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# Noteworthy Inspirations: A Collection of Student Work from SWOSU-Sayre 2013

Southwestern Oklahoma State University

## Description

This anthology contains the works of students attending the Sayre campus of Southwestern Oklahoma State University in the spring, summer, and fall semesters of 2013.

Sponsors: Language Arts instructors Judy Haught and Terry Ford. The book was designed and compiled by students Rebecca Dobbs and DeShawna Smyth. The cover photo by Sandra Pena. Published by SWOSU University Press. Inspiration for the theme: Western Oklahoma.

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*Cattle. By Mary Church*



# "Travel"

Photographs Taken in Wolf Creek, CO, by Alexis Fanshier,



# Halloween Breeze

By Cassidy Hill

The smell of Pumpkin Spice candles fills the air, my husband debates the call made by the referee officiating the football game on television, and I sit happily in the living room floor among piles of ribbon, yarn, tulle, buttons and an endless supply of hot glue sticks.

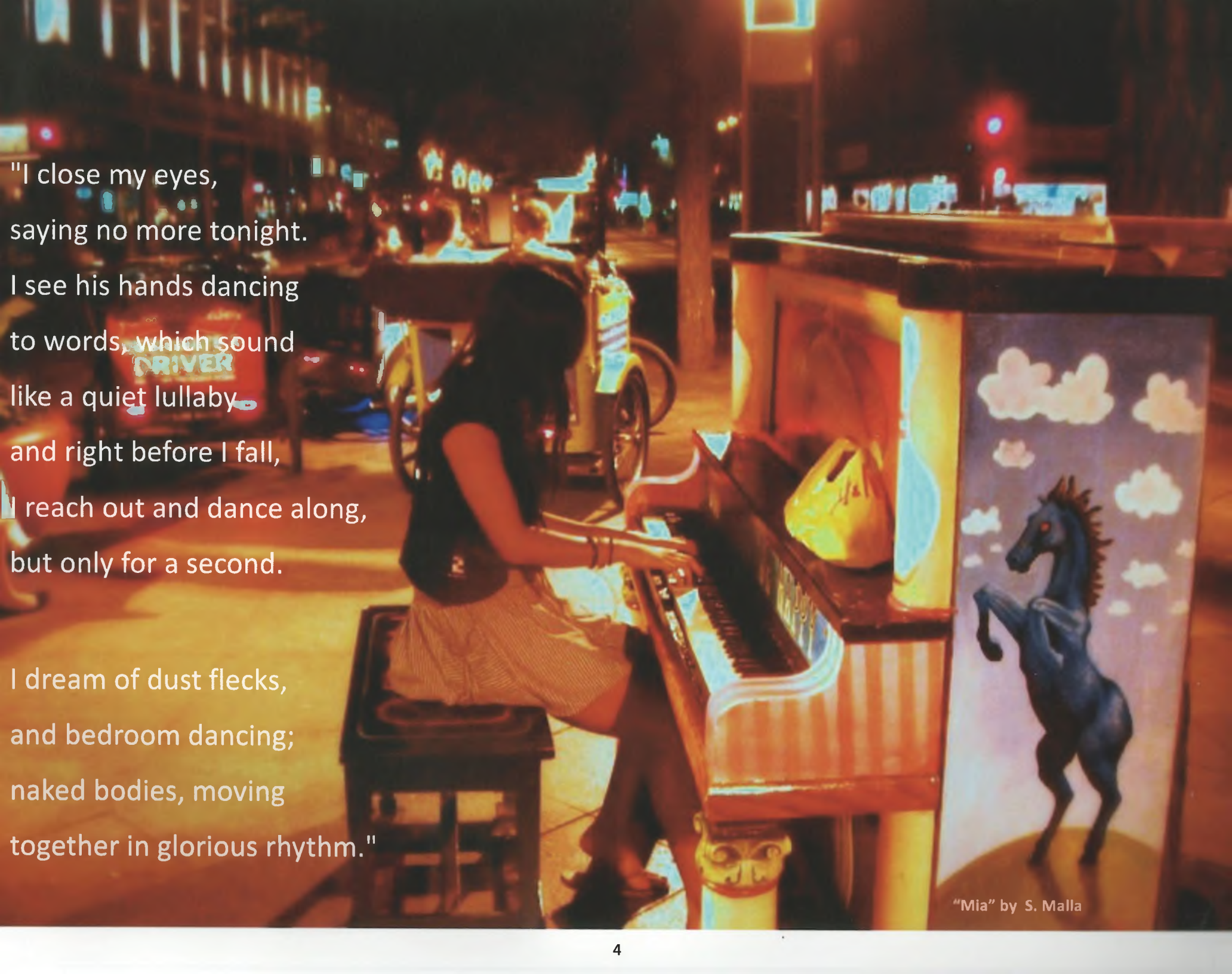
“What do you want to be for Halloween this year?” I ask Cadence, my six year old daughter.

“Ummm, a Scarecrow!” she says. My creative wheels begin to spin churning out ideas faster than my hands can create. Tirelessly, I begin to construct a Halloween costume sure to win the coveted “Mom of the Year” Award. I pull strands of yellow yarn measured and cut to perfection; glue them to the inside of an oversized floppy straw gardening hat resembling straw hair any scarecrow would envy. I line the outer brim of the hat with brown satin ribbon and adorn it with a beautiful yellow sunflower. Moving onto the pants- every scarecrow needs pants- I attach artificial patches using a red bandana and floss stitching thread onto each leg and one on the back pocket. Lastly, I stuff the pocket of her blue and black plaid shirt with yellow yarn, slip her brown ballerina flats on and a beautiful scarecrow is born. She grabs her decorated Halloween basket and we set off to collect our annual candy bounty.

The crisp cool air brushes my face and I tighten the wrap of my winter coat. Watching the children nervously approach the door of a spooky house I start to think, what an odd holiday. Many moms, like me take this holiday as an opportunity to showcase their creative skills relishing in the “oooohs” and “awwwws” their children receive and some race into their local Wal-Mart grab what Halloween costume is left and set out to collect their treats. As Cadence and I walk through our neighborhood, we admire the costumes of her fellow trick or treaters. These are the moments I will always remember and cherish; the days my little girl let me dress her up and walk with her while she hunts for candy.





A woman with long dark hair, wearing a black sleeveless top and a light-colored skirt, is seated on a wooden bench, playing a white upright piano on a city street at night. The piano is illuminated by a warm, orange light. To the right of the piano, there is a large, illuminated artwork of a blue horse rearing up against a purple sky with white clouds. In the background, the city street is visible with blurred lights and a sign that says "DRIVER".

"I close my eyes,  
saying no more tonight.  
I see his hands dancing  
to words, which sound  
like a quiet lullaby,  
and right before I fall,  
I reach out and dance along,  
but only for a second.

I dream of dust flecks,  
and bedroom dancing;  
naked bodies, moving  
together in glorious rhythm."

"Mia" by S. Malla



# The Babysitter

by Jarrod Manning

When I was a small child I was a crazy little booger! If I wasn't climbing to the top of the fridge, I was in the ally shooting cats and birds with my pellet gun. Looking back now after the years of spankings and groundings I received from my adventures, I realized that they were all connected by one thing, and that is my brother Josh had been babysitting me at the time. Josh, who is ten years older than I am, was not the best babysitter in the world by any means! He took his babysitting job as serious as I took him being in charge. While he was "watching me," I managed to ruin a brand new leather recliner with pink nail polish, shoot a myriad of animals, and break my arm. That's right. I managed to break my arm while my older brother was "watching me."

I remember it like it was yesterday, and my parents went out on the town and left my oldest brother Josh in charge of me. It was a dark summer night in the middle of July, and I remember the smell of the fresh cut grass and recent rain showers as my parents left around 9 p.m. so they wouldn't miss the late movie. As they walked out the door the usual ensued, and Josh put his babysitting skills to work and headed straight to the living room and turned the television on to watch MTV instead of watching me. I walked straight to my room because being six years old, I had no interest in music television.

As I sat in my room playing with my Legos, I soon became bored. I began to play with a trophy I had won earlier that year showing pigs. I carried it around the room and reminisced about that pig show. Soon I wandered into my parents' adjacent bedroom with the trophy still clutched in my tiny hands. I tossed the trophy on the floor and climbed upon my parents' bed. After I was atop the bed, I placed my legs and arm inside of my shirt and began to roll around the bed. I rolled like a gymnast doing summersaults across a mat. As minutes of rolling around in a ball ensued, I soon rolled to the edge of the bed. As soon as I started to fall I was completely oblivious to the trophy I had tossed on the floor minutes earlier. As I landed with all of my weight on that trophy, my arm was the first thing to hit the base of it. I could hear my arm snap under the weight of my body. The pain felt like someone had stabbed this six year old in the arm with a 7-inch knife over and over again.

What followed was a loud scream that come from these six-year-old lungs. Not five seconds later, my brother was in the room to see what was wrong.

"My arm!"

"You're okay, Jarrod. Just calm down."

I yelled until he called mom and dad to come back home and check on me. When they burst in, I was still in immense pain as they asked what had happened. As I told them the ridiculous story, I also informed them that I believed that I had broken my arm. After debating what to do, they decided that taking me to Elk City hospital was the best idea. On the way there I remember they wrapped my arm in a blue and white western blanket, and the feel of the blanket soothing my freshly broken arm. I also recall my brother reassuring my parents that he was watching me with a close eye.

"I was watching Jarrod all night, and I never let him out of my sight!"

"Then how in the hell did he break his arm if he never left your sight all night long, Josh?" thundered my father.

Josh finally broke down and told them of his mad babysitting skills, and how he actually wasn't watching me at all. As we pulled into the hospital, I remember the pain starting to ease due to the massive amounts of adrenaline being pumped through my body. I was scared going into the x-ray room by the sight of the big machines and amounts of people it took to run it. I was placed under the machine which seemed to swallow me in size. The machine was a monster about to devour me in my mind. During which time they decided to give me some medicine to ease the pain, and I can still remember the taste of the morphine on my tongue as I swallowed that pill. After the x-rays were over they directed me into a cold room as we waited for the results.

The doctor walked in and confirmed what I already knew—my arm was broken. Also in confirming that my arm was broken he also confirmed to my parents that Josh was indeed the worst babysitter in the history of mankind!

On the way home my parents now knew what I had known all of my young life, that he took babysitting me about as seriously as he took going to class in high school. That's the last time Josh watched Joe or myself. After that they decided that hiring a real babysitter would be the smart and safest thing to do.



# If It Hurts, Come In

By Kendra Price

"Babe, you have to come back to Elk. I can't kick this pain and my water broke!"

That is how mine and Coy's phone call went on April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2010, at 7:15 a.m. I had been up since about 3 a.m. and at 5 a.m. Coy reminded me, of the doctors warning.

"Babe, Dr. Jensen said, that girls like you are tougher than most, and if it hurts, you need to go to the hospital."

"If I can walk, I ain't in labor!" I replied. About an hour after he had left the house for work, my water broke. As my friend drove me to the hospital. I kept saying, "This should hurt worse." I walked into the E.R. and stood as the register signed me in.

"Honey, if you are walking, you are not in labor," said a nurse.

"Well, either my water broke, or I wet myself and I do not normally do that, so?" After the nurses got me all hooked up to the two heart monitors, one for me and one for Baby Teagn, Dr. Jensen came in to do an exam.

"Yep, you are definitely in labor. How long have you been in pain? You are pretty far along."

"I told her to come in at 5," Coy exclaimed as he came rushing through the door. Not long after he arrived so did my Aunt Becca, my Aunt Kate and shortly after them Coy's mom Tammy. I felt as if I was a animal at the zoo with them all lined up on the sofa in front of me, watching and waiting. Every hour or so a nurse would come in and check on me, then call Dr. Jensen with a report. At about 4 p.m. Dr. Jensen came in. She did an exam, read my chart and read the contraction chart. After a few moments, she said,

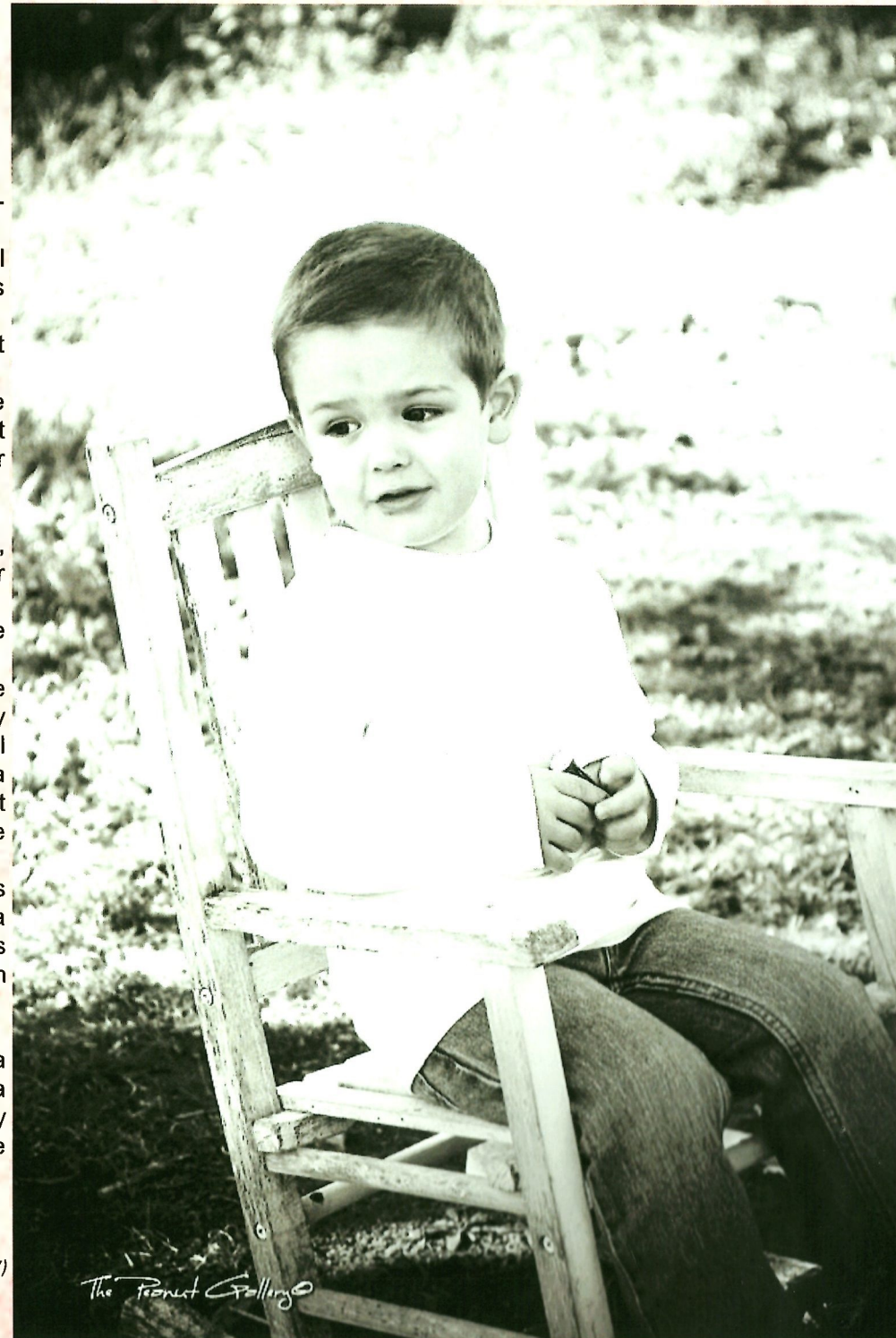
"Ok, Kendra, since Teagn is being very stubborn and keeps cocking his head, we can do one of two things. We can wait another 1 to 2 hours and take a chance of having to do a Emergency C-Section and something be wrong like his cord being wrapped around his neck. Or, we can prep you and do a C-Section now. Which do you want?"

