



4-2011

Look Mom! No Tweets!: A collection of Student Writing 2011

Southwestern Oklahoma State University

Description

The Student Anthology of Literature published, April 2011, by the Literature and Language Arts Department Of Southwestern Oklahoma State University--Sayre Campus.

With works from SWOSU Students and Concurrently-Enrolled High School Students Fall 2010-Spring 2011. By Instructors Terry Ford and Judy Haught. Pages designed and edited by journalism students Dayna Hicks and Dandi Re' Clark.

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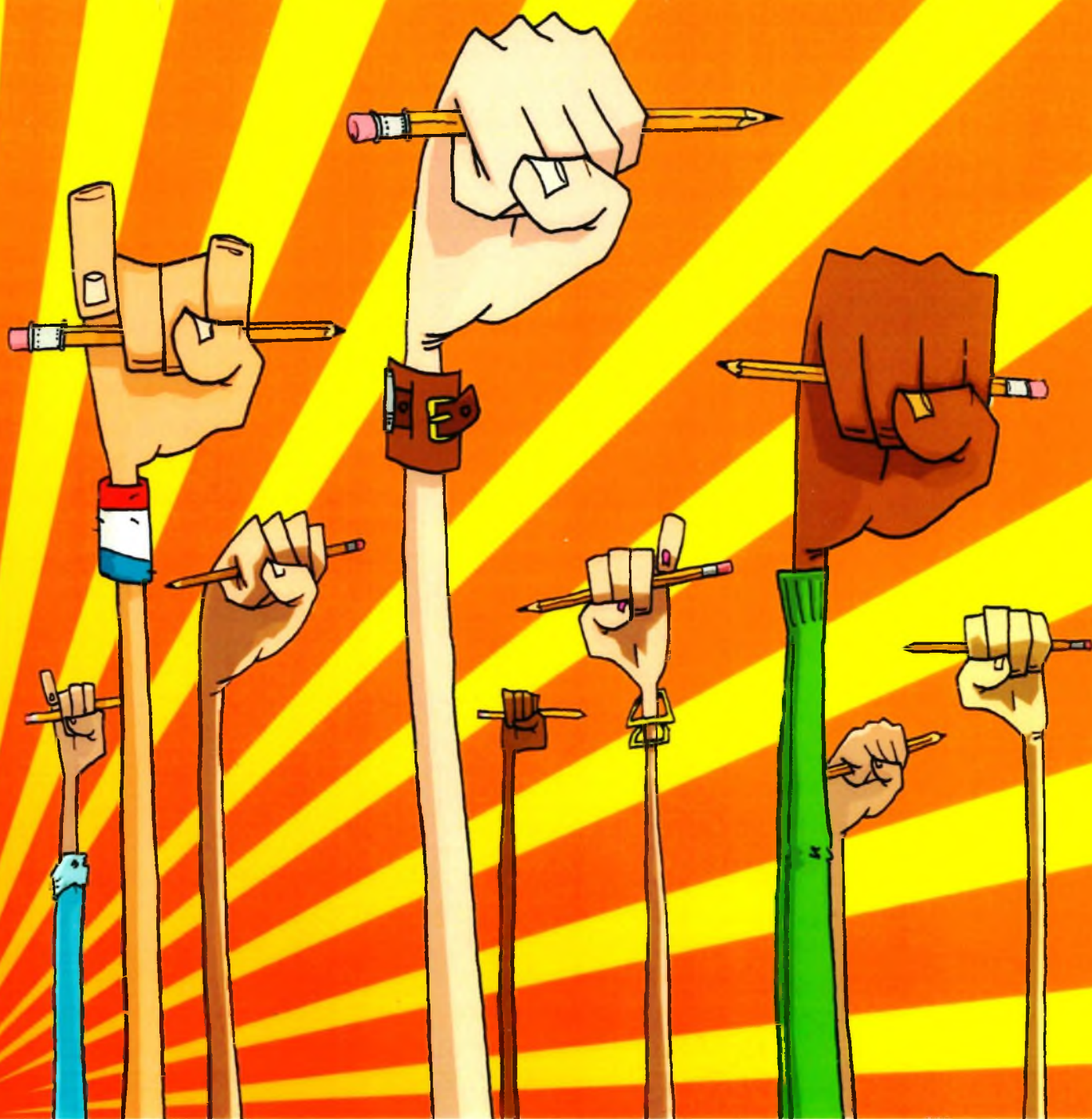
Recommended Citation

Southwestern Oklahoma State University, "Look Mom! No Tweets!: A collection of Student Writing 2011" (2011). *Sayre Writing Workshop Anthology*. 2.
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Look Mom! No Tweets!

A Collection of Student Writing



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THE STUDENT ANTHOLOGY OF LITERATURE

PUBLISHED: APRIL 2011

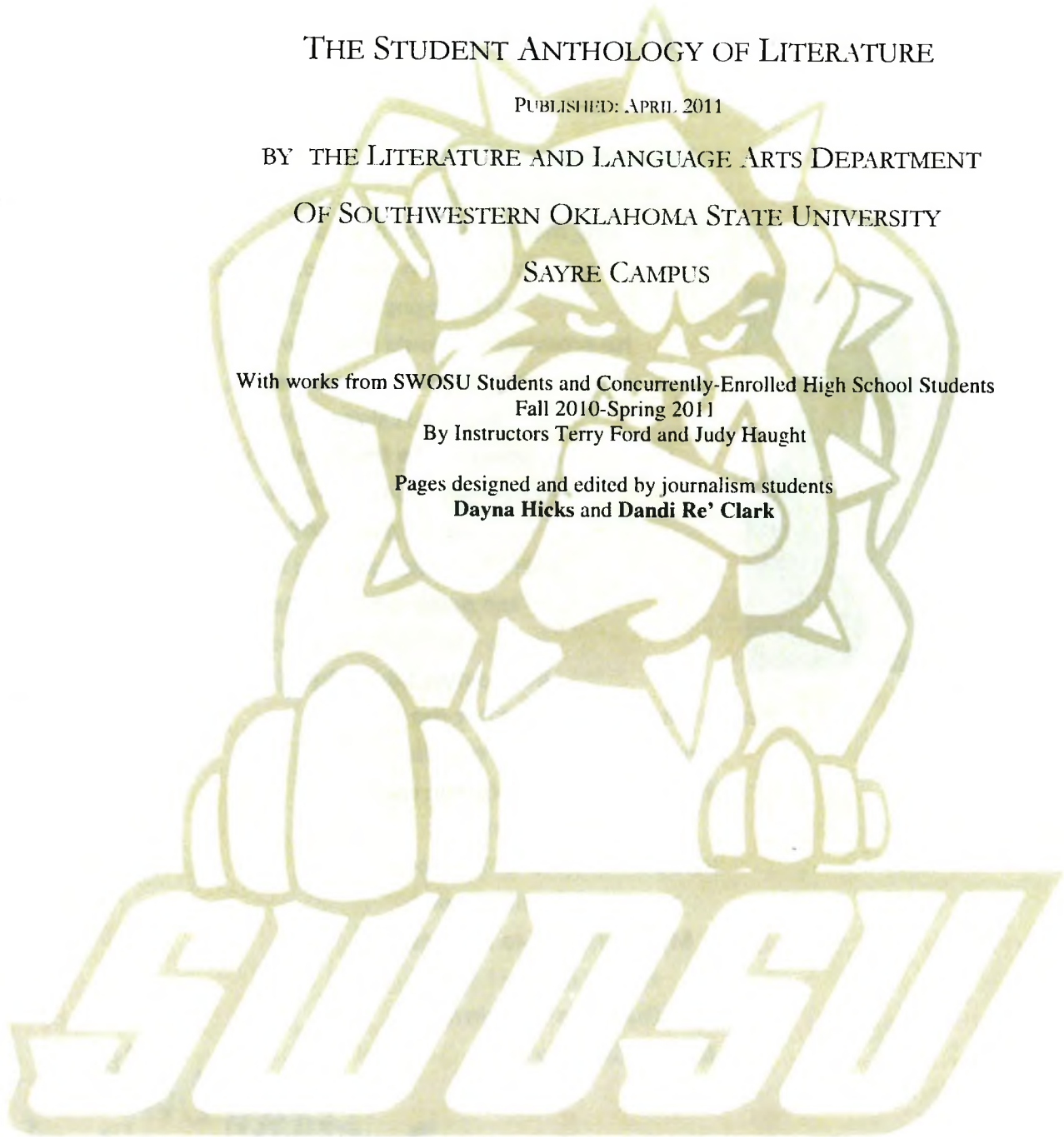
BY THE LITERATURE AND LANGUAGE ARTS DEPARTMENT
OF SOUTHWESTERN OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

SAYRE CAMPUS

With works from SWOSU Students and Concurrently-Enrolled High School Students
Fall 2010-Spring 2011

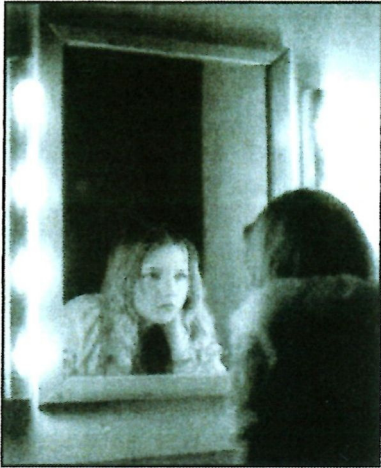
By Instructors Terry Ford and Judy Haught

Pages designed and edited by journalism students
Dayna Hicks and Dandi Re' Clark



Broken

She is lying in the darkness,
Gasping as she cries.
She is slowly seeing the unfolding of his lies.



To her pillow she holds tightly.
It is clinging to her chest.
He promised he would be nothing like the rest.
She is not the one he wants,
this she realizes is true.
She is slowly going insane from realization of the truth.
This downward spiral she is traveling,
will it ever end?
Everything she has been through,
too much to comprehend.
In this void that cannot be filled,
his memory haunts her dreams.

There is not much more of this she can take,
in the darkness she screams.
She is losing the person she was.
Reality is gone.
He built her up to let her down.
Her heart cannot go on.
My hand starts to tremble.
Reality is what I see.
The girl in the mirror,
that broken girl is me.

Brittany Clift
Cheyenne High School





Photo by Wesli Bloomer

Time Stands Still

The longest journey starts with a single step.
Trying to march, but only falling back.
I can't move on until I forgive and forget.

Those words played over in my head.
Giving my all to diminish the slack.
The longest journey starts with a single step.

Nights spent weeping in my bed.
Drowning me, another panic attack.
I can't move on until I forgive and forget.

How it hurt, the words were said.
Way too much for me to pack.
The longest journey starts with a single step.

There wasn't an hour I didn't dread.
A hole in my heart, not just a crack.
I can't move on until I forgive and forget.

Is it my time? Am I done dead?
Time has passed; I'm not in the black.
The longest journey starts with a single step.
I can't move on until I forgive and forget.



