

*I will be very surprised if Correspondent of the Day Stanley Elmore ("Save Your Brain: Turn Off the TV") does not garner the top honor this year. In one of the most compelling letters I've seen in many years, his cogent argument against the toxic effects of television on young developing minds really struck a cord. In particular, he connects the dots of TV exposure and its mostly inane programming and endless commercialism with the ultimate price we all pay manifested in mounting societal dysfunction.*

*I would add to his observations another dimension of our over-wired TV-centric culture. In his seminal bestselling book, Last Child in the Woods, Richard Louv makes a similar case in coining the term "Nature Deficit Disorder" to describe the ill-effects of children spending increasing amounts of time indoors and therefore becoming more and more disconnected from the natural world. Through years of research, Louv skillfully establishes a direct link between the "de-naturing" of kids and the alarming rise in childhood afflictions such as obesity, attention disorders and depression. To elucidate this reality, one study has shown that by the time the average American child reaches high school, he/she can identify over 1000 corporate logos, but cannot name 10 plants or animals native to their bioregion (could there be a correlation between this and the fact that advertising is a \$500 billion/year global industry?). Along with the threat to physical well-being and ability to function as productive citizens, young people overexposed to the gamut of commercial media are also at risk of reduced facility for the ecological literacy necessary for their generation's role in restoring planetary health.*

*For those readers interested in engaging the subject of Nature Deficit Disorder in depth, the James River Green Building Council is hosting a symposium on the subject at Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens October 12th.*