"I don't know, you pick I just want a healthy baby." I replied.

"Prep her!" Dr. Jensen almost shouted at the nurses. They moved me to a new bed and rolled me down to the O.R., as everyone was rushing about I felt a little panic, apparently the scrub nurse could tell. She placed her hand on my head and said, "Dad is dressing he will be in here soon, just try to breath. These go pretty fast. So soon you will have your little angle in your arms. Just breath."

Coy looked like a knight in shining armor as he came threw the door wearing a white paper suit. Then I heard a voice say, "Ok, Dad you sit here. If

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you feel like you are going to faint just lean back into your chair." I thought, if he faints when this is all over I am going to bet him. Dr. Jensen peeked over the blanket they had put up so that I could not see them opening up my belly, and said, "You are going to feel some pressure, just breath and try to relax." Not five minutes later a loud cry came out from over the blanket.

"It's a big ole boy!" exclaimed Dr. Jensen. Eight pounds, ten ounces, 22 1/2 inches—our blue eyed baby boy was here and healthy.

When women have C-Sections doctors like them to stay in the hospital a little longer than normal, just in case they need any extra medical attention. We stayed for a week in the hospital and were discharged with flying colors. My two week checkup went well. It seemed as though I had a UTI, but nothing to worry about. A few days later my step- daughter's littler brother was staying the night with us. While we were eating Leeland was acting a little odd. All of the sudden he hit the floor; he turned blue and started shaking. Thanks to my 4-H counselor training, I knew exactly what it was. This little boy was having a seizer!

"COY, CALL 911!" As I jumped off the couch, it felt as though I pulled a muscle in my stomach where my stiches were. The ambulance arrived and Coy followed them to the hospital. Meanwhile, his younger sister Taylor came to stay with me and help with the kids. I was starting to hurt pretty bad so I decided go ahead and take a shower since my stiches needed to be cleaned also. When I was done, I couldn't pick up my leg to step out of the shower.

Tee, come help me! I can't get out." As she came in, I added, "Do not call your brother and tell him, but I think something is wrong." Right then Coy walked in.

"What?" asked Coy, I explained to him what had happened and the pain. He and Taylor helped me into bed and Taylor decided with all the commotion going on she'd stay the night just in case we needed her. I woke up at about 5 a.m. feeling something wet running down my leg. As I lifted the blanket, I smelled a familiar odor, I knew from growing up, riding up on something that had been rotting in the sun for a few days. I dropped the blanket and woke up Coy.

"Babe, Babe, something's wrong." The night light was still on from when he had got up with Teagn. As I pulled the blankets up, he almost jumped out of bed in shock.

"Don't look!" he shouted. "Go to the bathroom wrap up in a towel, and don't come back in here!!"

Off to the hospital we went.

"I need a doctor." I told the lady at the desk. "I can't wait. There is lots of rotten blood coming from somewhere."

Coy came running in the door after parking; they rushed us back and put me into a gown. The words 'If it hurts, come in,' kept playing in my head, as the morphine dripped in the IV and burned through my vines. After a few hours, and several test, the doctor determined that I had an allergic reaction to the staples and stiches. He determined that and abscess had formed and antibiotics would not be enough. They had to open me back up. At that moment those were the scariest words I had ever herd. The doctor did not put me completely out. With all the medicine they gave me I was in a haze, a painful haze. I felt them pulling my staples out, ting, ting they sounded as they hit the medal pan. Slowly, they cut my stiches then layer, by layer they cut my skin and muscle to clean out the infection.

"I FEEL IT. IT HURTS, YOU \*\*\*\*\*!" I screamed. I do not remember this; this is what my family has told me. No one was allowed in the room, finally the procedure was over. I was crazy mad with pain for several hours, after a second visit from the no good doctor, I finally had enough medicine running through me like wildfire that I could sleep. Every day for two weeks, I laid in that hospital bed and three times a day the nurses would come in pump me full of morphine like a car on an empty tank; pull out all of my packing out of my stomach, clean it all out, then pack it full of new gauze. My mom, who was keeping Baby Teagn for us while I was in the hospital would bring him to see me every afternoon. Even though I was always hazy from all the medicine his big blue eyes would shine through and for that moment I would forget about the pain. When I was released, I still had to change my bandages twice a day. Tammy thought it best we go home with her.

"No one can take care of you like we think they should, but me," she told us.

Every morning and evening Coy would hold my arms above my head, while Tammy cleaned and changed my bandages. Labor doesn't have anything on lying with a hole as wide as the Oklahoma sky in the middle of your stomach for almost a month.

Finally got to see Dr. Jensen, who had been my doctor though the whole pregnancy and birth.

"It hurt, and I came in," I told her, with tears in my eyes.



# It's Life

By Lacy Pryor

Growing old, losing friends, it's inevitable.

Losing one to life and one to a life that's incredible,


but what do you do when you lose yourself to the unbearable?

The pressure to be unbreakable, needing to be available,

to be that shoulder to lean on when your life is so terrible.

In the midst of feeling hopeless

and the need to be loved, I just lower my head and raise my hands up above.



*Silver Lining  
Photo by Payton Wright*



# 666: DOESN'T SOUND LIKE A LOTTERY TICKET

By Bray Haven

A grain of rice is such a small thing in this gigantic world, but could something as small as this change the entire human race? A piece of technology as small as a grain of rice is currently being manufactured to be inserted in the hand or scalp of a human, which would hold everything from our medical history to our finances and everything in between. This new piece of technology is being called the VeriChip or the RFID Chip. Could the VeriChip change everything from buying gas to going to the Emergency Room? Is the VeriChip for making human's lives easier, or is it for the government to start the takeover of this country? On March 23, 2010 President Obama signed into law a new health care plan, and according to this bill Americans will eventually be forced to be implanted with this so called VeriChip. I believe the VeriChip will cause harm to all humans and will be a huge blow to this fine country.

The VeriChip is not a new piece of technology; however, the sudden rise in popularity or familiarity speaks otherwise. The U.S Army has been using the chip in every soldier for the past decade. It has been a well-kept secret until recently. The VeriChip is devices to help in emergencies, to help track all missing

humans, and to hopefully become a credit card of sorts. "The VeriChip is about twice the length of a dime, the device is typically implanted between the shoulder and elbow area of an individual's right arm. Once scanned at the proper frequency, the VeriChip responds with a unique 16 digit number which could be then linked with information about the user held on a database for identity verification, medical records access and other uses" ("AntiChips").

Positives to the VeriChip include such things as when a child is kidnapped the police could easily find the child and whoever they propose took him or her. One ABC news report had this to say: "It's 10 p.m. You may not know where your child is, but the chip does" ("Implant Chips, Track People"). This thought is flawed though it sounds brilliant. If the kidnapper cut off this child's hand, it could kill the child or just make it where the government cannot track him or her anymore. There is a way around all things about the VeriChip. If this hypothetical child had a card that he or she carried with himself or herself that the kidnapper did not know about then the government could easily track the child exactly like they

would with the VeriChip. "There are already, and increasingly, ways to electronically track people," says [nowtheendbegins.com](http://nowtheendbegins.com). Since 2006, new U.S. passports include radio frequency identification tags that store all the information in the passport, plus a digital picture of the owner." ("Posts") Another positive about the VeriChip is if a human is in an accident and has no identification, the hospital can then scan this person's hand and know all of his or her medical history. People who suffer from memory loss could have all of their medical records on the chip so that doctors could better understand how to care for them and treat them. After Hurricane Katrina, thousands of people saw their medical records wiped out because the physical documents were destroyed. And many people left their homes in the middle of the night wearing only their pajamas, so they had no way to prove who they were when seeking medical treatment. By linking electronic medical records stored securely in a remote location and backed up properly to a chip inside a person, that person could be sure he or she would always be able to be identified and have access to medical records. Also, illegal immigration could be de-

creased tremendously because with the chip aliens would be easily identified through traffic stops or anywhere identification is required. Prisoners who escape could be easily tracked and put back into prison. The chip could provide an alibi for those who are innocent in a crime in which they are a suspect. I personally believe that I could carry around an identification card just as easy. I would much rather carry something in my wallet than having something embedded in my skin. But not everyone likes the idea of an implant.

However, numerous questions surrounding the legality and morality of this chip have arisen: How can the government legally control us with a simple identification device inserted in our right hands? These chips would carry much more info than we can simply carry in our wallets. Although the government already has minimal access to all of our financial and health records, why give them more control and access than they need?



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The VeriChip being embedded in a human's skin is a huge negative in my opinion. I do not think I could let a doctor embed a chip in my skin that could potentially let me be controlled by the government. NBCnews.com not-

ed, "A series of veterinary and toxicology studies, dating to the mid-1990s, stated that chip implants had "induced" malignant tumors in some lab mice and rats. The VeriChip has been scientifically proven that it causes cancer. According to Wired News online, and the Associated Press, there have been research articles over the last ten years that found a connection between the chips and possible cancer. When mice and rats were injected with glass-encapsulated RFID transponders, like those made by VeriChip, they "developed malignant, fast-growing, lethal cancers in up to 1% to 10% of cases" at the site at which the microchip was injected or to which it had migrated"(Williams).

How much more does the Food and Drug Administration need to know to not allow doctors to implant the chip in your hand? I do not understand how humans can be for the VeriChip when it has caused cancerous tumors in rats and mice since it was invented." Are there any medical risks associated with taking a



VeriChip implant? Yes! Electrical hazards, MRI incompatibility, adverse tissue reaction, and migration of the implant-

ed transponder are just a few of the potential risks associated with the VeriChip ID implant device, according to an October 12, 2004 letter issued by the Food and Drug Administration."(AntiChips) These are all prime examples of why the VeriChip should not be approved. It is not hard to recognize that the VeriChip is a hazardous piece of technology.

The biggest negative in my eyes is the fact that I am a Christian, and many people feel that this piece of technology is what is known in the bible as the Mark of the Beast. "Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name. This calls for wisdom: let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is 666."(Revelation 13:16-18) Even The Holy Bible is against the VeriChip. How can politicians who claim to be Christians be

for the VeriChip? It is in the word of God that if anyone shall take the mark they shall be sent to Hell. I believe that the VeriChip will not be as successful as people think. I have faith in this statement because I know that there are true Christians in the world who will not take the VeriChip even if it is not the Mark of the Beast, which I believe it is. This is a huge downfall of the VeriChip. However, the government is gradually becoming more controlling of our everyday lives. People are screaming for equality, but what they do not realize is that if we continue to put everyone on the same level as far as economics, beliefs and we all serve an all powerful government this is comparable to communism. I believe inequality is simply what makes America democratic in its own liberties. If we did not have the opportunities to develop our own ideas, our own beliefs, and do in life what we choose to do then I'll ask the simple question, "Where is our liberty and freedom?" Our government has done a good job of hiding that fact that we are becoming more and more like every other country on the planet. The Holy Bible states, "If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath." (Revelation 14:9,10) True, some Christians feel that the foretold "marking" is done by God and is not literal. According to the book Reasoning from the Scrip-

tures, the "forehead" and "hand" have been said to be symbolic for the fact that those people deserving destruction will be obvious to all who look, as if they are wearing a big sign on an obvious place like their forehead. Nevertheless, why would we want to take a chance if it is Bible prophecy? It's not worth it to gamble with our lives.

As for me, I believe the VeriChip will cause harm to all humans and will be a huge blow to this fine country and the basis it was founded on. The VeriChip is current technology that has minimal positives and multiple negatives. The government is trying to control everything and everyone and if people do not stand up their goals will be accomplished. I will keep my freedom, justice, and liberty. If people are okay with being inserted with a chip in their arm then they need a reality check. People need to wake up; it is morning of the last days, and 666 is not a winning lottery ticket.

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# Growing up with Kiana

By: Brisa Garza

The love of my life is four years old. I could not imagine my life without her, and I cherish her so much. Although being her mother is my biggest accomplishment, I am only twenty years old, and it hasn't always been a smooth road.

I was fifteen years old and a sophomore in High School. I had been dating her father for a long time, and I honestly felt that I loved him. As you know, I got pregnant and was forced to choose what to do for my unborn baby. Abortion and adoption were completely out of the question. I knew I had to take full responsibility for this child, and I was one hundred percent willing to step up to the plate, with or without her father.

Telling my parents was the hardest thing I have ever done. I was so scared to physically speak up and tell them. I actually wrote them a letter, left it on the kitchen table, and went to school. I was six months pregnant, and they had no idea. I was petite and barely showing. To everyone's dismay, I had been feeling a baby move around inside of me. Sitting in my second class of the day, I heard the intercom alert my teacher.