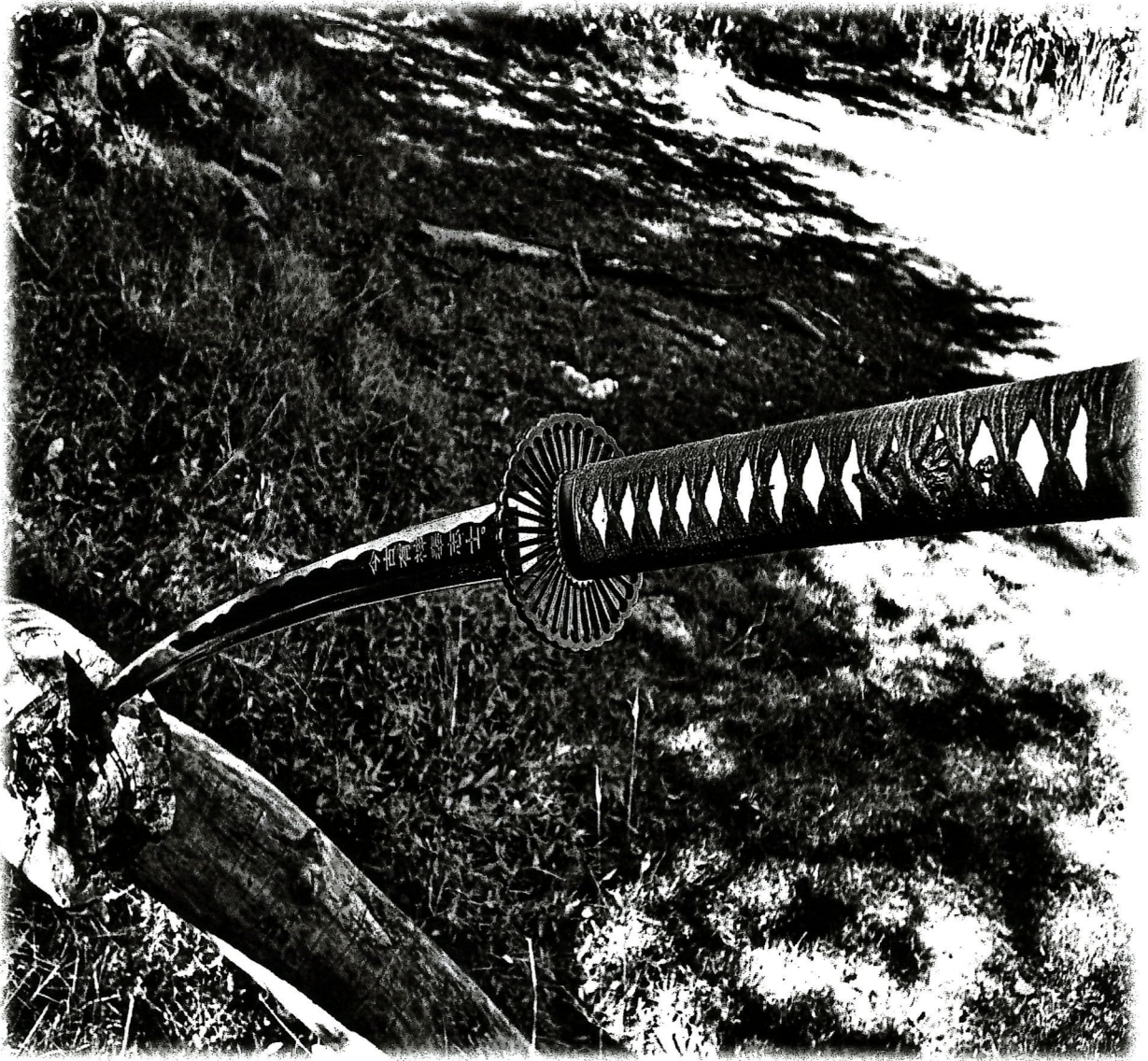
Meaghann Paige Snell
Meaghann Paige Snell

A Collection of Works

Collectio Vera Opera Hominis

© -Umbra Immortalis- LLC

(I.L.L.V.)



Picture: Ancient Strength

By: -Umbra Immortalis-

A Deep Mountain Peak

in

A Tight Hollow Space

Out of the Deep,

We Awake from our sleep.

From Oceans of insanity,

We crawl into this clarity.

To make an impact in this place.

To fill the Void, to fill the Space.

I remember it well,

such a long time ago.

The haze of a Spell,

to create what I know.

An infantile Race:

Given Life, given Love and granted this place.

Into the Light of Above, as Below.

From both We come,

of both We know.

And given a Name,

tasked with a Will.

Endowed unmistakably with Great Power and Great Skill.

A chore now to find All that I am,

To which I scream, "I AM that I AM!"

Of Gods and Angels all of us are.

Each Man, Woman, Child; nothing less than a Star.

We speak the same thing,

the same Thing we've All been,

and now in this Age,

throw off Sin once again.

Lost memories, unaware,

made to see what's projected.

Save a few Shining Lamps,

through the Ages undetected.

What is isn't life,

so Dance and Proclaim,

"We have the Truth! We Rule this domain!"

The thought of what isn't really IS you see,

And the thought of what is, is but schism indeed.

~Umbræ~

Ultima Ultra

Forever here.

Forever there.

Forever always everywhere.

Forever lost.

Forever found.

Forever feet tread on the ground.

Forever free.

Forever me.

Forever locked in destiny.

Forever comes and never goes.

Forever is gone before One knows.

Forever Time and time again.

Forever close another end.

Forever sing, Forever dance,

Forever undone, a single trance.

Forever makes forever ill,

As forever acts against the Will.

Forever will be in the light,

Forever made to live in night.

Forever this, forever that,
Forever ALL in Aum, Tat, Sat.
Forever making more and more,
Forever never reach the shore.

Forever sorrow,
Forever Joy,
Forever a Child with his toy.
Forever came and forever went,
Forever from whence One is sent.
Forever work, forever play,
Forever Live another day.

~Immortalis~

Remedium

Dance! Dance! Round the Fire!
Dance! Dance! Whilst it burn!
Shout the Moon your heart's desire!
Lift it high for which ye yearn!
Dance! Dance! Round the pyre!
Passion! Passion! Mote it burn!

Pan, play loud the tunes of Bliss,

Lift my Will o'er Aphrodite's Kiss!

Lord and Lady, One in ALL,

Shine within us when We call!

Hymn to Pleasure, Honor, Power!

The night is ours in this hour!

Bring forth Angels in the Moon mist,

Raise our voice and hear the Tower!

Sing ye loud for They devour!

Whole in part till come the voice,

In the rains come choice and Choice.

Dance! Dance! Round the Fire!

Make ye now a Blessing's hearth!

Dance! Dance! Round the Fire!

Bring it forth upon the Earth!

Bring now gifts of All to me,

As We Will, So Mote It Be!

~/.L.L.V.~



Photo/Image: In Feodo Domini

By:

-Umbra Immortalis-

Tempestate Silentio

Silence wake.

Silence break.

Silence make me oath to take.

Take in vain,

No more pain,

No more shame,

No more game.

Make it plain,

Silence stops.

Words Alive,

Door to knock.

Silence.....

~/.L.L.V.~



Photo/Image: SummerLand in Nightfall

By:

-Umbra Immortalis-

Hailey Raetz

Why I Am Proud to be An American

"We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for common defense, promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America." These famous words make up the preamble to the Constitution of the United States of America. Our constitution lays the foundation for all of America's freedoms today. In America, people have a huge number of rights and freedoms. I am so blessed to live in such a great country. Let me share with you "Why I Am Proud to be An American."

The horrific events of 9/11 and the OKC Murrah Bombings have shown me how resilient the people of this great country are as we rose together while going through these events. We could have allowed these tragic events to break us, but we did not. Instead as Americans we took these events and made good come out of them. These events will be forever written in our history books. The stories should depict proud Americans and how we came together and were made stronger as a result of what we went through. The events didn't define who we were; rather we showed the world who we are by how we rose up and handled the many adversities that were hurled at us. Our patriotism became stronger, evidence of the fact that many men and women joined the Armed Forces to help defend and protect our great country.

Yes the men and women of this great country put themselves on the line to protect everything we stand for. The 5th Amendment adds the freedom of religion, speech, press, petition and assembly. While not everyone agrees on whether we need to be on foreign soils fighting, and we may not like that other Americans will burn the flag of the United States of America or verbally acclaim their dislike of our troops, we need to realize our troops are fighting to defend our rights to disagree on all the above situations. So yes, I am very proud of our troops and how they defend us each and every day. Also, our freedom of religion is one I do not take for granted at all as I realize that in many countries people could be thrown in prison if their beliefs didn't align with that of the country they live in. I have a friend who is a missionary kid in China, and if their family was found to be sharing about Jesus they could be thrown in jail or even worse. Here in the states we have just about every type of religious affiliation; and I do not agree with all of their belief systems, but that's ok. We all have a right to freedom of religion.

One amendment that makes me particularly proud is the 19th Amendment which was added in 1920. This gave the American women the right to vote, which is a freedom that most people take for granted. I know that if I want my voice heard that I need to express my views to my local political representatives. Then I need to exercise my right to vote and get involved. Many countries still do not allow a woman to vote, and I am extremely proud that as an American I have that privilege.

I hope you have seen the many reasons I am proud to be an American. Yes I am proud that we are resilient people, strong and courageous. I am blessed to live in a country with so many freedoms that are daily and moment by moment being protected by the men and women of the United States of America.

Humanesque by James Racadio

Fighting,
Always smiting.
Never fully satisfied
with what was naturally supplied.

Why is the blood now flowing?
Our ignorance must be showing.

Killing,
Senseless blood spilling.
Always trying to get on top.
Never satisfied with what was first supplied.

Why is the blood now flowing?
Our ignorance must be showing.

Controlling,
Taking one's life
without knowing
the reason.

Why is the blood now flowing?
Our ignorance must be showing.

Dividing.
Terror multiplying.
Death toll rising,
for no reason.

Why is the blood now flowing?
Our ignorance is showing.

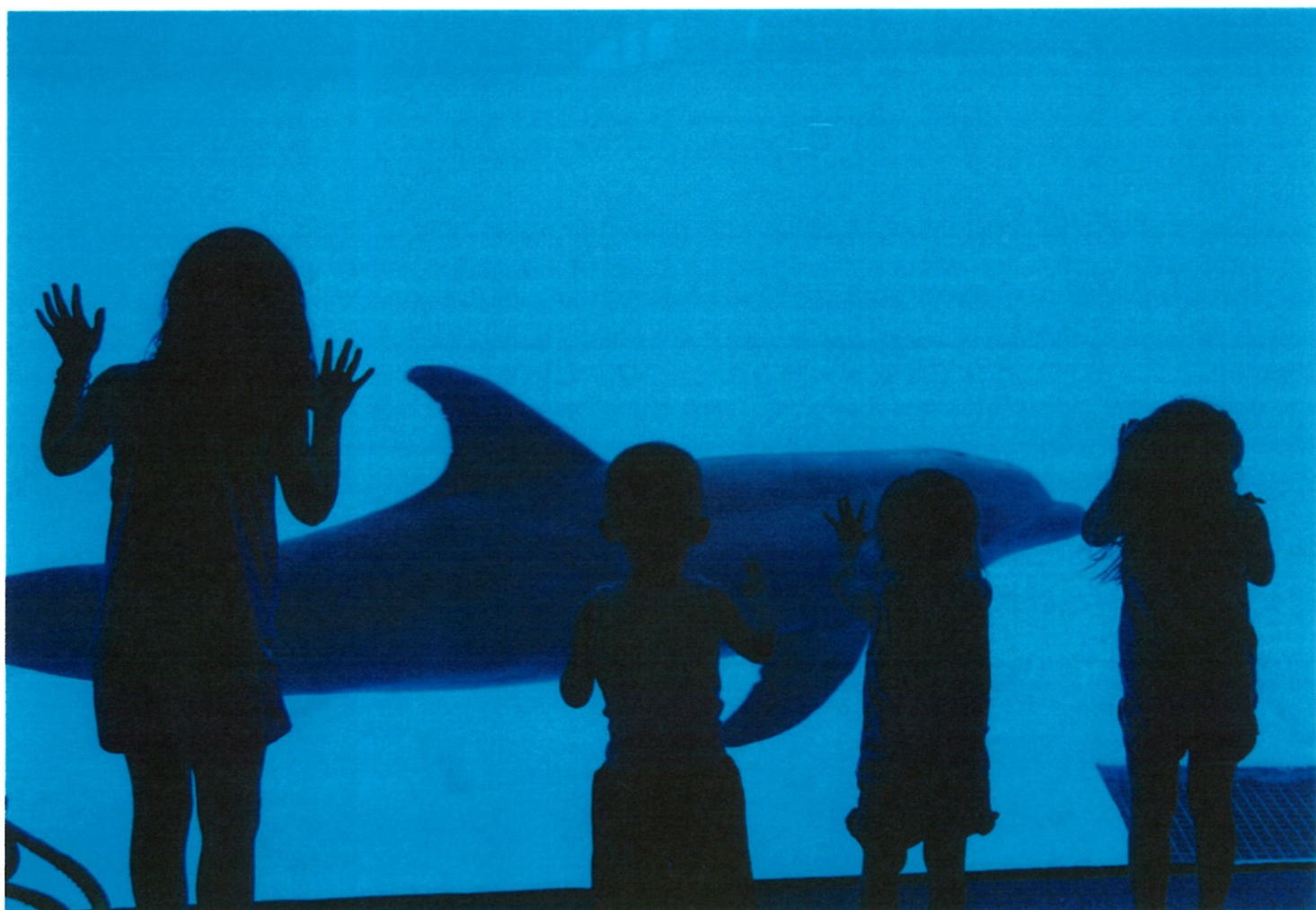


Photo by
Leslie Shawn

The Halloween Phantom

Jordyn Roberts



I never believed in ghosts until I had a gruesome encounter with one. Ghosts were always something I laughed at when my friends would mention how scary they were. People who actually believed in ghosts were ignorant in my mind. That feeling changed the day that I met one.

The day started out like usual. It was Friday last October on Halloween weekend. I went to school, attended my classes, and finished basketball practice. Everything was going normally, when I decided to go shoot hoops in the old gym. Little did I know my life would change forever.

I had texted all my friends asking them to come up to the gym, and shoot some hoops. Sadly, everyone was busy or couldn't show up. So I grabbed my basketball shoes and headed to the gym by myself. When I got there, I turned on the lights and

grabbed a ball. I was shooting on the farthest end of the court when I heard a large thump in the locker rooms past the gated door.

I began walking to the metal gate and found that it was padlocked. I squinted my eyes and tried to peer into the darkness. Suddenly, a flash of light appeared. I stepped back, a little frightened but still curious. I began to get scared when a tall faint figure appeared from the girls old locker room. I timidly spoke, "Is anyone there?" The figure moved closer and stood in front of me. I could see it clearly; it was a phantom. I couldn't believe my eyes. I stood there staring into the face of a mythical character who was actually very real.

Mesmerized, I stayed there until his distinct silhouette disappeared. I felt as if my whole body were fake and weightless. The goose bumps still come back every time I reminisce on this ghostly encounter. I was not only scared but also entranced by the sighting of a real ghost. Since that Halloween weekend, I am not ashamed to say I am a true believer in ghosts.

The Boy Who Was Seen, Not His Wheels

By Travis Wells



There was a boy, who was born not to walk,
But because he never knew something was wrong, oh, boy, could he talk!
When he reached a certain age, his dad bought him a walker with wheels,
When Travis stepped into the walker with wheels his dad asked, "How does it feel?"
Travis was so happy, that now he could go on his own,
Why, if he heard the bell tolling he could go answer the phone!
Like going to school, and being with other kids, Travis had so much to give,
But the kids at school looked at Travis different not the same,
When it was playtime outside no one ever asked if he would like to be part of a game.
So Travis forgot how excited he was, and stayed quiet as a mouse,
For when Travis came home from school he never would go out of the house.
Though Travis's parents, tried everything they could,
They wanted Travis to have a reason to go out, if only he would.
Well, fall, and winter went by so fast,
Springtime had come at last.

One Saturday morning, Travis awoke to the bluebirds singing a beautiful song,

He lay there for a while wishing there was a place for him to belong.

Getting into his walker, Travis thought and thought about going outside,

"Maybe staying in here I am only trying to hide."

Travis remembered what they taught in Sunday school,

To love everyone like Jesus, for that is the golden rule.

So Travis sat down on the front lawn,

After awhile it was so quite he started to yawn,

He started to fall asleep, but all of a sudden what did occur?

A wet nose, with a wet tongue licking his face, attached to a lot of fur!

"Hey, wait a minute, you!" Travis said,

"What are you trying to do?"

From where did the beautiful golden-haired dog appear?

So gentle she was, Travis felt no fear.

It seemed no one knew where she lived, or belonged to,

So Travis's parents allowed the dog to stay, it was the thing to do.

The dog named Buffy, was such a wonderful friend,

She got Travis to play, tossing a ball, so much fun; Travis hated the day to end.

One day Buffy wanted Travis to take her for a walk that day,

They were having so much fun; Travis didn't realize how they had gone so far away.

Across the street were some boys playing basketball,
All of a sudden, one of them gave Travis a holler, a call.

"Hey, want to come over and join the game?"

That day was the beginning for Travis; he would never be the same.

Travis hesitated, but Buffy pulled him along,

She seemed anxious for him to belong.

"You sure you want me?"

"I am in this walker, can't you see?"

"So what if you are, can you make those wheels go?"

Travis stood there a moment. "I don't know."

"Well give it a try, see how it goes",

What happened next, I don't think anyone would expect or know?

They gave Travis the ball, and with one hand he went towards the net,
With all his strength, he threw the ball, not thinking he would make it, but yet,

The ball went into the net, and Travis was amazed at what he could do,

Well the game proceeded, and Buffy got to help retrieve the ball,

Everyone was involved with the game; it was Travis's happiest day of all.

When Buffy and Travis arrived home, his mother where they had gone,
Mom, Travis smiled, "Jesus showed me even with my walker, I can belong."

Season Poems

By: Alisha Kupka
Canute High School

Summer Sunshine

Look up at the sun
Its smiling face
Says it's going
To be a sunny
Wonderful day
His smile also says
That he is going
To make summer wonderful



Winter Snow



Snow drifting down
From the gray sky
Making a white blanket
For all the children
To make snow angels
And have snowball fights



Photo by Jordyn Roberts

A Homemaker's Life for Me

By: Michael Brinkley

Flipping through the dusty pages of an old yearbook can bring back good and bad memories. The other day while thumbing through the pages of my old yearbook, I paused for a moment. There it was, a picture of my home economics teacher Mrs. Martin. See, she passed away a few years ago, but the memories of the class periods and FCCLA or FHA trips past are still fresh in my mind.



We have all heard the statement that appearances can be deceiving, and such was the case with Mrs. Martin. She was a short, stocky woman with glasses and thinning, gray hair, but don't let that fool you. What Mrs. Martin lacked in vertical stature she made up for with passion, willingness and stubbornness. She was a crass little lady on the surface, but a deeper look would have revealed a heart of gold. Love for her students and fellow faculty members was something she wore just as proudly as she wore her apron. Just a few moments with her and you could get a sense of her love for her students and her job.

During the cooking section of each class, Mrs. Martin would bring out food of all kinds and give cooking demonstrations. What a lot of her students did not know is that the food they were eating, most of the time, Mrs. Martin had paid for out of pocket. She would buy expensive cuts of meat and fruit, which in turn she would share with her sometimes ungrateful students. Never would she complain about the cost of the food or for her having to pay for it herself. Rarely did she ask anything in return.

Inventing new ways of raising money for the FCCLA, or FHA, chapter was also one of her strong suits. One of her ideas would in a short time grow into a great project. Mrs. Martin's idea was to sell seven inch, decorated heart-shaped cookies for Valentine's Day. This project grew into epic proportions. Each year, about a month before Valentine's Day, we would start to bake the heart-shaped cookies. The cookies were then frozen until time for them to be decorated, a few days before the holiday. Every year hundreds of these cookies were delivered to the citizens of Erick to spread the love, so to speak. No matter how many hours it took, Mrs. Martin would not leave until the work for that day was complete. That is just the kind of person that she was. It saddened

the students the day that it was decided not to make the cookies anymore. Her health had gotten too bad to handle the stress of the massive project.

Day by day she showed love to her students through acts of kindness. As a side project to teaching, Mrs. Martin decorated cakes. On one of her orders she messed up the bottom layer of a cake, and at the time she said it was a thirty-dollar mistake. The next day, after realizing what had happened, she brought the cake to school and shared it with all the students.

One life lesson she taught me was that no matter what, you should stand up for what you believe. I had grown up in the same church that she attended. This added to the relationship between the both of us. She always encouraged me in school as well as at church.

Mrs. Martin was the best when it came to the support of an after-school Bible study group that I was leading at the time. There was one day in particular that will always stick in my mind. My fellow praise band members and I had planned an after-school concert. The plans were made with the school's approval, and we set up to have a big concert after school. To our surprise no one attended the concert. Mrs. Martin saw me walking up the hall heartbroken and was there to encourage me. Later that week, she got up in front of church and asked that the church pray for the study group. Because of what she did that day, the Bible study group is still meeting over eight years later.

To most students, Mrs. Martin was a pest, but they never took the time to get to know her. She was known to most students as the woman who gave too many gross details and was a little too cranky and crazy. Had more students taken the time to get to know her, the story might have been different. Yes, she did sometimes assign hard homework, but most of the time it was to help us learn a valuable life lesson.

So watch out, you may never know. The instructor of your least favorite class may turn out to be your favorite teacher.

By Bryttany Harris

How

How do
I put him
In my past,
When he is
In my present,
And I **NEED**
Him in my future?

Getting Greasy

Sam Maddux



There are lots of people that have no idea how to change the oil in their vehicles.

Changing the oil in your vehicle is a very important component in making sure that your vehicle will run smoothly and work properly. There are several steps in changing the oil in your vehicle.



To begin changing the oil in your vehicle, you first must acquire the necessary tools to complete this task. You will need an oil pump wrench, oil, a

pan to put the oil into, a new oil filter, and plenty of rags to clean yourself after getting through. You will also need a car jack to lift the front of your vehicle. You should be able to find all of these components at a mechanical store such as O'Reilly's Auto shop.