"Will you please send Brisa Garza to the office? Her mother is here to check her out."

"Of course, she will be there in just a second."

My heart sank. How could I face my parents? I quickly gathered my things and met my mom at the office. "Is it true?"

"I think so, Mom."



PHOTOS OF BRISA AND KIANA

We went to the store, purchased a pregnancy test, and proceeded to go home where my father was waiting for us. That was the longest car ride ever. We arrive to my house; the look on my dad's face was indescribable. I am his only daughter, and I have three brothers. I really disappointed him.

"Brisa, you are 15 years old; you are too young to be a mother."

"Dad, I know I've upset you, but everything happens for a reason."

All he could do was cry. It broke my heart to see my father so upset. His main concern was that I had no prenatal care for so long. He was nervous about how the baby was doing. I quickly scheduled an appointment at the doctor the next day, got every test done, and started taking vitamins. I was scared but determined to stay in school and make my parents proud, despite making them grandparents at such a young age. I hate to say it was a mistake, because my daughter is a blessing, but I definitely was not prepared for motherhood. At what age is anyone ever "ready?"

On Wednesday, January 9, 2008, I gave birth to a healthy seven pound eight ounce baby girl and named her Kiana. My life changed forever. I no longer had myself to worry about but this tiny human who constantly needed me. It's insane and chaotic how life changes so fast. I was forced to grow up and take on the title of being someone's mother.

In a way, I feel like I am growing up with her. I hope one day I am blessed to be someone else's mother, and I honestly think that's what I was made for. In the meantime, I will finish college and become a kindergarten teacher and appreciate everyone else's kids! Becoming a mother at such a young age impacted my life in a huge way. It made me strong and independent, and I hope Kiana appreciates everything I have sacrificed to be the best for her. We met a little sooner, but I get to love her longer.





**Dusk. By Jaci Alford**





**Photos by**  
**Alysa Duenas**



# The Bravest Man in My Life

By Vanessa Rosebrook

He always had a way of making my day better by giving a simple smile or hug, it always warmed my heart and brightened my outlook. On April 22, one year ago, I gave a very important man in my life a kiss good-bye, a man who I was proud to call Grandpa. I had never attended a funeral of any of my family members until that day, let alone a military funeral. At the service before the burial, I completely lost all composure.



Sketch by Payton Mariah Wright

They had given me a card for me and my cousin that my grandpa had made out to us a few days previously for graduation. Inside I found a letter that read "Love you, Grandpa Fred," along with a 50 dollar bill, it felt like my breath would be gone forever. The next day I thought I had brought myself back together, and I did fine at the burial except for when they played the song "Taps" and fired the first of three ringing shots, then I lost it again. But to know he is in a better place still looking out for my protection. That makes the tears of sadness truly tears of joy.

My great-grandpa was closer to me than any grand-parent I have. He may have lived over 400 miles away, but he still impacted my life greatly. He would tell me of all his memories from WWII, and nearly all of them would start out with "When I was in the Marines..." During all the stories of him being marred and receiving the Purple Heart so many times, I would wonder "Why would he keep going after being wounded three times?" It was then I realized how much he truly cared for this country and the people in it. He would always tell me of the things he used to do and his outlook on things. Memories seem to be what keep me strong!

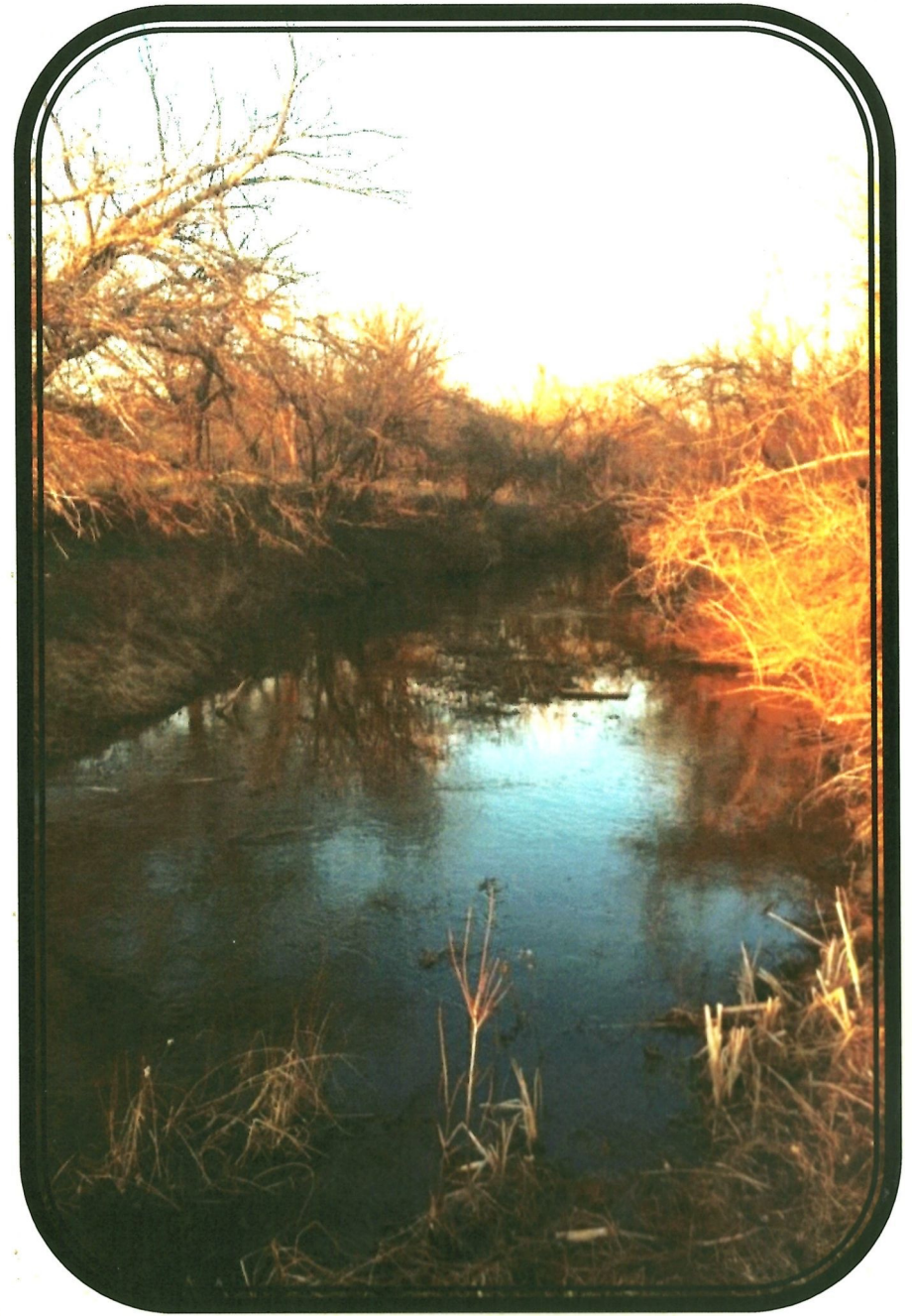
Every time he would come down, he and I would cook up new recipes, moments I have always cherished and hold with me, and he would always make me apple spice jelly, the smell would be so sweet it would make my mouth water. We would always go to "Wally-World" for him to buy something new, whether it was needed or not. When I was younger he bought me a bunny with a purple dress, and to this day I still

have it. We would always go do different things with him. One of my favorite memories of being with him is when he took me, my sister, and my mom to Worlds Of Fun in Kansas City, KS. It's the little things that mean the most to me.

He would always have funny stories to tell, and know exactly how to make everyone laugh and be in a good mood. He loved taking pictures with his special camera. He also painted pictures; they were always beautiful and so full of detail. He also enjoyed watching movies, and he always knew the most specific things most people didn't remember about movies. He used to joke in the series *The Pacific* he wanted Leonardo DiCaprio to play him. In his words he would say, "I was a good looking guy, I think I look like Leonardo DiCaprio, I want him to play me." It's memories like these that make all the sorrow disintegrate and turn into happiness.

My grandpa may have been gone for nearly a year now, but there is no way his memories will ever disappear. Because he had so much meaning and impact on my life I chose to get a memorial tattoo with his personal signature. The pain was nothing compared to what he had gone through for me and the rest of our country. I know he is up there in heaven, taking care of what needs to be done for us here on Earth. He was a great man with great respect. It's a shame to have lost him so soon in my life, but God just needed one more angel to help look over us. I know, and he knew he had done all he can on Earth, and by doing so he showed God his greatness and that he had earned his way into heaven.





*My World. Photos By Jaci Alford*

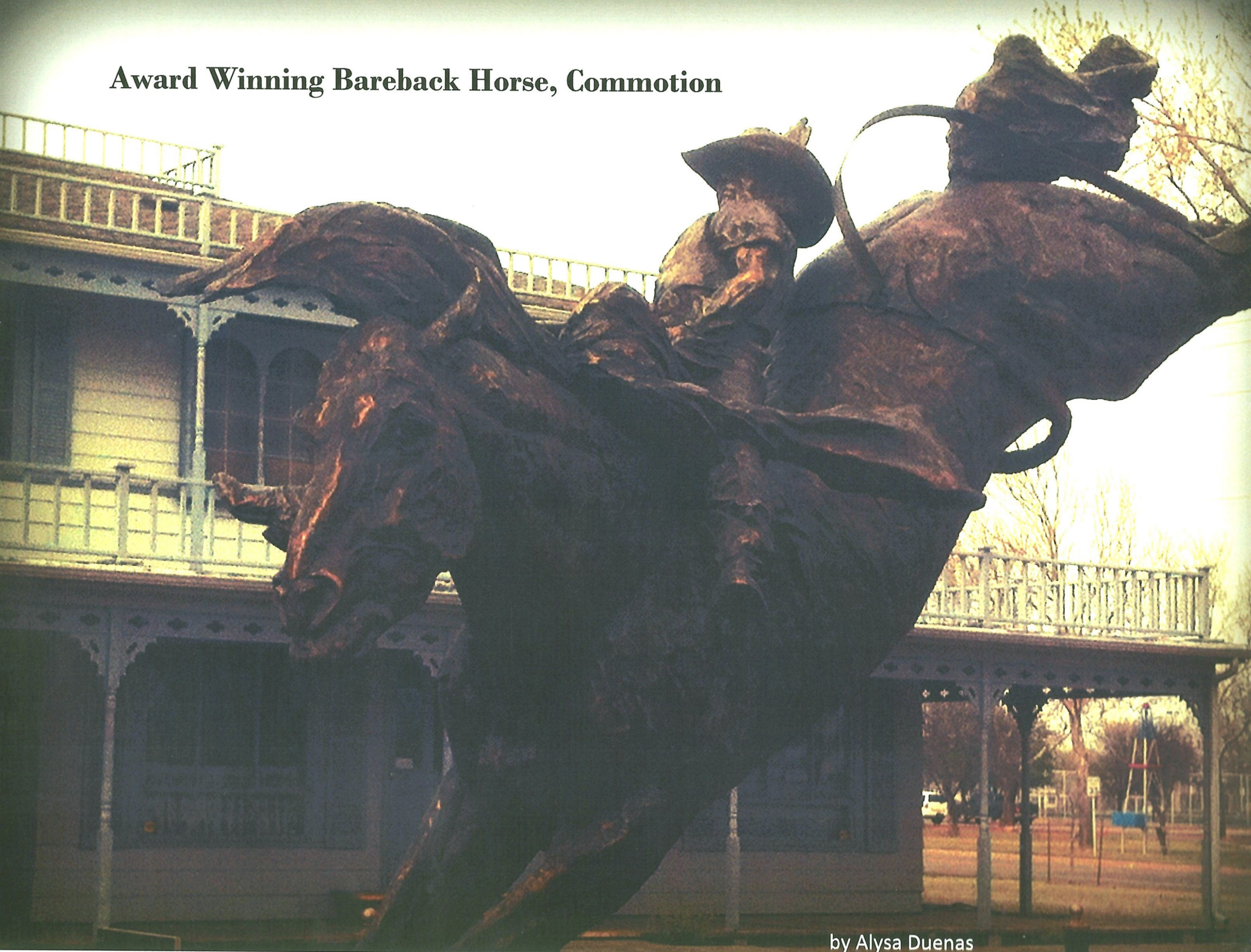




*Subjective  
Photo  
Journal  
Jokana  
Ford*



## Award Winning Bareback Horse, Commotion



by Alysa Duenas



# Are We Using Yesterday's Wisdom to Reach Tomorrow's Destiny?

By Payton Wright

By Payton Wright

Everyday hundreds of people in America die of so-called incurable diseases; however, we continue to believe that others are searching for cures for such diseases and will offer them to the public in mass as soon as they are discovered. But, are we truly finding cures for any illnesses? The people of America rely on the Pharmaceutical Industry to search for and supply treatments and cures for their illnesses. However, make no mistake about it, it is an industry, with the main goal of making money. Finding a cure for a disease would hurt the company's bottom line; therefore, there is no real incentive to find cures for any disease or illness, only treatments that take advantage of people's extended suffering and will allow the industry to continue making money as long as possible. According to many people, the last disease cured was polio. However, the fact is, there is no cure for polio; once a person has the disease, only time will help them (Schoenstadt). Many people have given up on the pharmaceutical industry and the government-controlled Food and Drug Administration, also known as the FDA. Some are finally realizing that neither of these entities have the best interest of the general population at heart. Instead, people have chosen to open their minds to the more advanced treatments of eastern and far eastern countries. For centuries, essential oils have been considered by many to be the missing link in modern medicine. They have been around and in use since the beginning of time. The

Holy Bible mentions them approximately 191 times, they have been discovered in ancient tombs across the Sudan, and have been recorded in the mountains of China (Stewart). The use of essential oils is relatively foreign to Americans, and often frowned upon. Interestingly though, thousands of countries around the world have openly embraced them and have used them for centuries. Maybe it is time, as Americans, that we start taking responsibility for our health and begin opening our minds to a new way of life, which in turn, might actually extend our life.