The first and foremost thing you need to do before changing the oil in your car is park it in the garage and let the engine cool down; otherwise, the oil will be scorching hot which could result in injury. The next step is to lift the front part of the car with your car jack just enough to give access to the bottom side of the engine. Next, you need to find the oil cap



on the engine and remove it. Now grab your pan and place it under the oil drain plug. You then need to use a wrench of the right caliber to take off the oil plug. Next you need to wait several minutes until



the car has been completely drained of the oil. Once it has been completely drained, you can put the oil plug back into its place and proceed to move the pan over under your oil filter.

You then need to grab your filter wrench and take off the filter, which should be disposed of in your oil pan or somewhere else. Then grab your new oil filter and proceed to place it in its designated spot.



Finally, we have gotten to the part where you place the oil into the vehicle.

You find the oil cap on the top part of the engine and pour normally around 6 quarts of oil into the vehicle. Then proceed to check your oil stick and make sure it's full. Finally we have completed our task and need to get rid of the oil. If you live in the country, you can burn it or go throw it on the ground somewhere in a nearby pasture. It will kill the grass, so be warned.



Theses are the steps necessary to put oil into your vehicle. There are many Americans that have no idea how to do such a simple task, so they pay a station or store to do it for them. They could easily do it themselves if they just took the time and effort. Changing your vehicles oil yourself is much cheaper.



Courage Found

Brady Greer

Early morning rise, 4:30 to be exact
Greeting the day before dawn has cracked

"Platoon. Present Arms" as the cannon fires and reveille plays
Young man has done it many days

Preparing for war, day after day
Young man ready for come what may

Romanticizing of combat, as young men do
Saving himself, the platoon too

The Captain announces, "There's trouble in the Middle East"
Deployment in twelve hours to somewhere overseas

Early morning rise, 4:30 to be exact
Greeting the day before dawn has cracked

Looking for insurgents on this patrol
Hours in, everything normal, senses lulled

Up ahead behind cover of boulder
Sits a marksman with rifle to shoulder

"Pinned down! We are pinned down by enemy fire"
No response coming through the wire!

Rifle fire, mortar fire, young man starts to pray
"An all out assault, Lord help us this day!"

All around, friends gone with the blink of the eye
"Lord please, please don't let me die!"

Darkness falls over the land
Enemy soldiers still close at hand

Resolve tested throughout the night
Resolve broken with dawn's first light

The frailty of life surrounds him
He has nowhere to turn





The enemy is still near
Courage begins to burn

Young man opens fire on those he can see
Return fire from the periphery

Burning in the leg, burning in the side
Crawling, searching for cover of any kind

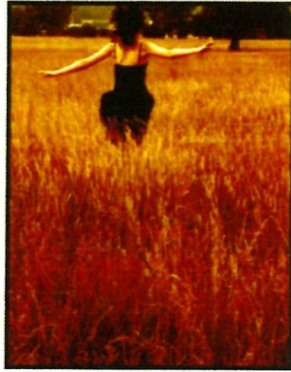
Cold sets in, as behind concealment he hides
Eyes are heavy, the pain subsides

Daylight dims, darkness falls
In the distance a faint sound calls

"Could it be? Can I survive this ordeal?"
The sound is getting louder, clearer he feels

It is on him. No longer is he relaxed
Early morning rise, 4:30 to be exact
Greeting the day before dawn has cracked





Ashlynn Adcox

How can one enjoy life with the stress that follows it?

The bills, the payments, the emotions.

Ideas began to pop in your head about ways to escape the stress.

All of sudden moving off and starting fresh sounds better every day

And it begins to sound more logical to clear out all your accounts and run away.

But that sure would be a cowardly way.

Honing My Edge

Kaleb Cusack

When I was about four years old, I started to talk. But even then it was a mumble with a lisp (quite the combination). So I went to a speech therapist every Wednesday at nine o'clock in the morning. My most vivid memory from the clinic was the day my therapist wanted me to tell a story about going to the beach. I thought about it, but then I told her I had never been. She then asked if I've seen a picture of a beach. I said yes. She told me to tell her what a beach looked like. I gave her a brief description of sand, ocean, seashells, and pretty women lying in their underwear. She wanted to know how I could describe it but not tell a story about being there. I told her that it would be a lie, and that's when she gave me a strange expression and then gave up on the exercise. My lack of imagination had reared its ugly head. I wouldn't learn of imagination's value until I was much older.

*Coming from a typical blue collar family, my younger years were devoid of the arts. I spent the first eight years of my life helping my dad milk cows and learning the basic studies of reading, writing, and arithmetic. I was homeschooled, so every assignment was graded by my father. He did his very best to teach the process of writing my thoughts, but he was biased towards clear-cut efficiency. My first essays were bland, logical, and dull. They were only recollections of my past experiences. My technique received its well needed change when at nine years old I had finished my first "real" book, *The Hobbit*. J.R.R.*

Tolkien had introduced me to the idea that a story could be made up and still have the ability to feel real.



From there I began building my imagination.

Reading soon became my favorite pastime. I used reading as an escape



and also as a writing tool. Harry Potter was my favorite book to read when I was

eleven, and I stayed a devoted fan right up to the end. It wasn't until I went to public school that I

started



to expand into the world of literature. I learned from Lemony Snickett that

books

are capable of being funny and dark. Steinbeck taught me that that you have

to create characters that the audience will be attached to; from there you can add misery to the character's

life that will also hurt the reader. From Vonnegut, I learned that a story can be interesting even if

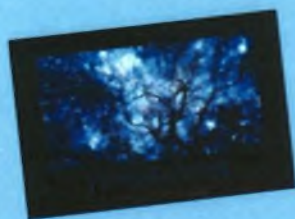
you don't follow a straight time line (and that you shouldn't drink Ice Nine). Books were



perfect for me to gain a foundation of my imagination, because I could just write any idea on a piece of

paper. If I decided that I liked it, I would continue it. If it lacked any roots, I would let it dissolve and

never think of it ever again.



I used books to shape my own writing, but my imagination really took off

once I discovered the power of movies. They are simple to watch, but can contain

amazing stories and messages. Movies contain the story-telling aspects of books,

but also add in the visual aspect of the camera. I have a friend who aspires to make movies one day. He

was the one who really introduced me to movies. Of course I had seen movies before, but my eyes were blind to what was really going on, the work that went on behind the cameras and what had to be put into them to make them so powerful.

I helped my friend with a couple of movies, starting from scratch. We would spend a few hours just brainstorming on what to even write about; then we would develop the story. After we finished preparing the script, the filming would begin. Every scene had to be carefully planned out, or we would later discover that we forgot a shot while editing and would scramble to either reshot or adjust the story. But after all the work, it was the finished product that really shocked me. It was like we were gods. We had started with nothing and finished with a beautiful product.

I had finally found my imagination. After thirteen years, I was finally able to mold a fresh idea into a real thing. Even if I never followed a career in the arts, I found out the true value of the imagination: It's the ability to create, invent, and dream. Humanity's progress would have stopped at standing upright if it wasn't for the ability to wonder why something did or didn't work. It's creating that allows us to build great skyscrapers and automobiles. It's inventing that allows us to combat diseases, and talk person to person from thousands of miles away. It's dreaming that allows us to touch the stars.



Bobbi Jo Rylant

Leave Me Be

Maybe someday you'll be able to see

Oh how I wish you didn't love me,

I wish you would leave me alone

Stop coming over or calling my phone,

Can't you see there is nothing you can do?

*I do **NOT** want to be with **YOU!***



My Summer Vacation

By Stacy Hill

My family and I have been very fortunate when it comes to a vacation. We get to go somewhere about every summer. We have been to several different places over the years, always finding something new to try. This year we went to Colorado for a second time. There is a lot to do there. One can trail ride, raft, hike, fish, off-road, swim, or even hunt. I found rafting, fishing, and off-roading to be my favorite things to do in Colorado.

The first thing we did was go rafting. We floated the river two times. The first trip we



spent a lot of our time stuck on rocks or carrying our rafts. The river was low this year which made it harder to navigate. However, the second trip was more fun because we knew where not to go. We were able to keep

going and make it to the rapids. The rapids were rough and challenging. We had a lot of fun trying not to tip over. Although the rapids were the most exciting part, they may not have been the best part. When we were not in the rapids, we got to relax. We would lie back in the raft and slowly float along while looking at the scenery.

The second thing we tried was fishing. We fished in the river and in the lakes. The first place we went was the river, where we saw a lot of fish but



never caught even one. We mostly lost lures and got wet. The second place we went was the

lakes. The lake fishing was awesome, a lot better than the river. We limited out two different days. We never stopped catching fish. It was a great experience. The view was amazing, and the weather was nice.

The last thing we got to do was go off-roading. We took our three motorcycles and our cousins' two 4x4's. We took two trails and rode for miles and miles into the mountains and up the mountains. There were trails all over; we could never explore them all.



The first trail was steep and rocky. I could barely make it up; I had to stay in first gear the whole time. But it was worth it; it took us up to a

big overlook where we could see the towns. The second trail was not as steep, but just as rocky. We had to navigate through rocks that are taller than the tires on our motorcycles and sharper than a sword. We crossed two creeks and rode miles before finding a turn that led us back. The end of that trail, where we turned, was the best part of the trip. We stopped there for a long time. We had a great view of all the mountains. We could see all the valleys, rivers, trees, and waterfalls from there, all while standing in a lonely patch of snow.

My vacation to Colorado was a lot of fun. I really hope I get to take another vacation there. There were a lot of things I still wanted to do when I left. I saw lots of trails that I never got to explore and beautiful lakes that I never got to fish. The only thing I will do different next time is stay longer.



Poetry Blues

Jordyn Roberts

Every day in her class we learn a lot,
Our teacher is cool, her name is Mrs. Haught.

In English Comp II, we study diction,
But in Literature class, it's all about short fiction.

We check out books to improve ourselves,
We read so much, we empty the shelves.

Reading Dickinson, Frost, and Hughes,
Has given us all the poetry blues.

If you think reading poetry is a pest,
Just wait until you take the poem test.

Oh I can't wait, the time is near,
Next we read a play by Shakespeare.

This poem is new, but poetry is old,
To write this poem, I had to be bold.

Is Testing Good?

Tawni Watson

As a junior at Cheyenne Public Schools, I am required to take end of instruction tests, also known as EOI's. These tests are designed to see if the teachers have actually taught the subject so that the students can retain it for further use. Preparation for these tests is stressful and time consuming. Last minute cram sessions and all-nighters to study can take its toll on the students' capabilities to do well on the test. As a student, I am aware of the advantages and disadvantages school testing brings. All around the nation, students prepare year round for End of Instruction tests. High School students should not have to take any, or have to take less, end of instruction tests.

Teachers have to cover certain material to help students pass the EOI. Sometimes this results in rushing through the year and not completely covering the material. However, this sets a standard that all teachers are forced to teach. This may result in confusion; if the teacher does not have time to slow things down and explain the material, students might know all the basics but not have time to learn all the details. In American History for example, students will know who won the Civil War and who the first President was, but they will not know what battles were fought and who George Washington's Secretary of State was. With as many tests as we have to take, it is hard to really learn about history, cover all of our math lessons, learn how to diagram a sentence, or learn how to dissect a frog in the science lab. Teachers do not teach the subject anymore, but instead they teach us how to pass a test. It almost seems like the tests are more to credit of the teachers than for the students, anyway. We are required to take seven mandated tests, but only have to pass four. Why not just take four tests instead of seven? How it is now, we have to take two or more tests in the same subject. EOI tests are hard to study for or know what to expect. Then there are the students who do not perform well on tests. They will make good grades on worksheet and daily assignments, but when a test is put in front of them they cannot handle the pressure. Students like this should be given credit for what they do all year long, not just the grade they make on a test. I believe we should not have to take tests in order to graduate; if we have honest teachers, the grades we get are the grades we earned. Passing the class should get us a diploma, not a test score received at the end of the year. As it has been said, "Although test results can be an indicator of what's happening in the classroom, they don't tell you everything about the quality of a particular school." This proves that what happens in the classroom does not always show up on the tests. It is unfair to cram a subject into a student's head but not get the outcome they deserve on the test.

High School students should not have to work all year just to take and hopefully pass an end of instruction test. An article by Diane Rado found in the *Chicago Tribune* reported, "Reaching the higher academic bar is important because simply passing exams can leave students struggling down the road and ill-prepared for college, according to educators and test experts. Exceeding standards requires more critical thinking, creativity and analytical skills." It is not about passing the test at the end of the year; getting prepared for college is what really matters.

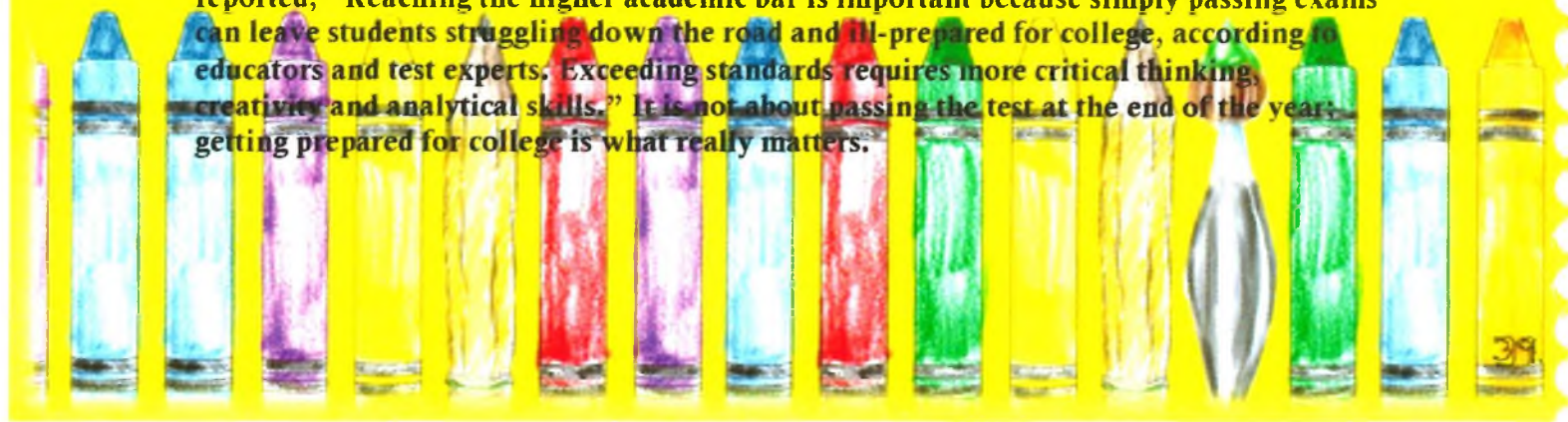




Photo by Jordyn Roberts

Halloween Story

By: Monica Waggoner

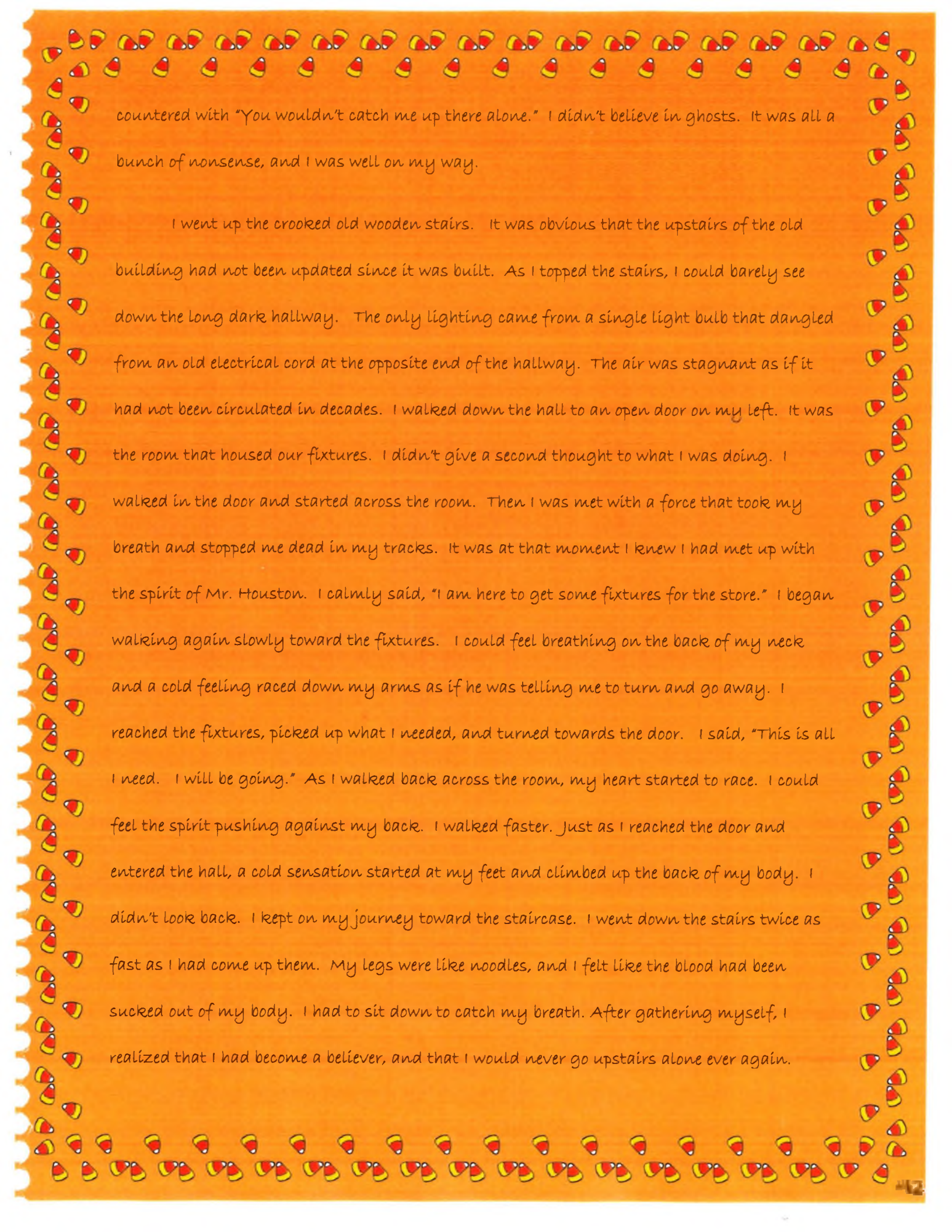
It has long been rumored that the ghost of the famous attorney, Temple Houston, roams the buildings located at 810 and 812 Main Street in Woodward, Oklahoma. According to legend, Attorney Temple Houston's spirit never went to rest because of a love affair he had with the local madam of the night, Dolly Keezer. Mr. Houston haunts one side of Main Street in Woodward, and Mistress Dolly haunts the opposite side. There have



actually been photographs taken of Mistress Dolly standing at the window atop the old building.

I worked at Maurice's as an assistant manager. The store was located at 810 Main Street. Next door at 812 Main Street was a candy store with an upstairs. This is where we stored our store fixtures. We were well aware of the rumors about Mr. Houston, and none of us ever went to the upstairs alone. I, however, was nonbeliever, and when we needed some fixtures during a remodeling, I didn't think twice about going over alone and getting what we needed.

As I entered the store, I told the storeowner that I was going up to get some things. She gave me a shocked look and asked where my backup was. I replied that I wasn't afraid and jokingly said that if I wasn't down in five minutes to send help. She wished me luck and



countered with "You wouldn't catch me up there alone." I didn't believe in ghosts. It was all a bunch of nonsense, and I was well on my way.

I went up the crooked old wooden stairs. It was obvious that the upstairs of the old building had not been updated since it was built. As I topped the stairs, I could barely see down the long dark hallway. The only lighting came from a single light bulb that dangled from an old electrical cord at the opposite end of the hallway. The air was stagnant as if it had not been circulated in decades. I walked down the hall to an open door on my left. It was the room that housed our fixtures. I didn't give a second thought to what I was doing. I walked in the door and started across the room. Then I was met with a force that took my breath and stopped me dead in my tracks. It was at that moment I knew I had met up with the spirit of Mr. Houston. I calmly said, "I am here to get some fixtures for the store." I began walking again slowly toward the fixtures. I could feel breathing on the back of my neck and a cold feeling raced down my arms as if he was telling me to turn and go away. I reached the fixtures, picked up what I needed, and turned towards the door. I said, "This is all I need. I will be going." As I walked back across the room, my heart started to race. I could feel the spirit pushing against my back. I walked faster. Just as I reached the door and entered the hall, a cold sensation started at my feet and climbed up the back of my body. I didn't look back. I kept on my journey toward the staircase. I went down the stairs twice as fast as I had come up them. My legs were like noodles, and I felt like the blood had been sucked out of my body. I had to sit down to catch my breath. After gathering myself, I realized that I had become a believer, and that I would never go upstairs alone ever again.

The World May Try

Kaleb Cusack

I wish the world had faith in me.

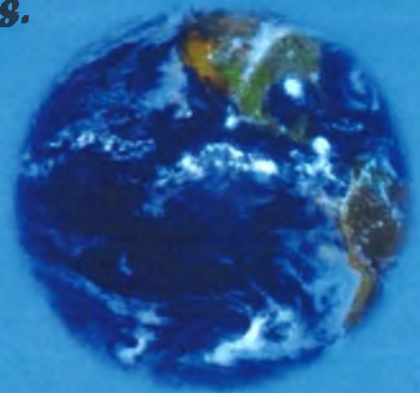
Or if it does, it isn't seen.

Its words of doubt will ring in my ears.

They'll try to solidify my fears.

It tries to drown all of my hope.

Dragging me down with heavy rope.