Safety is one of the biggest problems with pharmaceutical medicine. The World Health Education Initiative states that "Seven thousand deaths occur each year due to medication errors in hospitals." Overdoses can easily happen when medications do not work as the patient expects them to and the patient therefore decides to self-medicate. An overdose can also happen when patients are taking a large assortment of medications. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "One person dies from a drug overdose every 19 minutes" (CDC). Another problem with pharmaceutical medications is that the majority of them have a long list of possible side-effects. These side-effects result in harming the body more than helping it. Pharmaceutical medicines can be likened to pesticides. While they may kill harmful things, secretly they are deteriorating the vital makeup of the plant or person entirely, eventually leaving the plant or per-

son void of any life at all. Doctors do not prescribe cures, they prescribe symptom-relieving medicines. With these medications the problem may seem to have vanished, but many times it really has not. The body has simply been forced to produce another set of symptoms to try and get the person's attention to force them to deal with the real underlying issue. Thus, one may start with a simple problem that over time slowly escalates into a serious life-threatening disease, such as multiple sclerosis or cancer (Stewart).

While safety is a towering concern regarding pharmaceutical drugs, essential oils that have not been extended or adulterated, have no safety concerns whatsoever. Essential oils are the aromatic, volatile liquid that is contained within plants. The method used when extracting the oil from the plant removes the protein that humans are allergic to, thus leaving the oil totally hypoallergenic, a great benefit. Another tremendous benefit of essential oils is that unlike pharmaceutical medications, one hundred percent pure oils will not expire (Stewart). When King Tutankhamen's tomb was excavated in 1923 by Howard Carter, approximately three hundred and fifty alabaster jars of precious oil were found and it was still viable. In 2007, Dr. HK Lin, of Oklahoma State University of Medicine, began testing Frankincense oil to cure and prevent cancer and he has been quite successful (Liesner). While essential oils are not commonly known in the U.S., they are widely used throughout the eastern world. The "International Organization for Standardization" is a worldwide fed-

eration, based out of Switzerland that tests essential oils for their authenticity. The Association Française de Normalisation, has set reference standards that apply all across Europe. Laboratories around the world have done extensive research, proving that certain essential oils can greatly benefit the body (Yesterday's).

All people desire good health. Unfortunately, many die waiting for a cure, because of their own ignorance. Essential oils are only the beginning of a wonderful revelation. With dedicated people all around the world seeking, "Yesterday's wisdom and tomorrow's destiny," hopefully people can open their minds and hearts to a new way of life.

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By Scott Albright Taken at Washita Battle Site



During my *Introduction to Public Speaking* 1313 (Speech) class with instructor Ms. Terry Ford we studied, among other things, inter-cultural and multi-cultural communications and interactions. One of my short essays, *Washita River: Battle or Massacre?*, follows. I chose to do my essay on this subject not only because this event occurred in our own backyard near Cheyenne, Oklahoma but also because of my interest in cultural relations between the new frontier Americans and Native Americans. Most tribes tried to live in harmony with the settlers, but once they realized that their beloved home was being invaded and taken away from them some began to retaliate and wage war with the U.S. Government. Because of this bloodshed the U.S. began a campaign to remove the Native Americans from their land by any means and take that land from them.

Chief Black Kettle was a plains Cheyenne Native American who realized what was happening and became more interested in saving his tribe's lives than fighting a losing battle. Chief Black Kettle's tolerance and painstaking diligence to avoid conflict was soon to be no more. Black Kettle's camp was apart from the other Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Kiowa camps nearby on the morning of November 27, 1868.

Lieutenant Colonel George Custer, a Civil War hero with no more battles to fight, led about 700 7<sup>th</sup> U.S. Cavalry troops to this Washita River Valley. They were part of Major General Philip Sheridan's "no tolerance" campaign to destroy or immobilize these Plains Native American tribes.

### ***Washita River: Battle or Massacre?***

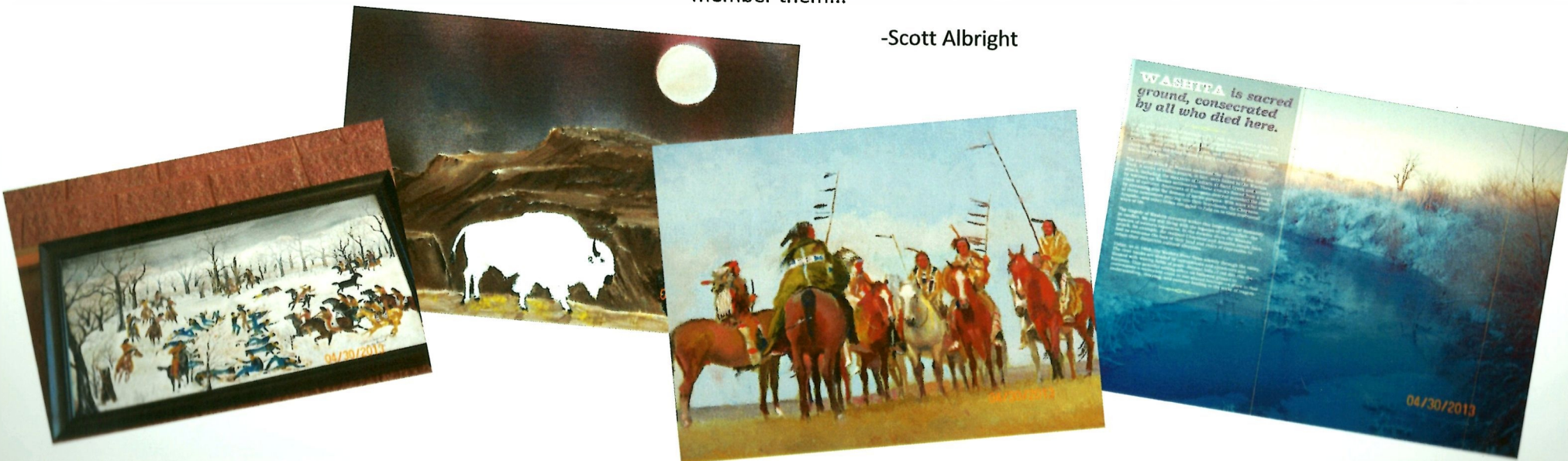
The incident which took place on the Washita River in Black Kettle's camp so long ago should never be forgotten. Forgiven but never forgotten. When a group of armed soldiers attacks a sleeping camp of women, children, elderly, and disabled people in the pre-dawn light and kills them, leaving only a few of the women and children alive solely for the purpose of "showing mercy", it is a massacre.

Black Kettle's camp had few if any able-bodied warriors in it namely because Black Kettle had been rejected by the Cheyenne warriors as a puppet to the US Government. The nearby camps of Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Kiowa tribes did contain warriors, however, and when threatened with attack, battled and killed Major Elliot and his men; this is a battle.

Not only did Custer botch the attack and massacre the wrong village, he allowed a regiment of U.S. soldiers to be killed in a short but deadly battle. Custer left the area with out checking on Major Elliot and did not know if he was alive or dead until two weeks later. Indeed, Custer left enough witnesses alive to attest to the atrocities of that day!

Battle or massacre? There was both a battle and a massacre that cold morning on the Washita River. Let us remember the souls lost there and always remember them...

-Scott Albright





# Las Vegas, the Sin City

Photos and story by Chukwuka B. Osuorji

In the last two decades, Las Vegas has earned some negative reputations which are associated with commonly known social evils in the society. Las Vegas is the most populous city in the state of Nevada in U.S. It has steadily grown since its inception to earn several reputations owing to activities that take within the city. For instance, it has billed itself as the entertainment center or capital of the world owing to a wide range of entertainment options with casinos leading the list. Besides being the entertainment capital center, it has been called Sin City and the recreation center. All these labels have been invented to depict the social activities that take place within this city, which is found in a dessert (Romero 80).

The reputation of Las Vegas can be traced to gambling, which is the main economic activity in the city. Although gambling activities were outlawed in U.S in the past, they later became legal and some sanity was put in the industry. In Las Vegas, gambling activities have almost spiraled out of control because they have attracted a lot of side businesses. One of the social evils that is directly attributed and connected to gambling is prostitution due to the free flow of money. Prostitutes are commonly found on the streets, in gambling dens and in massage parlors which are frequented by patrons with money from gambling. Prostitution is one evil that earned Las Vegas the title of Sin City because many people do not approve the practice (Romero 10).

Having world class hotels and casinos is a hallmark of Las Vegas, and it is this hallmark that confers the city with the reputation of a recreation center. Many people, especially retirees, have been known to have lost all their entire life savings in Las Vegas through gambling (Bernhard 12). Gambling promises so much, yet this is all an illusion that is designed to relieve people of their hard earned money. In order to make people take life easy in Las Vegas, drugs have infiltrated the city which account for many underground crimes. Pleasure is usually sweeter with these illicit substances that add wild fun to the recreation activities and make people throw all caution to the wind. Interestingly, the illicit social activities like drugs and prostitution rake in a lot of revenues for the city (Eadington 184).

I have witnessed some of these activities in Las Vegas. The reputation of Las Vegas being a Sin City is largely attributed to prostitution and drug problems, which lower the moral standards of the city. In addition, there are high levels of pleasure that scare people and leave very little room for moral values to thrive. Because chapels are open 24 hours a day with no need for reservations, there have been weddings that have been conducted between drunken people only to be annulled the next day when they sober up. As if this is not enough, the gambling casinos are thriving, and very luxurious hotels are expanding. It even advertises that a person can act without his or her normal moral character with the city's ad campaign: "What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas."

It is no wonder that Las Vegas has attracted all these reputations.

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"Ben" Osuorji visits Sin City.







Photos taken at Washita Battle Site By Scott Albright





# **“Battle of Muscle Cars”**

## **The Ford Mustang GT vs. The Chevy Camaro SS**

**By Dakota DeLeon**

The Ford Mustang GT and the Camaro SS are two well-known sports cars. They have been around for a very long time. Next year Ford is announcing the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary Mustang, I'm sure that the Camaro has been out just as long, if not longer. For decades there has been an argument over which one is a better car. All of the Ford Mustang guys might say that the Mustang is the better car. All of the Camaro lovers will say that the Camaro that is the better car. Which one is really the best car? I test drove both of these muscle cars to find out. The driving experience of both of these cars was very intense. One of the most fun times I have actually had in a car, and the owner said to give it all it has, so I did, and think I scared him a lot while doing it. It was a really fun experience, and I learned a lot about both of the cars from it.

There are really a lot of similarities in both of the cars. For one, they are both high-powered muscle cars. Both of them can really get up to speed fast, and they are both made mainly for racing. However, they both have their strong points and their weak points. One car is better than the other doing track racing or drag racing. Another similarity is the interior of both the cars. They both have a really sporty looking interior that looks perfect for the car, so that one knows one is in a true muscle car. They also have around the same horsepower and torque, so that they can be really competitive with each other. The two that are going to be compared are the newest models out. Why the newest models? Well, because that is what really matters now.

The new Camaro SS has 426 horsepower and 400 foot pounds of torque. That is a lot of power for such a small car. But, can the car put the power to the ground like it needs to be? Well, yes and no. It does a great job putting all of that power to the ground if the driver is going to be racing on a track with a lot of corners and turns. It is able to do this because of the rear axle. The rear axle on this car is made for racing on tracks that have lots of turns and corners. The axle is an independent suspension that means the rear wheels can do like the front on almost every vehicle; they are not tied together with a solid axle, so they can handle really sharp turns at higher speeds than the solid axle cars. So, yes it can put the power to the ground actually very well, but only while turning and just not going straight. This axle is not the

best for drag racing though. The safety on this car is wonderful; it has a five star crash rating. That's the best that anyone can get! So if someone ever got in major trouble in this car having a wreck probably doing what it's made for, which is racing, the chances of making it out okay are very good.

The Mustang GT has 420 horsepower and 390 foot pounds of torque. This is slightly lower than the Camaro SS, but it actually puts it to the ground a lot better than the Camaro SS. We all know that we don't get the same amount of horsepower to the back wheels as your engine puts out, but you still get a lot of it. Well the Mustang GT actually puts more horsepower and torque to the ground than the Camaro does. The Mustang is mainly made for drag racing, so that's why it is able to do this. For drag racing it is best to have a solid rear axle because that is what puts more horsepower and torque to the ground. The Mustang has the solid rear axle making it amazing at drag racing. The safety on this car is pretty good too; it got a 4 star crash test rating. That is also really good for a muscle car. It might not be as good as the Camaro, but it is almost as good. We still have a good chance of being okay in a wreck in the Mustang.

So what is really the better car? I know exactly which one I would pick. I would pick the Mustang GT. Why would I pick this car when the other one has more power for a muscle car? The Mustang GT actually has more horsepower and torque than the Camaro SS, because of the rear axle types. The Mustang is the one that puts the most power to the ground. Let's be real about this also, some people who buy these muscle cars are mostly going to drag race them. There are a few that actually take the car out to a track to race. The Mustang will win in a drag race hands down against the Camaro. They are both very fast muscle cars made for racing. Every year they come out with new ones that have even more horsepower and torque than they did last year. Just like Henry Ford said, "Everything can always be done faster and better." He was very right about that, there will continue to be lots of improvements to the two muscle cars in the future. As far as the safety, yes, the Camaro has better safety, but not by much. In a crash going too fast in these cars, I don't think that the safety rating would matter as much. Look at it this way, the Mustang is like a true muscle car lover's performance, and the Camaro is like baby performance.