*Like a cornered animal, it will fight for any escape it
can find.*

*Despite your best efforts, World, you will give up and
one day become mine.*

Two Adventures of Fancycat

By: Christy Rogers



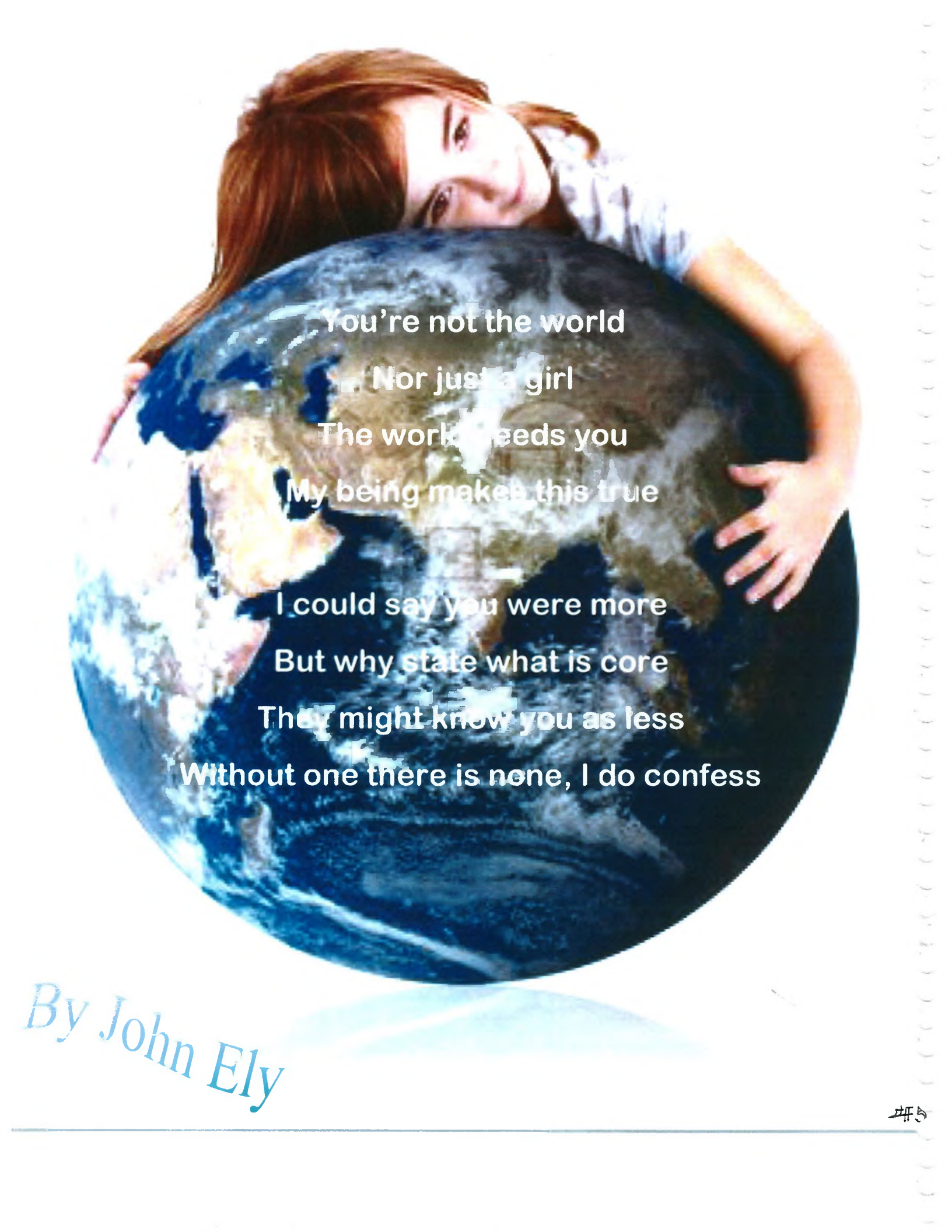
I say just two adventures because Fancycat is always experiencing many adventures. I am really never surprised.

One quiet morning I was enjoying my coffee on the front porch. All at once my ears were bombarded by the wildest screeching of the birds. It is probably good that I did not understand bird language. I am sure they were using some "dirty bird words!" I moved to the end of the porch for a better view. There in the yard was Fancycat. The birds were literally attacking him. One would swoop down and peck him on the back. When he gained altitude, his buddy would make the next dive. I felt sorry for Fancycat. My old Fancycat soon took shelter under the porch. It seemed strange. The other two big cats were in the yard also. The birds paid them absolutely no attention. They definitely knew their target. I surmised that old Fancycat had been doing his favorite tree climbing exercise. He probably could not resist poking around in the bird's nest.

I was working outside on a sunny day. My husband was sitting in front of his shop cleaning his hunting rifle. I thought I heard a faint growl. Then the growl turned into a roar. You guessed it!

Fancycat again! He was standing at the tractor shed. There inside was a big stray cat. I yelled at the stray. Fancycat was sure he was doing his duty when he chased that cat out of the shed. The cat ran past me and into the barnyard. Fancy was after him. I was yelling, "Stop, Fancy!" I thought perhaps the animal was infected with rabies. I was afraid for Fancycat. By this time my husband was on the scene. He shot his gun into the air trying to scare the stray away. Both cats stopped at the sound of the gun. Then the stray raced off again. Fancy was in hot pursuit. I commanded my husband to shoot the gun. Fancy was still running. My husband shot again. Finally, Fancycat got the message. He was running so fast that it seemed his feet didn't even touch the ground. The expression, "He was flying" seemed true as Fancycat turned and zoomed toward the big shop.

These were only two adventures. Fancycat makes sure there is never a dull moment on this farm.

A young girl with long brown hair is hugging a large globe of the Earth. She is wearing a striped shirt and has a gentle smile. The globe shows the continents of Africa and Europe. The background is white with a faint, light blue shadow of the globe at the bottom.

You're not the world
Nor just a girl
The world needs you
My being makes this true

I could say you were more
But why state what is core
They might know you as less
Without one there is none, I do confess

By John Ely



Photo by John Snow

The House by the Beach Dallas Passmore The House by the Beach Dallas Passmore

It was my senior year when I decided to run away from home. My parents and I resided in the suburbs where cars were locked after they were abandoned and children never ventured out of their parents' sight. These rules sent me into a frenzy of emotions that left me feeling trapped with no salvation. That is why I decided to run away. But little did I know I was not running alone.

The house was near a beach. It was an old place where nobody lived for years. It was said that from time to time somebody would open a window or a door and stand the night there, but never longer. My best friend occupied that house when we were nine. Nelly was an only child and so I was the closest thing she had to a sibling. I knew everything about her and her me. I used to travel to her house every evening to play but then one day they were gone. No one knew where. No one knew why.

The bust stop was a good two blocks away from my home and so I decided to pack up one day and have it carry me away to her old house. The ride on that old rusty bus was the saddest loneliest ride of my life. The sky outside had just faded to dusk and the fog was enveloping the bus to where the windows weren't clear to see out of. My mind wandered back to the last night I spent with Nelly.

Her dad was working late so her mother was in the living room on the phone with her friend Marge. She was too absorbed in her conversation to realize we were carefully carving our names into the door frame of Nelly's bedroom. We heard a loud boom as the front door swung open and hit the entry wall. Her mother was mumbling about how dinner was almost ready. She just became sidetracked but he paid no mind to what she was saying. We heard his heavy feet stomping up the stairs in what seemed like an eternity when finally he was standing in Nelly's doorway. He saw where we had tried to carve our initials into the flimsy wood and his face swelled into a dark shade of scarlet. He calmly, through his teeth, told me I needed to get home now. As I passed him, the smell of whiskey along my nostrils and I knew this couldn't end well.

The porch was dark and barely visible in the moon's shadow. I considered turning back and getting in the bus and going home but the bus was gone. I was alone. I found the old flashlight Nelly and I used for nighttime hide and go seek in the same spot as last time. Luckily the batteries still worked and it helped me find the doorway. I wasn't as frightened of the house as others because I knew the old occupants but I couldn't help but feel a trace over my spine when I stepped inside and smelt the vanilla of her mother's perfume still clinging to the air. I looked around and everything was still in the same place as the last time I saw it. I looked around the entire house and everything was the same and eerily untouched. It all seemed strange to me but I went up to Nelly's room despite. As I walked into her room I went straight to the door frame. I noticed that there was a message there. It said "GET OUT NOW." If I wasn't frightened before, I was now. I was just about to sprint down the stairs when I heard it. The booming steps from nine years ago that shook my very

core. And I wasn't just imagining it, either because then I smelt the whiskey. I hurriedly climbed under her bed and covered my mouth so I wouldn't scream. I saw the shadow of a man at first and then I saw his feet in the doorway. The shoes were familiar. For they were the ones Nelly's father wore but it couldn't be them. It couldn't be him! He walked past the room and just as I was about to climb out from under the bed to climb out the window, I saw her. It was Nelly! Her body was curled up with her arms outstretched. As if trying to prevent abuse and her eyes were still open full of fear. She wasn't breathing. She was still the nine-year-old girl I had remembered but her remains had rotted down and begun peeling off the bone like something seen in a horror movie. I burst into tears and tried as hard as I could not to scream. But I was too late. A little whimper slipped out and I heard the footsteps stop descending down the stairs and they began hustling at a quicker pace back to Nelly's room. I had to do something or it would be the end of me! I found a piece of glass from where someone had tried to break the window in by throwing rocks at the old abandoned house and I got in the closet. I was dead silent. And he stood in that doorway again for what seemed like an eternity. I watched him, though. His eyes darkened and his face hollowed. He was like a dead man walking and maybe he was. I had little time to see anything else because as soon as he left this time I saw Nelly's spirit. She was in the closet with me and she was looking at me with that same look of concern she always had as we were growing up. She didn't say anything she just pointed to the door frame where it said "GET OUT NOW." I looked back and she was gone. I didn't know what to do so I ran down the stairs to find him in the kitchen. He was sitting at the table with a fork in one hand and a spoon in the other, staring at the seat across from him. He croaked out, "Where's... my... dinner..." Then I heard her. Nelly's sweet mother who cooked me dinner all those nights but she had forgotten that one night of their disappearance. She simply said, "I got sidetracked. Marge called me and well..." Then I heard a shrilling scream. He had thrown his fork across the room and stuck her in the chest and then she disappeared. They were both gone. I didn't know what was going on so I spun around and was headed back out the door but as soon as I turned around I hit a tense, empty body. It was her father in the flesh. He grabbed me by the arm and I held the knife Nelly and I had used to carve our initials into the door frame to my neck. He was breathing his whiskey coated breath into my face and shouted, "You like messing up others' property! You like to mess up what I worked for! I worked 24/7 to feed and provide for my family and this is the thanks I get!" I whimpered out, "N-n-no, sir... we were just having fun... we didn't mean to mess anything up..." He retorted in rage, "I worked all the time and I thought you were a good friend for her! I punished her and her mother and you will soon see what I do to little girls and women who misbehave!" He raised the knife up and aimed towards my heart so I closed my eyes picturing my parents. How much I took them for granted but as I was waiting for my life to end I suddenly felt myself fall. I heard the police surround him and then felt my mother's arms surround me. As they picked him up off the floor and put handcuffs around him I knew it was over.

The mystery of the old "haunted house" had been solved and I knew that Nelly and her mother could now go home now and so could I. But even now when I smell a hint of whiskey, I shiver to the core.

Speechless

So badly I want to tell you...
to tell you...

to tell you that I love you,
but the words remain caught in my heart,
chained to my lips with fetters of fear
that are stronger than my own desires.

Do you know how exquisite you are?
One glimpse of your soul leaves me breathless;
one remembrance of your smile, and I smile too,
wanting to be near you, wanting,
always wanting you.

So badly I want to tell you...
to tell you...
to tell you that without you I am lost,
lost as a rose in the midst of the desert,
lost as a snowflake in the sun,
lost, so lost without your love.

You are whom I've searched for
in countless faces, over many years,
you are the one who completes my life
yet who tears me apart each time you begin
to say the word "goodbye."

So badly I want to tell you...
to tell you...
to tell you what you mean to me,
but the words vanish when I look into your eyes
and I find new things to love, things that I never
knew I could find in another person.

by David Levithan





Photo: Midnight, and all is well...

By:

-Umbra Immortalis-



Would You Prefer Skittles or Peanuts?

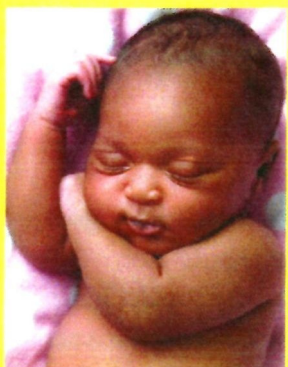
Alvin Aldaz

Born in a small town one thinks nothing of growing up knowing people there by their first name and learning the stories of their lives. In the big city one can see hundreds of people a day and not even know any of their names or anything about their lives. A small town is much like a bag of peanuts, all the same size and all the same flavor. The large city is more like a bag of Skittles a variety of color and flavors.

In the small towns people can run into the elderly, know who they are, what they did in the past and know what they have done for the community. People in a small town may even go to school and graduate with the same kids they grew up knowing too. Remembering the stories and gossip about them when in grade school, and who they were dating in high school as well. While driving around town, the memories that have gathered up over time float in and out. Only in the small town can people truly reminisce about these memories like what tree it was Johnny fell out of when he broke his arm. Being in a small town allows the mind to recall so much more just by looking around and seeing the places that memories have been created. People also are more than likely to make their career out of what their parents did or follow in their footsteps. They are also more likely to go away for college and return to the small town life to make a living and start a family. None of this is a bad thing it is a good place to settle down and raise a family. The crime rate is low and towns are calm and the people are friendly and neighbor like. In all sense the small town is not so much as boring but a content life style for people who don't mind the simple life. Like a bag of peanuts, reaching down into the bag the only thing that will be pulled out is a peanut. The same stories are repeated and nothing new as far as action is likely to occur in a small town.

A stoplight at every block, a new face around every corner, and new experience that waits for one every day. It is true that in the city we have to be a little more time managing because it does take longer to get from point "A" to point "B". The traffic is thicker, more stops, but also in a positive sense there is always a building on the side to accompany oneself or just more to see more excitement. The excitement comes with a new place to eat, or a new store that one has never entered into before. Whiling on the journey to one's destination people will never be lonely just look around and see the people and architecture. In a larger city the statement remains true the city never sleeps. Every day one can see hundreds of people that they have never been seen before and may know nothing about. It may be two in the afternoon or three in the morning there will always be a character on the streets. Meeting new people is quite an adventure in itself. Having something new happen every day and not the boring same old same old process is a wonderful excitement. The large city is like a bag of Skittles; one never knows what is going to be pulled out next.

All-in-all the larger city is a better life style for people who crave a change. Yes it is true to the human mind that people do not like change, but it is not that people do not enjoy distraction in their lives. The excitement and rush is just so much more fun compared to the simplicity of a small town and its daily routine. The large city is recommended for an enthusiast. The bag of peanuts is great to have when one wants a peanut, but when people could have an assortment of flavors and colors, why wouldn't we want a bag of Skittles?



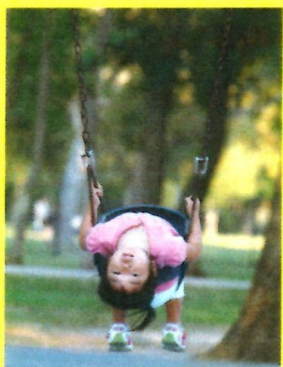
The Joy of Being a Mother

Anna Twyman

“Where’s Mike?” Amanda asked.
 “He’s over there in the chocolate river that looks like a banana,” I said. As we walked down the valley of strawberry liquorish, we heard a faint noise far in the distance. The farther we explored down the sweet trail, the louder the sound became. It was still blurry, but we could make it out. It was a cry, like a baby crying.



While laying there still dreaming, the piercing sound cut through my consciousness like a knife. My helpless baby Natalie was crying. I opened my eyes to the pure darkness of the night. I reached up to the headboard of my bed to see what time it was- two-thirty a.m. in bright cherry red numbers. I sluggishly slid out of my warm cozy bed, and searched for my beloved comfy slippers. As my body quivered from head to toe, and a spiking a chill ran down my spine. I crept to the bedroom door trying not to wake another soul. While I gently opened the squeaky door, I tiptoed down the cold wooden floor. I finally reached Natalie’s room. I peeked in, and I saw the dim night light sitting on her chest of drawers, and detected the musty scent of her drenched diaper.



Seconds later Natalie peeked over her Cinnamon Kids crib with her petite arms lifted and a bright smile, waiting to be picked up. Reaching down to lift her up, I whispered “Hey, Booger, are you hungry?” Little fingers grasped at my shirt, as she looked up at me with glowing eyes. Without her even saying a word I could already read her mind. So we walked to the living room around the corner. In the silence of the night I could hear her empty tummy rolling as if it were talking, telling me to feed it.



My body was still aching from the coolness in the air. I could feel the inflexibility of my legs as we sat down in our enormous recliner. I started to fix a formula bottle, while Natalie kept slapping my arm while she reached for her milk. I tilted her slender delicate body across my lap. As I watched her guzzle her bottle of milk, I held her tightly, making energy of warmth between our bodies. I looked up at the clock to see that it is almost three o’clock. Natalie impatiently tried to fulfill her craving of hunger. I could hear her gulping down every last drop. As I slowly took her bottle away, I lifted her up and laid her on top of my chest. I lightly patted her on her back, as she let out a huge belch. Having relief and satisfaction she cuddled up into my arms. As I gave her a kiss on the tip of her nose I said, “Good night, my little pumpkin. I love you.” As Natalie’s eyes drifted away I peacefully rocked my angel back to sleep. While I stared down at her, and watched every breath she took. I had a feeling that I never had before. A feeling that every mother has, and a feeling that will never fade away.



What a Student Wants

The dictionary definition of "fail" is to fall short of success. However, success has different standards to different people. What one person might see as failing, another person might view as succeeding. People might view success differently, but schools should not.



When it comes to grades, succeeding and failing should have the same standards in all schools. There are many differences between the seven point and the ten point grade scale that are unfair to students. To be fair, every high school should use the same grading scale, the ten point scale.

The first advantage of switching from seven point to ten point is to level the playing field. For example, two students at different schools take an English test and both make a ninety-two. The first student who attends a school using the ten point scale receives an A and continues to make a 4.0 GPA. The unfortunate second student receives a B and risks his straight A average. Maintaining good grades is helpful to receive as many scholarships as possible. A student on a seven point grade scale could lose a scholarship to a person on a ten point scale even if the student had higher grades.

Extra curricular activities also suffer from a seven point grade scale. Cheyenne and Reydon schools have been combined in sports for several years. Reydon has a ten point grade scale and Cheyenne has a seven point scale. On more occasion than one, a Reydon student has been eligible to play with an average of sixty while a Cheyenne student sits on the bench and cannot play because he has a sixty-nine. The Cheyenne student views this as punishment even though he has a better average than the Reydon student. If all schools graded by a ten point grading scale, this would not be an issue.

Another aspect is that high school grades are not even looked at once getting into college. Why should schools make it harder to get straight A's when they are hardly ever looked at after graduation? Even college admissions directors are confused with all of the different grading scales. According to an article in *The Washington Post* by Valerie Strauss, Richard Martinez, the admissions director at Ohio's College of Wooster, has trouble with applications. He said, "We have found that it is incredibly difficult to find out what a GPA really means. That's one reason that we travel to high schools to learn the differences in what an A means at each. We have to know." If every school used the same ten point grade scale, the need to travel to each school would be obsolete. Most colleges use a ten point grading scale as well; therefore, the scale would not change from high school.

All high schools should use the ten point grade scale to not only be fair to the students but also encourage them to make good grades. With a ten point scale, it is easier to make an A; therefore, more students will be on the superintendents and the principals honor roll. The ten point grade scale just makes sense. It is obviously the better choice.

--Tristan Watson



~Dandi Ré Clark

Can You Speak The Many Languages Of Love?

Ashley Nicole Brewer

It took a long time for me to realize how frequently my husband tried to tell me how in love with me he was. I did not hear him say, "I love you," because I did not know how to speak his love language. The signs were there. In fact, he was throwing them right in front of me. If we had been playing baseball, and I was up to bat, I would have struck out. I mean, it would have been as though I just stood there. Bat in hand, and completely still, just watching the white leather ball with its red stitching fly right by me, as though I were completely unaware I was supposed to swing at the ball. This might sound silly at first, but it does make sense. According to Gary Chapman and Ross Campbell, M.D., there are five "love languages," which they explain in further detail in their book *The Five Love Languages*. Through quality time, physical touch, words of affirmation, acts of service, and gifts, people express and communicate their feelings. Knowing how people express their feelings can make all the difference. Just like other languages to communicate successfully, the people participating in the conversation must be able to understand the language being spoken. Otherwise confusion, chaos, and complications will result.

My husband devotedly gets up every morning at 6 o'clock, gets ready, and leaves for work. Sometimes he goes straight from his full-time job as a welder's assistant to working on an old Ford truck for the farmer south of town. There are days that I don't see him again until 10 o'clock that night. I know many women who would get terribly upset if this were their situation. I used to be one of those women. Frustrated with all his time away, I felt as though he could care less if he got to spend any time with me at all. My feelings were, "If he really loved me, he would want to spend more time with me," leading me to feel unloved. This, of course, caused many heated arguments derived from the simple fact that I didn't have the comfort of knowing he loved me. My "love language" speaks through "quality time," and his didn't. All I wanted was a little time and attention from him. Before long, all I noticed or paid any attention to was what he was not doing for me.

Exhausted from the many hours of physical labor he had put in that week, my husband looked as though his legs had just completely given out on him, leaving him no other choice but to finally sit down. That Sunday, he actually made it home for the day around 2 o'clock, so he spent the rest of the afternoon doing chores. He looked beyond tired. He had smudges of dirt smeared where he had tried earlier that day to wipe away the sweat that had been dripping down his face. He had torn the sleeve on his shirt. There was even oil in his hair. Strangely, at the same time, he looked very pleased and content. He leaned back, feet crossed at the ankles, and his head resting in his hands behind his head. He thought about all that he had done that week. He had not been home much, but without complaining or even a second thought, he had taken out the trash, fixed the fence, mowed the

yard, and changed the oil in the car. He even did some other little things that I had flat out forgotten I had mentioned needed doing sometime earlier in the week. My husband was trying to tell me through "acts of service" that he loved me. In his heart and mind, he was doing everything he could think of to express and communicate to me that he did love me. It was not that he did not want to spend time with me. It was not that he wanted to work on the fence or take the trash out, but he was trying to make me happy and show he loved me. He did this by financially taking care of me, and thoughtfully remembering the little requests I had made, and doing them as soon as he had the chance. He didn't understand why I wasn't happy and was beginning to feel as though I was not accepting or approving his efforts; therefore he didn't feel loved.