**ALICIA CRUM AT LAKE**





**SWOSU**  
**BY SCOTT ALBRIGHT**





*By Mary Church*

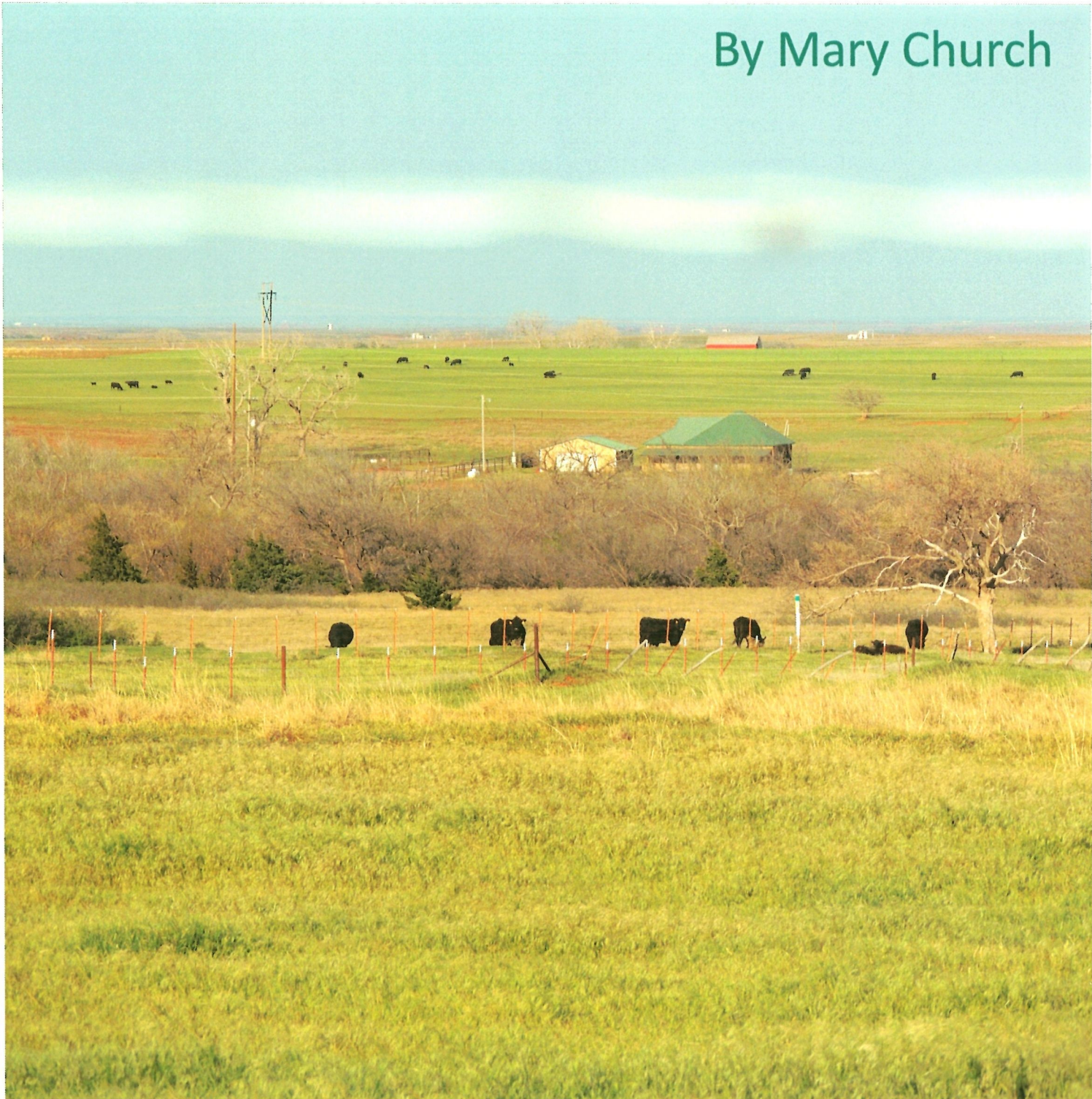


# By Mary Church





By Mary Church





# A Cruel Joke

By Chris Trent

**The Demons call us their slaves  
The Angels call us their friend  
They fight to claim our souls  
And they'll battle till the very end**

**It was meant to be a gift  
But its tearing this world in two  
And in this fight we've turned on ourselves  
Soon there will be nothing left to do  
We still go through the motions day after day  
But is this a joke or is it a game  
I don't know what caused it  
But I do know who to blame**





Photos by Hunter Chalfant



# A Good Thing Gone Bad?

By Sheri Flowers

A little over a year ago, a video about a movement to stop a man named Joseph Kony went viral. At the beginning of the video, the people from an organization called the Invisible Children Northern Uganda. The children were there because a group called the LRA, Lord's Resistance Army. It they kidnap into their army or will brutally kill them as sex slaves. The video was made to happening in Northern Uganda. They want people's help, the children of Uganda. Due to this movement that was started, many ment and have given billions of dollars as well as time and support into finding and stopping what Kony is doing. Millions more people have watched this video and thought the opposite and chose to respond in quite a different manner. Either which way, this disturbing real video made an effect on many people as well as the country of Uganda.



showed children who were sleeping in clusters all over buildings in a town in they were scared of being kidnapped at home during the night by went on to inform that the LRA either forces the children that them. It was also noted that they will also take the girls and use show the information that the Invisible Children had on what was whether money or support, to put an end to what the LRA is doing to things have taken place. Millions of people got on board with this move-

When people find a cause that they believe in, some go all out and do anything they can to help make a difference. When the Kony 2012 video was released, so many people responded positively to it. From all over the world, people started donating millions to the Invisible Children program as well as supporting by buying their merchandise. People also took a stand on Facebook and changed their profile and/or cover picture with the saying, "KONY 2012 STOP AT NOTHING." With all of this publicity, many things happened. Like the Kony 2012 video said, because people took a stand and now knew about who Joseph Kony and the LRA was, the Government noticed, and on January 15, 2013, a bill was passed to bring



## Kony to justice (Invisible).

In Uganda, things also began to change, but for the worse. People seeing in the video that the LRA was in Uganda possibly left them with the thoughts that Uganda is a not a safe place to visit. This, however, is false due to the fact that “the LRA was pushed out of Uganda and has been operating in extremely remote areas of the DRC, South Sudan, and the Central African Republic” (Keating). With people only seeing and hearing one source of information, it made a very negative impact on a country.

Many other people who did not take well to what the organization was trying to accomplish, decided to take a very different approach in their response. Some decided to pick apart what the Invisible Children were doing and make them out to be someone that they were not. Other people looked more into the situation in Uganda and found out more information about what is really happening in Uganda. Due to these researchers, many people thought that what the Invisible Children were doing was not that important and so the Kony 2012 movement started to die down. Many people also thought they were lied to; however, the video clearly explains a lot but a person is not likely to catch every single detail in a 30 minute long video. This showed and led to where many stopped in their support to the Kony 2012 movement as well as to the Invisible Children.

The Invisible Children are a group who has the goal of helping those in Africa in any way they can. They found a way and acted upon it. The Kony 2012 video was not only a way to make the issue heard and known but to also have their cause known since it is a way for people to help. People’s different responses to the Kony 2012 video have made both a positive and a negative effect due to everyone’s different opinion. Hopefully, that no matter what happens, there will be a way help these children, Ugandan or not, to where they will no longer have to sleep in fear.

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**By Sandra Peña**





# A Life That Isn't Mine

By Levi Sanders and Brock Buller

Have you ever heard the expression "My life flashed before my eyes"? People use it so much it's become a cliché. But such a thing happened to me, although it wasn't my life I saw.

It was a bright Monday morning when it started. Being the intern in the office, I had to be the runner for the morning coffee. As I patiently waited for the crosswalk on Biscayne Avenue, I noticed beside me what looked to be a homeless man. He smelled of body odor and garbage. I felt repulsed just standing by him.

"Beautiful day isn't it?" he asked me. He smiled warmly and appeared friendly. I tried to be polite and answered him with a nod.

The walking light turned, bringing a sigh of relief from me. As I started to walk towards the coffee shop across the street, I heard the sound of the homeless man. He was screaming, "Watch out!" and he shoved me away from a car that was running the red light. In the process of his shoving me, I tripped and fell. My head hit the curb, and that was the last thing I remember before waking up in Memorial Hospital.

When I open my eyes, I see balloons and flowers with signs that say *Get Well Soon!* and *You're in Our Thoughts!* I am the only person in

the room, the beeping sounds of machines blaring in my ears. I fling the covers off me and sit up. As my head it seems time still, and I'm transported somewhere else. I see a woman in a hospital bed holding a baby boy. She looks down and says to the baby, "I love you."

Within a second, I am back in my room. I feel my hands and they are sweaty. *That must have been a dream*, I tell myself. But, it felt so real. I rip the cords that are connected to my chest and fingers, and I go into the hallway. I see no one except my mom. When she sees me walk towards her, she cries, shouts with joy, and hugs me. I ask her where Dad is - my adoptive dad - and she says he is coming from New York and will be here as soon as possible.

I love my adoptive dad with all my heart, because he treats me like his own child. My biological dad ran out on me and my mom when I was three months old. Mom said he told her that he didn't love her anymore and he was going to find someone who appreciated him for who he is. I have hated my dad for as long as I can remember, and I don't think I could ever forgive him for what he did. My mom ushers me to my room and sits in the chair. I asked her what happened and she told me: some homeless man shoved me



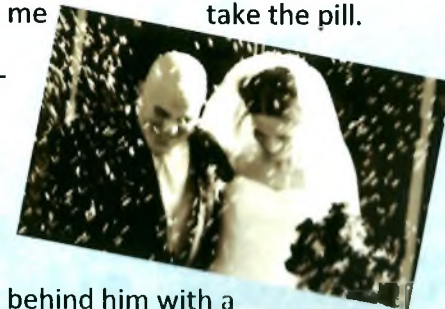
away from a car and he saved my life. The man took my phone from my pocket and called the contact named "Mom" and explained what happened. 911 was called and everything else fell into place except no one could find the man that helped me.

Around dinner time, Dad walks in and gives me a hug and tells me I was going to be all right. Then right before my eyes, I see another vision. This time, I see a boy and girl in an old, beat-up pickup truck. The boy looks slightly like me, and the girl looks like my mom. *What is this?* I ask myself. I see them kiss and the vision fades away.

My heart is beating super-fast, and I'm sweating bullets. My parents look alarmed and get a nurse. The nurse comes in with a wet cloth, a glass of water, and a pill. She puts the cloth on my head and makes me take the pill.

On Wednesday, I am released. Dad comes in my room, and he has a wheelchair. My

mom comes in right behind him with a suitcase of the clothes I was wearing when I came to the hospital. I get in the wheelchair, and Dad takes me to the elevator and down to the car. When I get inside the car, I get another vision. This time, I am taken outside a church. There are cars parked everywhere, and I see people running out of the church, first a bride with the groom on





her arm and then people throwing rice at the newlyweds. I get a closer look at the newlyweds, and I see it's the boy and girl I saw in my last vision.

I snap back to reality, puzzled by why this is happening to me. The ride back home is a blur. I get to my parents' house and go to the kitchen. I see a week's worth of newspapers neatly stacked on the dinner table. Mom walks in and tells me that Dad put them there because he knew I liked to read them. I find the earliest newspaper: Monday. I skim through most of the boring old news and I come upon the obituaries. There are the usual types of people dead: 80 year old men and women who had a heart attack or stroke. Then, I notice one picture of someone I had seen before: the homeless man. Under his picture, "*Died Sunday*" is written. I am struck with surprise and I get another vision. This time, we are in my parents' house, and I see my mother holding a little baby. She's yelling at the homeless man that saved me.

*"I'm sorry, Adam! He loves me in a way you can't!"* she yells, crying.

He yells back, "*We had a child, Susan!*" He points to the child she is holding. "*You had an affair while you were pregnant with my child.*"

About this time, the front door opens and my adoptive father walks in. Adam looks at him and then at my mom. He picks up a suitcase and tells her, "*I'm leaving. I don't love you anymore, Susan,*

*and I'm going to find someone who appreciates me for who I am."*

With that, he walks around my adoptive dad and slams the door shut. I am taken back to reality with what just happened.

The homeless man is my real dad.

I think back to all the visions I've had, and they all center on my biological dad. I am appalled. It felt like I had been hit with a sack full of bricks. I look around and don't see anyone. I look to see what funeral home my real dad is in, and I decide to go there and pay my respects.

I don't tell my cheating mom or deceiving adoptive dad I'm leaving. I take their car and drive to the funeral home. I get there and ask the funeral director where he is, and he points me to a room at the end of a long hall. He looks at me and says, "You got here in time. In an hour, we're going to cremate him."

I go into the room they are holding him in, and I see they have him in just a cardboard box. There is another man in the room viewing the body. It is a man dressed in the same homeless clothing style I saw him in on Monday. He looks at me and says, "You look like him." He shakes my hand and continues, "He said you would come. He told me to give this to you." He

hands me an envelope.

I look at the front and in delicate handwriting it says "*My Child.*" I open it and there is a letter written in the same handwriting. It says:

*"My Child,*

*If you are reading this, that means my plan worked. I am sorry I never got the chance to get to know you. I didn't want to leave, but I had to. I hope the visions of my life I've sent you explain my situation. Just know that from now on, I will be with you wherever you go. I love you.*

*Love Always,*

*Your Father*



arthurgreeneo.com

A tear starts to roll down my cheek, but I have a smile on my face. He might have died Sunday, but on Monday, he lived in me. Even after he died, he made it clear that he wanted to make amends.

I turn the paper over, grab a pen from the guestbook table, and write the words "*I forgive you. I love you, too.*" I place the note in his dead hands, turn and walk out of the funeral home.



Everyday Use

Sisters waking up  
Lookin' for cardboard box to play in  
Always runnin'  
Coach says keep up our spirits in the game we hope to stay in  
Always runnin'  
Movin' my shoes in this 5k race of life that I work so hard to try to make my way in  
Always runnin'

Kristina Rhoades



## Who Wants to Be a Billionaire?

By April Soto

Having billions of dollars is usually everyone's biggest wish. Having so much money can either be a blessing or a curse. It all depends on how well someone is with money, and their will power to say "no" to negative influences for example drugs and alcohol. In my opinion being a billionaire has many positives a few would be absolutely no struggle to make ends meet, living the American Dream, and helping those who need it.

Being a billionaire would mean making ends meet, and not living paycheck to paycheck. Many families live on an income that is below poverty line. In the state of Oklahoma 17.2 percent of Oklahomans are estimated to be living in poverty during the given year "National Priorities". Struggling with a family depending on one or both parents is by far very stressful. When having a family a parent wants to give their child or children a good life with plenty of amazing experiences, and be able to pay for a good college education.

Everyone does not have the same definition for the American Dream. The definition of the "American Dream" has changed over the course of history, the quote by James Truslow Windslow in 1931 hit home in my heart. James Windslow said, "Life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone with opportunity for each according to ability and achievement." It also brings a song to my memory called "Billionaire" by Travie McCoy and Bruno Mars. They sing about all the perks of being a billionaire, what they would do about the recession, and how they would help everyone around the world in need. In one verse he sings "I'll probably take whatever's left and split it up so everyone that I love can have a couple bucks. Not a single tummy around me would know what hungry is eating good sleeping soundly. I know we all have a similar dream." Those quotes are two different versions of the American Dream.

There are countless charities all over the world. My charities of choice would be Oklahoma's Children's Cancer Association (OCCA), and the World Vision Organization

(WVO). There is nothing that hurts my heart more than to see a child with any type of cancer or a child going hungry. Here is a good quote by Albert Pine, "What we do for ourselves dies with us, what we do for others and the world remains and is immortal." I would have to say becoming a billionaire can either make you or break you. Being able to keep oneself from falling into the wrong habits whether it is a drug or alcohol addiction can be a challenge. Growing up poor my mother and stepfather stole for us to eat, and sometimes we would go to bed hungry. I went through a life changing experience when my stepfather won 250,000 dollars from the New Mexico lottery. He now has nothing to show for it due to drugs which caused us to be poor and go hungry in the first place. I learned who I do not want to be, how I do not want to live, and what not to do. Money can bring out the bad in people, but it can also bring out the good in others. Therefore, whether it is the ease of stress from my shoulders, my desire to live the American Dream, or helping those in need, I could trust that I would be

a good billionaire like Opera. That woman has a heart of gold.

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Photos by Sandra Peña



# Confined to a Computer: Video Game Addicts

By Charles Shilling

In today's world, video games are a staple form of entertainment. We see advertisements every day for new and upcoming releases of every genre. These releases include popular titles such as the first-person shooters know as the Call of Duty series, an online military war game, and World of Warcraft, a world-renowned massively multiplayer online role playing game (known by the acronym MMORPG for short.) A certain trend that seems to take place among modern video games is a focus on ways to keep the players

interested. These games are often designed with common reward systems, such as a gaining experience to "level up" and unlock new functions of the game in question. The aspect of my focus is the time required to obtain the experience necessary to reach these goals in the game. But even more dreadful are certain games such as Minecraft, a popular online game fundamentally based on creativity, that has no real goals to reach. Having neither items

to obtain nor secrets to unlock, I fear such games are even worse for video game addicts. After these video games have taken all of someone's time and dedication, what remains for them in real life as they've not dedicated this time to aspects educational or financial?

The Call of Duty franchise is extremely well known. The corporation behind the video games runs advertisements for the latest addition to the series during some of the

most critical television hours, successfully promoting their product to the masses. This company typically releases a new addition to the series every year, promoting new features as well as

innovations on fan-favorites, such as Zombie Survival Mode (a game mode in which players fight an endless number of zombies to collect points and survive as long as possible.) Players of this game typically play at night, which tends to be the best time to mix with other millions of players worldwide. After a long night of Call of Duty, they are likely to sleep throughout daytime hours. Many people whom I know personally suffer from this routine, finding themselves wasting

daylight to awaken to "nothing better to do than play *Call of Duty*." Although I enjoy the game myself, I'm afraid I have found it impossible to make time for video games while

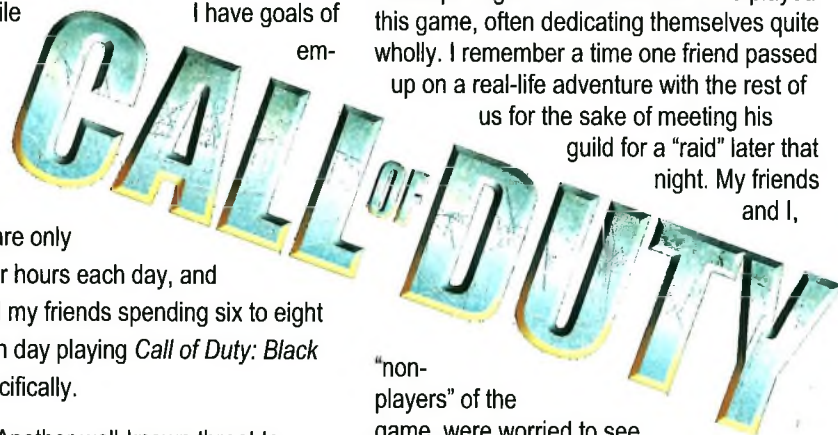
I have goals of employment and attending a university. There are only twenty-four hours each day, and I often find my friends spending six to eight hours each day playing *Call of Duty: Black Ops 2* specifically.

Another well-known threat to teens, young adults, and the middle-aged simultaneously is the epic phenomenon known as *World of Warcraft*. *World of Warcraft* is easily the best known example of an MMORPG, or massively multiplayer online role-playing game. Such games typically involve the customization of a player's avatar through the collection of experience points, obtained by means of traveling the game world, slaying monsters, and undertaking quests. The nature of such a game requires hundreds of hours of gameplay to accomplish goals in the game. It is debatable that there is no true end to such a game. The corporation behind *World of Warcraft* periodically releases "expansions" to the game, purchasable software which gives the player new features, quests, and places to explore. Such games also often call for teamwork to attempt quests, requiring a

dependence on other players to play the game. This dependence often lead to gamer communities, such as guilds, in which players work together in an organized fashion to accomplish goals. I have friends who played this game, often dedicating themselves quite wholly. I remember a time one friend passed up on a real-life adventure with the rest of us for the sake of meeting his guild for a "raid" later that night. My friends and I,

"non-players" of the game, were worried to see a friend forsake real-life fun for a video game. I suppose we wouldn't understand his point of view?

Facebook games: Facebook is estimated to have one billion users every month. Facebook is also known to run advertisements for, among many things, online video games. One I'm quite familiar with is known as *Farmville*, a game in which the player owns and operates a farm. This game operates on real-world time. For example, a player might plant seeds and find that crops have grown twenty-four hours later, representative of the time required in nature for plants to grow. A player would then harvest these crops to obtain points and items, often "coins" or "gems," then proceed to plant and harvest more. The nature of this game requires players to play every day, completing a routine of collecting points and "treasure"

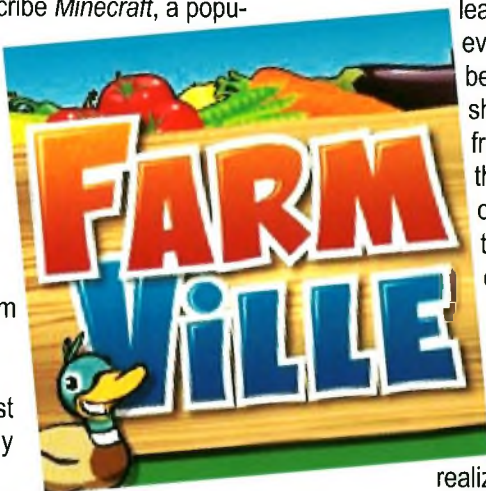




within the world of the game. In my personal experience, I have seen many of my family members occupied for hours daily while tending to their crops and completing their daily routine. Throughout the duration of the routine, the player is often mesmerized by the game, rather unaware of anything going on around them. I fear this distraction from real life easily becomes a necessity to the player, the player feeling obligated to the game. I most certainly have a biased point of view and abhor games of this genre.

I feel it simply vital to this article to describe *Minecraft*, a popular multi-

platform video game that just recently found popularity.



ty. The premise of this game is an open world to explore, a world in which everything looks very block and low-resolution. All structures within the games are comprised of cubic components, often cubes of brick, wood, leaves, etc. Within this game, players use a pickaxe to collect cubes of material throughout the game's "daytime." Players use the obtained material to build a form of shelter, like a house with a door in it. At "night time," the player must use the shelter to find refuge from vicious skeletons armed

with arrows. To my understanding, there is no end to this game, and the only goals are to build structures comprised of the cubes collected by the player. I fear this gaming genre is sadly "the dregs of the dregs," being the most hazardous variety of video game to the layer's well-being.

Video games have changed a lot since the simplicity of *Pong* or *Pac-Man*. The video game industry has set a new standard by releasing video games which require unprecedented hours of dedication to playing the games. People all too often fall victim to a video game addiction that leaves them incapable of working or even functioning as a typical human being. We should be frightened, shocked by the transformation of our friends and families into creatures of the night, morbid creations of their own mistakes, be it lethargy or apathy. Don't misunderstand me, however. I believe morality should be considered in such a situation. By this I'm of course suggesting video-game addicts need help, just as addicts of other things within the material world. People have to

realize that there's a huge world with countless paths to explore, adventures into new lands, quests to help others --- Perhaps game addicts simply need to play the game of life for a few minutes and they'll be hooked. then proceed to plant and harvest more. The nature of this game requires players to play every day, completing a routine of collecting points and "treasure" within the world of the game. In my personal experience, I have seen many of my family members occupied for hours daily while tending to their crops and completing their daily routine. Throughout

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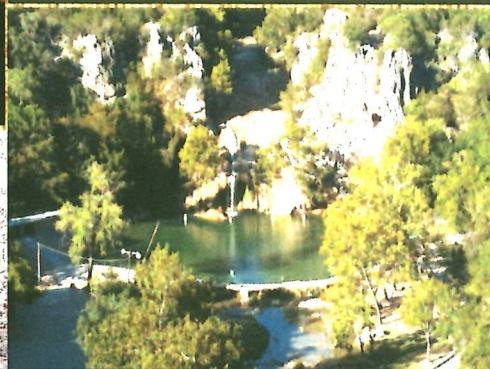




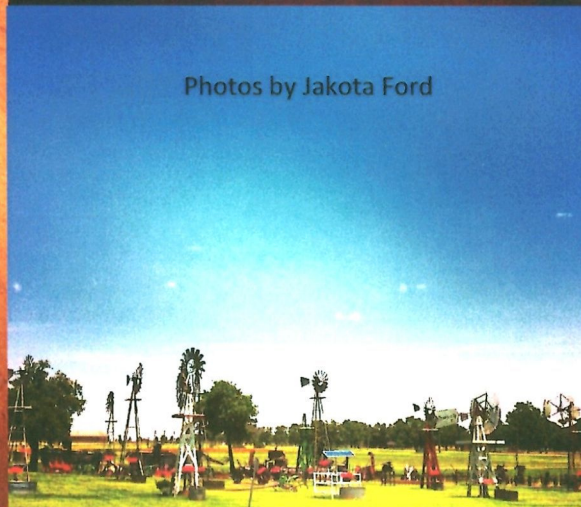
PHOTOS BY



CHRIS TRENT







Photos by Jakota Ford





# Discovering Life

By DeShawna Smyth

*I was born in Claremore, Oklahoma, at 1:47 a.m. on December 23, 1985. My mother was a waitress and single. My father was in the wind, somewhere in Texas. I always wondered what my life would be like if I had been raised by my father, or by both my parents.*

*Life with my mother was not great. We had moved all over Oklahoma and landed in Elk City when I was four years old. My grandparents were my real role models. And even though they loved me very much, I still had an empty feeling in my life. I first started looking for my father two days after my thirteenth birthday. I found the number for a guy with the exact same name as my father; the only difference was that he lived in Ohio. I dialed the number anyway. I talked to the man for an hour or so. In the end, he was not the man I was looking for. This gave me hope though.*

*I soon was introduced to the internet. I would search endlessly for my father's address, or phone number, court records, ANYTHING that could lead me to him. Every website needed me to pay, or be eighteen, to obtain the information I needed. This was hopeless. I would never find anything on my father. Maybe he didn't want to be found. Lord knows the child support agency tried to find him and couldn't. When I went into foster care, the DHS workers would try to find him, without success. I gave up.*

*I was almost eighteen when I met a Sargent in the military. He said he could help me find my father. I chuckled and told him to go ahead, but I wasn't going to hold my breath. He never did succeed in finding the David Davis that I was looking for. It was like this man never existed. All I wanted to know was why he left, if he knew about me, if he loved me. To me this seemed such a small request, something every person deserved the answers to.*



*It wasn't until the summer of 2011 that I found what I was looking for. I had been watching the show *The Locator* on TV. This man would reunite families or find siblings or parents in adoption cases, and most importantly he found parents for children who had never met them! As soon as I found how to contact him, I did. I sent Troy the Locator an email explaining my situation and what I desperately wanted. It only took a few days for him to reply, and the message wasn't one I wanted to hear. He gave me some tips on locating my father, but said he could not help me with my endeavor.*

*That day, I randomly searched his name again. This time I found a link that stated he had a son and an ex-wife. I went right to my Facebook page. I first searched for the son's name, Sam Davis. I came across several with that name and emailed them all asking if they were the son that I was looking for. The last Sam that I clicked on, just so happened to have a mother named Tina, the same name that was listed as David's ex-wife! My God, I had actually found them! I sent both Tina and Sam an email asking if they could be the right ones. It only took a couple of hours for Tina to reply! She knew exactly who I was and had been looking for me too! I had a sister named Mary, a brother named Colt, and another brother named Sam! They had been trying to find me for five years! It would be another six months before I actually talked to my father, and six months after that before I actually met him.*

*He answered every question I had. He left because he thought that I was not his child. He and my mother did not get along that well, and could not continue the relationship as it was. But in the end, he said he could not deny that I was his daughter. After all, I did look just like him, and my sister and I could be twins!*

*My father and I still talk every now and then; we text or Facebook each other. I have a new step-mother now. My dad actually asked for my advice on when to tie the knot! My sister and I are as close as any sisters would be, my brothers and I wrestle and tease and I have a beautiful niece that I love very much! I do have two younger brothers on my mother's side as well. I can't imagine life without this big family that I have now!*

*(Names have been changed in this story, to protect the individual's privacy.)*



# Falling

Writings by DeShawna  
Smyth

# Sinking

Heavy thoughts on my mind  
Pouring through the sands of time  
A whirlwind of hate rushes in  
I turn and run away from sin  
  
Looking for a new beginning,  
A door to something better  
No more fighting, hitting, screaming  
  
A ray of light trickling in,  
It burst into flames of passion  
Heated by the past's destruction  
  
Two jaded lives walking through  
This game of shame, so real and true  
Painful love and cheating bribes  
Playing clearly before our eyes  
  
This web we weave of blatant lies  
Holding together the world in which we dwell  
Sticking to our hearts full of hurt  
  
Could this ever really work?  
This life of hidden dreams so strong  
How could destiny be wrong?

Walking down this road of fame  
I fear life's most tempting game  
Wandering why I even came  
I hang my head in sinful shame  
  
Drowning in a sea of pain  
Everywhere I turn, a wall of rain  
I ask myself why I get pulled under  
All I feel is pounding thunder  
  
Wanting, needing, hoping, pleading  
Taking, faking, lying, cheating  
Hiding, flying, running, beating  
Hitting, hating, loving, leading  
Following, caring, laughing, meeting  
Into your mind I am reading  
  
Insanity comes crashing in  
All of what I do is sin  
Life, I wish did not begin  
Love, I can never give again

Photo by Todd  
Garret



*Photo by Todd Garret*  
*Poem by DeShawna Smyth*

Forgiveness, shameless  
It's already begun  
Show me how it is  
done  
Forgiveness, Blameless  
It's already begun  
Show me how it is  
done  
I stepped outside my  
box  
I'll let go of my  
thoughts  
You weren't there all  
along  
I didn't know where I  
belong  
But it wasn't your fault  
These words, I locked  
in a vault  
It's time to let it all out  
In you, I have always  
had doubt

You couldn't help me  
understand  
Life was not as I had  
planned  
I don't know if you  
loved me at all  
You won't catch me if I  
fall  
I'll put the past behind  
Erase these thoughts  
from my mind  
It will set my soul free  
Shackled down, I'll no  
longer be  
Forgiveness, shameless  
It's already begun  
Show me how it is  
done  
Forgiveness, blameless  
It's already begun  
Show me how it is  
done





**Photo by Kevin Parkhurst**

**Gritty Residue**

**Justin Short**

What are these negatives that are burned onto my soul  
They haunt and write and dissolve so slow  
They are memories  
From times ago

The beasts on tracks they trudge through the sand  
The sharp chop of the blades I can no longer stand  
The bombs bursting in air, only Hells fury could compare  
The blood of the innocent I can no longer bear

With sharp lines of tragedy  
And blurred images of home  
Innocence is my agony  
This froth turns to foam

Why won't this scab heal  
The VA gives me candy to help me deal  
My mind wonders if it was all in vain  
Why didn't I ride on that long black train

Death and I, we go way back  
Back to Nebraska street, before Iraq  
He is swift even when he is slow  
Our names are all tattooed on his soul  
he's called me by my name, and I have his  
Through the death of Brothers Freedom Lives

Surrounded by sand  
Surrounded by time  
Surrounded by images  
They are mine

**Semper Fi**



# Learning New Things

By Jakota Ford

*Learning new things can be a very exciting, yet scary experience. One of the hardest things I've ever had to do was learn how to grow up. When I was a child, I had to grow up a lot sooner than the rest of my friends did. I became pregnant at the age of 15. The main things I figured out during my journey of becoming an adult at the age of 15 with a child are to maintain a job, staying in school, and always doing what is best for your child.*

*When I found out I was pregnant I realized that I would have to get a job. I couldn't just get a summer job and blow it off when school came around like the rest of my friends could. I had to maintain the job so I could provide for my child. I found out that there's not many places that will hire a teenager without a GED or high school diploma, and considering I was still in high school, I had not yet received either of those. So, I took what I could get at the time and kept my head up as I finished high school.*


*Staying in school was probably one of the biggest life lessons I have learned growing up. While I was hunting for a job I realized that I couldn't get very far without education, and with a child on the way all I could think about was I good job. Since I found out that I was pregnant I have wanted nothing more than to give my daughter the life she deserved. The life I never had. So, I stuck to it, as there were good and bad times, and I finally graduated high school. That was when I knew I had to go to college and better myself so I could give her everything she wanted.*

*Another one of the biggest things I have learned about growing up as a pregnant teenager, is always do what's best for your child. No matter what the circumstances, always do what will benefit your child. Because of my daughter I have graduated high school, enlisted in the Oklahoma National Guard, and am now in college. So many people these days start to believe that they cannot make it and turn to drugs or down other wrong paths such as that.*

*Aside from everything I have been through, I chose the path I took and I have made my own decisions. I believe that my daughter changed me for the better and every day I live to better myself for her. Yes, I had her at a very young age, but she has made me who I am today and I am so thankful she was put into my life. Growing up is a very scary experience especially when your doing it with a child on your own, just remember to always keep your head up.*



## Night After Night

A photograph of a couple walking away from the viewer on a sandy beach towards the ocean. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright, hazy glow that fills the sky and reflects on the water. The couple is silhouetted against the bright light. Their shadows are cast long and dark on the sand in front of them. Numerous footprints are visible in the sand, leading from the foreground towards the couple. The overall mood is romantic and contemplative.

He hears her cry night after night  
But the timing must be perfect the moment just right  
He has to stay strong for his love, his wife  
She's all that he has, she's his whole life  
He knows she is scared but won't let him see  
Yet night after night it's his heart that bleeds  
He'll take her away to the ocean, the beach  
No more nurses or doctors  
All will be far out of reach  
Except for their love that they vowed  
It will go on forever after she has lied down  
He will whisk her away in the middle of the night  
But the timing must be perfect the moment just right

By Torja Hammond





Photos by Sandra Pena





# PRESSURES AND BECOMING A PROFESSIONAL

By Mandy Ovalle

I have Math and English homework due on Monday, my boss is changing my schedule, mom called again to remind me about papers I need to turn in, Dallas asked if I could do something with him this week, and I am trying to maintain my personal and academic standards. These are just a few of the pressures I face as a college student. There are many sections of my life that tug at time and require devotion. Between my home, job, parents, peers, and myself, the pressures of becoming a professional college graduate are overwhelming.

College is strict on homework, projects, and class activities. For example, it does not allow for sick days. I have a lot of instructors who care about my academics, but that does not allow leniency. An assignment is due when an assignment is due. Also, many tests are in the same week, which is quite nerve wracking. On top of assignments and projects, I have to attend class and actively participate. While I enjoy being a part of class, it does take time to be on campus. I prefer to come to class though because being in class helps me understand my assignments. I need to hear discussion to better comprehend concepts. The pressures of curriculum are constantly in my mind and seem to be endless.

The second stress of learning to be a professional is learning how to balance a job and a home with school. I still live at home, but I have numerous responsibilities. I take care of my car and help around the house. My parents have a business which I often help with also. To add even more, we are building an addition on our house. Adding on a room to a house is actually tedious and hard work. Especially when I know I have laundry, cleaning, and dinner to handle also. Two days out of the week I am at work and not at home. I work one twelve hour shift on Sunday and one nine hour shift on Tuesday. I am grateful I only work two days, but my twelve hour shift is tiring. I am thankful I really enjoy my job! It has taken me a few months to develop a good schedule that balances home, class, and my job.

My friends and family are wonderful people. They support my aspirations. With their support comes constant encouragement. Sometimes the encouragement is disguised as a massive shove to do what I need to. My friends are sometimes a distraction, but without their distracting me I would not survive for long. My friends make me take a break, but mom makes sure I take care of my responsibilities. I appreciate the hard work and dedication my friends and family provide me, even though it is undoubtedly a pressure in my life.

The last major pressure to becoming a professional is nothing else than myself. I have huge dreams and goals. When I do not do well, it is stressful to think about it hindering me. I know the process of success takes a lot of dedication, failures, and accomplishments.

The failures are sometimes hard to manage, but all I can do is learn and move on to the next step in the process. Someday I will be working in a medical lab, discovering the next big medical breakthrough. Although the challenges will not be easy, each will mold me.

I know I have a bright future ahead of me; therefore I will continue to push my limits.

The many portions of my life are special to me. Without the time my instructors give me, the skills I develop in my home, the money I make at my job, the support from my parents, the breaks with my peers, or the desire to excel, I would not be able to catch my dreams.

One thing I have learned on my journey to becoming a professional, is that the pressures I have makes me better.



photos by DeShawna Smyth







***Photos by Sandra Peña***





# Escape

My heart was racing. “Did they see us?” I asked my friend clad in black. There was no answer; only silence. I looked behind me to only see an empty bush where my friend once stood. My partner must have made a dash across the large golden expanse of wheat to try his escape. Anger and fear welled up inside of me. Why would he just leave me by myself after he promised to stay close? It didn’t matter as I looked back to the uneven dirt road to see the dim lighting of an approaching car. I had to make a break for it or get caught. The wheat was waving at me as an invitation, but I knew it was a death trap. I heard the vehicle getting closer and decided to lay flat on the ground in hopes that they wouldn’t see my silhouette and snatch me up. With my face buried in the cool damp dirt, I heard the skidding of tire against dirt as the vehicle came to a stop. Voices filled the air.

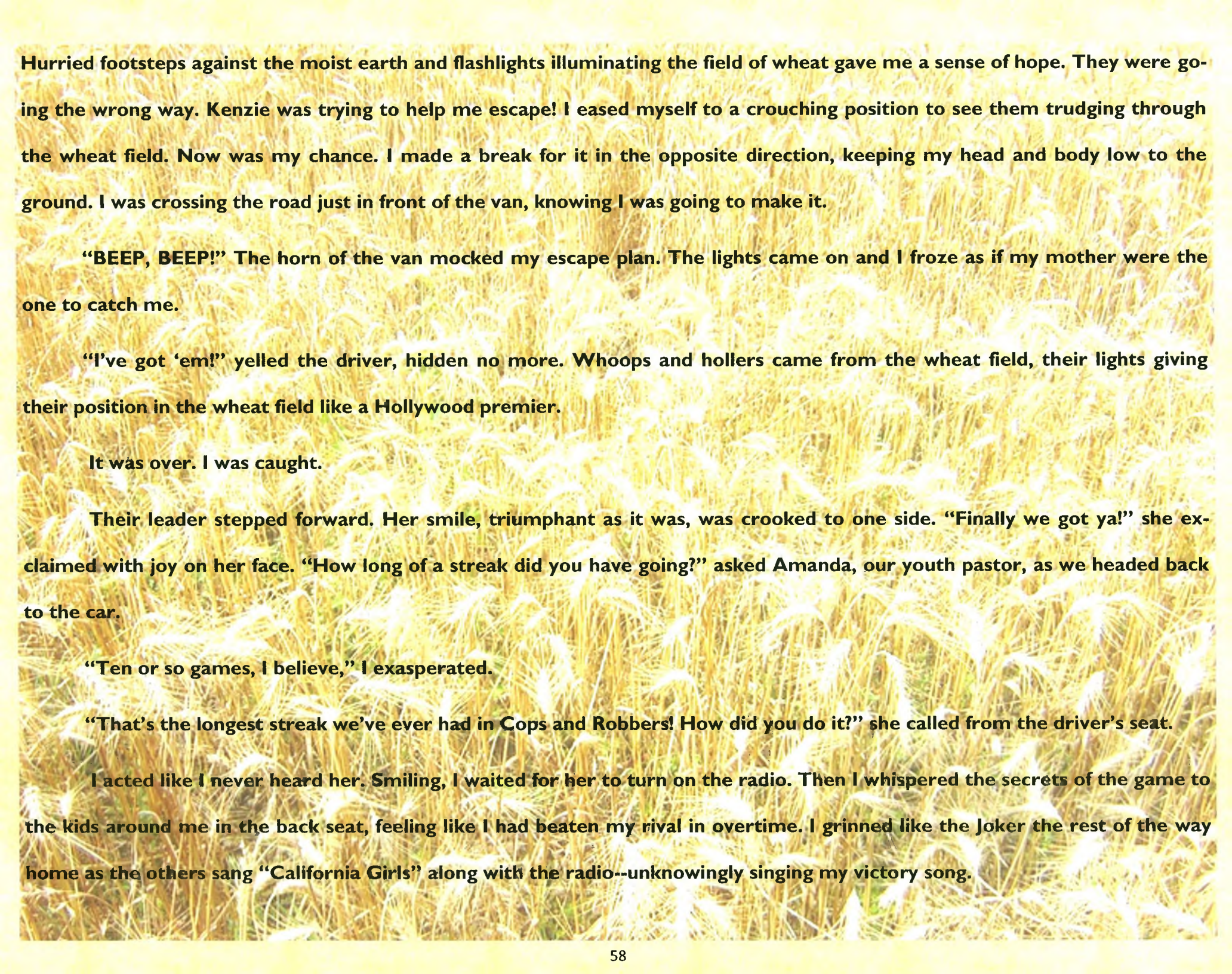
“I was just with him-- right over here!” a voice cried out. I knew it as my friend, clad in black, Kenzie. He not only was caught, he was to betray me by disclosing my whereabouts? I looked up to see a beam of light illuminating the gnats and mosquitos that hovered around my body as if I were the dinner buffet at Golden Corral.

“You are POSITIVE he went this way?” a female voice cut through the still night.

“I promise.”

“Spread out and find the little robber!” the woman barked.





Hurried footsteps against the moist earth and flashlights illuminating the field of wheat gave me a sense of hope. They were going the wrong way. Kenzie was trying to help me escape! I eased myself to a crouching position to see them trudging through the wheat field. Now was my chance. I made a break for it in the opposite direction, keeping my head and body low to the ground. I was crossing the road just in front of the van, knowing I was going to make it.

“BEEP, BEEP!” The horn of the van mocked my escape plan. The lights came on and I froze as if my mother were the one to catch me.

“I’ve got ‘em!” yelled the driver, hidden no more. Whoops and hollers came from the wheat field, their lights giving their position in the wheat field like a Hollywood premier.

It was over. I was caught.

Their leader stepped forward. Her smile, triumphant as it was, was crooked to one side. “Finally we got ya!” she exclaimed with joy on her face. “How long of a streak did you have going?” asked Amanda, our youth pastor, as we headed back to the car.

“Ten or so games, I believe,” I exasperated.

“That’s the longest streak we’ve ever had in Cops and Robbers! How did you do it?” she called from the driver’s seat.

I acted like I never heard her. Smiling, I waited for her to turn on the radio. Then I whispered the secrets of the game to the kids around me in the back seat, feeling like I had beaten my rival in overtime. I grinned like the Joker the rest of the way home as the others sang “California Girls” along with the radio--unknowingly singing my victory song.





Photos by Sandra Peña





# February

*By: Macie Maddox*

I lie in bed, fanaticizing about the sleep that won't come, lying in the filth of destruction that was once such a happy place.  
My mind taunts me, laughing at me because I can't seem to move, to get up, to shower, to even function.

I am numb.

The milk has gone bad, the fruit moldy. It doesn't matter; it's not like I'll move to go eat anyway.  
As the History Channel plays in the background, I stare blankly at the empty closet, a closet once filled with beautiful articles of clothing. Now average pieces of clothing are strung all around my bedroom.

My hair is a mess, tangled and dirty. My face is stained with tears.

A voice tells me to get up, to shower, to just be happy, but we both know that will cease to happen.  
I'm locked away in a small apartment. I'm the only inhabitant other than my demons that constantly provoke me.

I must find the courage to get up and to go shower, in itself such a difficult task.

I let the soap run down my body, run into my eyes.

As I lie there watching the blood run down my arm, the razor lies there taunting me. It is clear to me I have finally lost control.

I am numb.

The depression has me in its grasp, a stronghold I can never escape.

I am alone.

I am weary.

I am numb.

The water runs cold, just like my heart, a heart that was once so warm and loving shattered by events of a cruel, cruel world.

Over reacting you might think, but death can do that to an already fragile person.

I'm held together by cheap tape, willing to shatter all over again in a moment's notice.

My grades are falling. I am falling into the black hole once again.

I go home, I hide the scars. I lie, I say everything is fine, although it's clear that it is not.

I feel alone and abandoned.

I am numb.

My events are all sad. My events are crippling.

But I tell myself it's time to move on.

I tell myself I will fight this.

I tell myself this is my battle.

I tell myself I will overcome this so I can one day help someone other than myself.

I tell myself the scars will remain, but my sadness will not.

I tell myself I will break the chains, I will escape the prison that is my dark mind.

I am greater than this, oh so much greater than this.





**Photos by**

**Todd Garret**





# THE RACE AHEAD

**By Trent Mikles**

**As a nine year old boy I had a brain bleed and was temporarily paralyzed on my left side. This incident caused a huge drawback in my life. My left side has been significantly weaker ever since. A few years later in the 8th grade my parents decided that a good form of therapy would be to join the cross country team. I found this to be some sort of cruel joke on their part. I had trouble walking short distances I had no idea how I would be able to run miles.**

**The Elk City Cross Country team had won the state championship five years in a row. This was a top of the line program. Coach Mark Heard demanded perfection from his athletes, and he got it. This made my first day even more intimidating. What would he think of a kid who had trouble walking? I exited the school bus almost trembling.**

**At the first practiced we were ordered to go run one mile. This was an effortless task for the returning runners, but it seemed impossible to me. Coach Heard immediately noticed my limp and confronted me. I told him of my weakness and history. He told me that being a long distance runner is something anyone can do with practice. He said that he would help me overcome my weakness.**

**The first few months of the season crawled by. Eight weeks in I could finally run one mile without walking. This was a huge accomplishment in my mind. Most of the other runners were able to do this from day one. I treasured this and I was ready to go for two. I found that building up the stamina to run two miles was not too bad.**

**Race day was quickly approaching. A Jr. High boys cross country race is two miles. I had finally built up the stamina to run two miles but I was much slower than all of my teammates. I could run two miles in 18 minutes, while my teammates ran closer to 14 and 15 minutes. I pushed hard my first race, but still I placed last. A week later was race two, last place again.**

**My first year of cross country, I became quite accustomed to last place. This would seem sad, but my left leg also had become much stronger and I could walk significantly better. My parents' decision to force me to become a runner although seemed harsh at the time, turned out to be a great help. I continued to run cross country the remained of Jr. High and High School. I became increasingly better, and eventually was a fierce competitor.**



# The Spark

By: Macie Maddox

The thing about fire is it devours everything it touches. It consumes everything you've strived for and the things that matter most to you. But one thing about fire is that after all the destruction, all the pain, and the aftermath, comes beauty and new growth if only you will open your eyes to see it.





**Photos  
By  
Todd  
Garret**





# THE MIRROR



I'm reminded of a chilling thought  
That never came to pass  
When last I gazed into the depths  
Of the painfully clear glass.  
When I took a good long look  
I found that all was foul and fair;  
There was a dark and empty world  
With a lovely creature there.  
She stood in deepest gloom and was far  
alone  
From tender memories of love  
And was distant from the one that walks  
under earth  
And He who hangs the stars above.  
She walked in Death's great shadow  
That covered her like a veil

Of forgotten thoughts and prayers  
That left her starved and frail.  
Winter did surely covet her  
For he wished to cover her in ice  
To preserve her pale blue beauty  
That against age never would suffice.  
Finally we both watched in silence  
As twin tears fell from our quiet eyes  
That rolled down our soft hollow cheeks  
And away from the watchful skies.  
Then as I turned to leave the sight  
My thoughts were quick to find  
That she was far lovelier in death  
Than she ever was in life.  
-Anna Ebert



# School Daze

By DeShawana Smyth

In my younger years, I knew it all. I didn't need school. The things they taught were useless in real life. I left school and went into the real world, soon learning that I knew nothing. I got my G.E.D. and decided to start college. I was so far behind and could not figure out how to balance school and the rest of my life, so I dropped out of college. I soon married, had children, and regretted leaving school. I had to try again and enrolled in a few classes at Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Sayre, Oklahoma. In doing so, I have to take my son to daycare, I spend less time with my family, and I cannot give my house the attention it needs.

I have never had to put either of my children in daycare. My husband and I would work opposite shifts or find a friend or family member to watch our kids. My oldest son, Thomas, started all-day kindergarten in August of 2012, and I started college classes that same month. I had some discussion with my family, and we came to the conclusion that my grandmother



could watch my youngest son, Jason, while I was in class. This only lasted my first semester. For my second semester of college classes, I would have to find someone else that could watch my son. I took

on more work for my second semester and realized that I needed a more stable type of babysitting. Family and friends weren't always there when I needed them. So my husband and I started looking into local daycares. I was not thrilled with the idea. I didn't like the fact that a complete stranger would be taking care of my baby boy (mind you, he is 3 ½ years old). I think Jason was more excited about daycare than I was. He went running in, saw the other kids and a movie on the television, and yelled "Bye Mom!" as he was running away from me. It has become easier for me, and he is learning so much!

With this new schedule, I also get less time with my family as a whole. Once I do get home, my time is usually spent doing my homework, or studying for my next test. I had no idea that my course load was going to have so much home-stantly work! I am constantly having to tell my family, "We will as soon as I get done with this!" when they ask me to play with them, or watch a movie with them, and that is heart-breaking for me. My husband has had to take on more as the father of our children, while I have my head stuck in a book, or my laptop. My husband gets to watch movies with our kids, while I am writing a paper. I just have to keep reminding myself that it is all for the better in the end.



Also, as a result of my new schedule, my house gets less of my attention. Once my homework is done, and once I have studied enough for the day, I want to

spend what little time I have left of the day with my family. The last thing I want to do is waste that time on cleaning my house! I'm not saying that I don't clean our house at all; I just don't do any deep cleaning as a result of going back to school. I often leave things like dusting to a later time. My cabinets are unorganized. My fridge is in desperate need of a good cleaning. All of which is left in my husband's capable hands. Lately the dishes pile up in the sink until one of us has the time to put them in the dishwasher. My ceiling fans have an inch of Oklahoma dust on each blade. The kitchen table has become a "catch-all" to everything we don't have time to put away. My laundry gets done, but does not get put away properly. It sits in a pile on a chair in the living room and at the foot of my bed. I'm sure it will all get done. The question is when? I guess during spring break I will do some spring cleaning!



Don't get me wrong. I love going back to school! I am learning so much, and I know it will help my family and me in the long run. As for now, there are some effects from going back to school. I am neglecting my house, I feel as though I am missing out on time with my family, and I have had to put my trust in a daycare to take care of my son. I know this is all for the best. I just can't wait until it's over!



# Not for the Faint of Heart!



**PHOTOS BY ROPER HARGUES**





# *The Demon and The Man*

*Kelli Leverett*

*There is a heart—in everyone, no matter how it's used.*

*A heart that feels the pain and sorrow so often it's  
abused.*

*We take for granted every day, how fragile it can be.*

*We leave ourselves open for sure attack, how vulnera-  
ble is he.*

*Instead of showing his feelings about, what really  
grieves him so.*

*He closes in and tries to grin, his pride he tries to show.*

*But he can't hide his sentiment, no matter how he tries.*

*So privately he lets it out, the rugged man—he cries.*

*He sits and ponders over things, how little he under-  
stands.*

*Why deep inside there's a little boy, with a multitude of  
demands.*

*The things he has to show in life are fewer than the  
score.*

*No matter what he accumulates, he wants a little  
more.*

*He's blinded by materials, and worldly lonesome greed.*

*If only he could recognize, how much he could succeed.*

*If only he would realize, the richness of his life.*

*How what he has—is plenty more, than the misses and  
his wife.*

*It's obvious he owns a lot, he's loved by many folk.*

*They must see something good in him, the world can-  
not revoke.*

*He comes alive to understand, he's quite a wealthy  
guy.*

*He owns a bit of heaven—yes, he never had to buy.*

*His soul is good, and heart is deep, for this—he's given  
grace.*

*He's rich in love and tenderness, to this he'll gladly  
face.*

*To have someone to care about—is a blessing and a  
gift.*

*To be the one they care about, will surely give the spirit  
a lift.*

*Friends and family is all we have, to get us through the  
strife.*

*Of the daily tribulations and the evils of our life.*

*Honor your heart with everything, for it's the center of  
your spirit.*

*Heaven holds a mountain of gold, for the faithful to  
inherit.*

*Love is there to have and hold, for all to enjoy together.*

*A gift from God—so wonderful, it can overcome any  
weather.*

*So tough it out—the struggled world—until you under-  
stand.*

*How much you matter in the fight, of the Demon and  
the Man.*

*Friends and family is all we have, to get us through the  
strife.*

*Of the daily tribulations and the evils of our life.*

*Honor your heart with everything, for it's the center of  
your spirit.*

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*How much you matter in the fight, of the Demon and  
the Man.*





Photos by Sandra Peña





# Winter



Top two photos by

**Sandra Peña**

Photo at left by

**Kevin Parkhurst**



# A Snake In The Grass: A First-Hand Encounter with Ophidiophobia

By Rebecca Dobbs

The day started like any other Western Oklahoma spring day. The wind was blowing, the sun was blazing. The temperature was unseasonably hot, almost 100 degrees. That was the day that I let my dog, Ozzy, off of his chain to get some extra exercise, since the cows that he loves to chase were at the vet.

I had decided that I needed to run errands out of town, and knew that I wouldn't return before the cows were brought back. I was chasing the mischievous, shaggy-haired, black and white dog around the yard attempting to catch him to put him back on the chain. That's when it happened. I came around the back side of my vehicle as Ozzy came around the front. Out of the corner of my eye I saw Beast, my other dog, come bouncing up to the front fence of his pen, tail wagging, ready to get in on the action of the chase with Ozzy.

Suddenly, he stopped. All four feet leaped simultaneously off the ground and he jumped straight backwards almost three feet; no easy feat when you weigh in at around 120 pounds. His fur stood up in a ridge down his back. He crouched low to the ground, nose stretched out towards the fence, a low, menacing growl coming from deep within his throat. Noticing this strange behavior from Beast, I said to him "You silly dog, what's

wrong with you?" Ozzy and I saw it at exactly the same time. Coiled in the weeds against the metal gate of Beast's pen was a rattle snake. Judging by the pile of snake, that thing had to have been at least six feet long. Time froze. Suddenly Ozzy sprang into action! His furious barking at the snake jolted Beast and me out of our frozen panic filled state. Beast, not one to be left out of the action, joined Ozzy in his frenzied barking, lunging, and snapping at the snake, who by this point was as scared as I was.

As I watched in horror, I heard the angry rattle of the snake's tail, a sound I would hear for weeks to come. I saw the trapped snake begin to lash out in fear. Twice the snake attempted to strike Beast in the face. Every strike towards my beloved dog was like a strike to my panic filled heart.

My first clear thought was "How do I get these dogs safely away from this snake." As if Ozzy had read my mind he finally listened to my command to "Stay" and allowed me to catch him and snap the chain back on his collar, keeping him a safe distance from the fence. My next prob-

lem was how to get Beast away from what he considered to be a new chew toy and safely into the barn. I ran to the door of the barn and threw open sliding door that opens into Beast's pen. My only explanation for his sudden response to my hurried call to come in the barn is that he also sensed the urgency of the situation.

Now that both dogs were safe, my next thought was to eliminate the snake; a menace to the livestock that would soon be returning. It was time to call in reinforcements. I don't own a gun so I called the first person I could think of that did. I called my Aunt Linda. One hurried conversation was all it took. As soon as she heard me say "Bring a gun, there is a huge snake in my front yard" she sprang into action. While I waited for Linda to arrive, my eyes stayed riveted on the snake.

Suddenly it was gone! In the blink of an eye the snake disappeared. In that moment I lost all of the comfort that I had previously felt in keeping my feet on the ground. I frantically began searching in circles around myself desperately trying to find the snake. He was nowhere to be found. I searched in the yard, under the propane tank, and inside of Beast's pen. I got my shovel and began beating on the pile of scrap metal that lies

against the barn right beside where the dogs found the snake. There was no snake to be found.

After what seemed like an eternity, Linda finally arrived. She quickly piloted her truck up the driveway and leaped out of her truck, barely stopping before grabbing her shotgun. It kind of reminded me of Granny from the Beverly Hillbillies. She bolted over to me and asked, "Where is the snake?"

"I don't know" I replied, "It disappeared in the blink of an eye." Linda and I again searched everywhere for the snake, looking outside and inside the barn. We even looked under Beast's enormous, ugly, plywood doghouse. We never did find that snake. After a thorough search of the property, Linda decided that the coast was clear, unloaded her shotgun and vamoosed.

Every time I venture out in to the great beyond that is my front yard, I am constantly on high alert. Every pesky grasshopper that jumps out of the wild, overgrown- gourd vines and onto my shin, every dry blade of grass that brushes against my flip flop clad foot, causes me to leap in fright. Every clink of Ozzy's chain as he scampers around the yard sounds like the menacing rattle of a snake's tail. I have discovered I obviously suffer from ophidiophobia, or the fear of snakes.







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