I was willing to stop doing laundry. I did not care if the dishes were done. I hated to cook. I did those things, but only when I had to. I definitely did not do them with an enthusiastic attitude. I would, however, curl up on the couch with him to watch a movie, even if I really had not a single desire to see it. I would sit and watch him shoot pool, just glad I was there with him. I would sit and watch him mess with whatever it was under the hood of the car that had been annoyingly clanking around all week. I would go with him to go pick up some part just for the ride and the time with him. It didn't bother me a bit when he would roll his eyes, sigh, and shake his head as I turned the radio station yet again. I spent a ton of time doing things I could care less about to make him happy. Neither he nor I knew how speak the same love language. If I knew how to speak his language, I would have realized that he didn't really care if I watched him do anything, or if I went with him to the corner store and back. Not that on some level he didn't enjoy it, but these things just didn't scream "I LOVE YOU" to him. No, it was those times that I cleaned home and really cleaned the house (not just the quick fix pick up.) For him, coming home to food that consisted of more than just reheating something that had already been pre-packaged was what made him happy. When he opens his drawer and finds it full of clean matched socks, it's just like me wrapping my arms around his neck and professing my undying love. That is what means the most to him and makes him feel loved.

We both love each other. It took some time for us to put it all together. People only communicate in one language, until they are taught how to speak in a different one. I finally realized that we were just looking at things differently and I started to respond to him in a way that he could understand. Then, I explained to him the best I could the theory. It was not very long after that when the conversation started to make more sense. I did my best to convey my feelings of endearment in a way that spoke to him. He was picking up on how to articulate to me in a way that didn't leave me displeased. It wasn't that we did not want to please each other before, we just didn't know how. It was like we were stuck in a tornado, I was hot and he was cold, and even though we tried, our efforts worked against each other, leaving the damage behind. If people want to avoid the confusion, elation, and complications a good and very helpful start is to learn how to detect and communicate using the different "love languages."

Hard Work and Diligence Matt Dyson

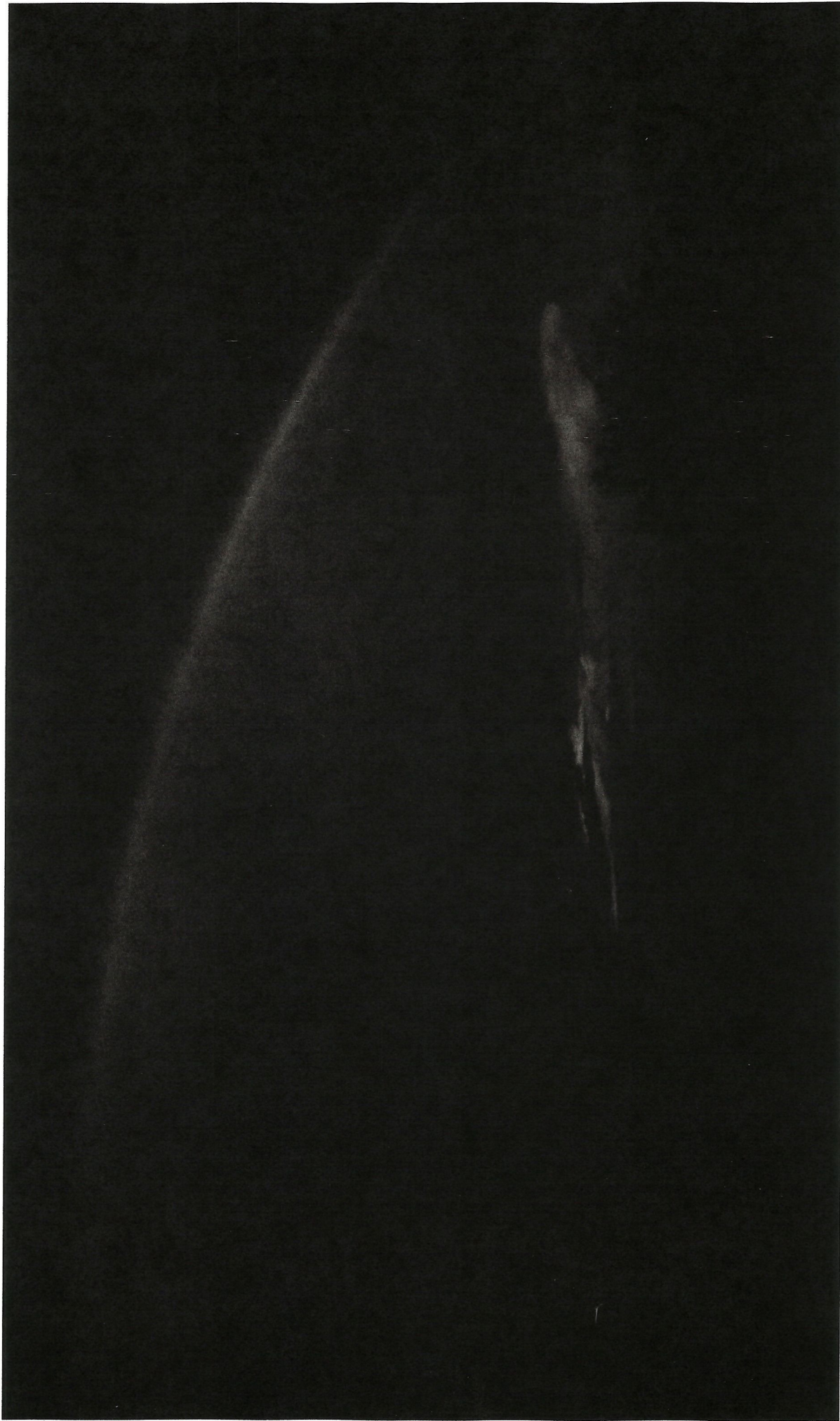
Even though engineers have been around for a long time, one could say they have been around from the *dawn* of mankind, creating even the very first set of tools. Though they are still quite young in the professional world today, engineers are in every aspect of the world as we know it. Engineering is involved in everything from the wheat fields in Kalvesta, Kansas to the majestic Empire State Building in New York City. The fields in Kansas have been genetically and chemically engineered to survive the harsh and bitter winters of Kansas, while the Empire State Building was designed to stand the ultimate test of time in the concrete jungle.

When someone sees a monstrous building that goes on and on forever, they should realize that some man or woman was in charge of building that undertaking. That person most likely spent countless hours of planning, drafting, and researching for that single build. It could be just a simple lean-to to the multi-million dollar complex, yet all builds require some sort of engineering. As the great author James A. Michener said, "Scientist dream about doing great things. Engineers do them."

Engineers can be anything from the simple, yet still complex civil engineer to the genetic engineer. The schooling can range from the four year degree up to an eight year degree. One important thing about engineering is that it helps one learn from the past and what to look forward to in the future.

Scientists are men and women who discover new things, but engineers are the ones who build it. They make it available for everyday use for the common man. According to Merriam-Webster, engineering is "the application of science and mathematics by which the properties of matter and the source of energy in nature are made useful to people." Luckily for the men and women interested in this line of work, it will be around for many years to come. Engineers have solved the problems of the past and will do so with the dilemmas to come in the future.





~Dandi Ré Clark

To Change or Not to Change... That is the Question

Samantha Meyers

Ranchers all over the country are making decisions. They want what's best for their cattle, and then they have to make decisions that ranchers are faced with: whether or not to join the "all natural" programs or stick with good old-fashioned vaccination and implanting. If a rancher decides to take the plunge into "all natural" programs, there are some very specific guidelines he must follow.

According to the Beef Marketing Group, cattle are "all natural" if they meet these specific standards that have been laid down: all cattle must be 51% Black Angus, and the organization prefers 45 days weaned and properly conditioned. Cattle are allowed two rounds of the following vaccinations: two Viral, one Clostridial, and two Clostridial. Cattle must also be wormed, castrated with a knife, tank and water broke, and have proper nutrition. All natural cattle are not allowed antibiotics, hormones, animal by-products, and treated animals must be properly identified. The owners must have the following documentation: a Natural Affirmation, a Supplier Approval Form, and all of the rancher's suppliers must be on the approved list.

The standards for "all natural" cattle are strict and require excellent ranch management. They must follow these rules and give their cattle antibiotics when sick to maintain their cattle's body mass. Cattle are "worked" when they arrive at the market. They receive the appropriate vaccinations, are often wormed, and are given growth hormone. While getting "worked" out and frightened out of their minds, they may become sick. Imagine a rancher checking on his cattle in the morning. Most of the cattle looks healthy and happy. One of the cattle looks off. He's all alone, his body is off, and he hasn't come to the market. He's all alone and more than a little fever. He needs medicine, and he relies on you to provide him with the "doctor" that he and give them antibiotics to fight the infection. He's all alone on the body. However, all of this is a direct violation of the "all natural" standards.

While making all of these decisions, ranchers are also faced with their budget, time, their cattle, and do what they can to make the best of it.

Ranchers all over the country are making decisions. They want what's best for their cattle, and when it comes to decisions that ranchers are making, whether or not to join the "all natural" programs or stick with good old-fashioned vaccination and implanting. If a rancher decides to take the plunge into "all natural" programs, there are some very specific guidelines he must follow.

According to the Beef Marketing Group, cattle must be natural if they meet these specific standards that have been laid down: all cattle must be 51% Black Angus, and the organization prefers 45 days weaned and properly conditioned. Cattle are allowed two rounds of the following vaccinations: two Viral, one Tetanus, and two Clostridial. Cattle must also be wormed, castrated with a knife, break and water broke, and have proper nutrition. All natural cattle are not allowed antibiotics, hormones, animal by-products, and treated animals must be identified. The owners must have the following documentation: a Natural Affirmation, a Supplier Approval Form, and all of the rancher's suppliers must be on the approved list.

The cowboy cattle are strict and require excellent ranch management. They follow these rules and give their cattle antibiotics when sick to maintain their cattle's body mass. Cattle are "worked" when they arrive at the ranch. They receive the appropriate vaccinations, are often wormed, and are given growth hormone. While getting vaccinated, frightened out and handled, they may become sick. Imagine a rancher checking on his cattle in the morning at night. Most of the time, the cattle looks healthy and happy. But one day, he notices a copy of his cattle is sick and he hasn't come back yet. He's all alone and more than 100 miles away from a doctor. He needs medicine, and he relies on you to provide him with the "doctor" that he needs and give them antibiotics to fight the infection. He has no one to rely on the cattle body. However, all of this is a direct violation of the rules of the cowboy cattle.

While making all of these decisions, the farmers must also deal with their budget, time, their cattle, and do what the market demands.



Photo by Yajaira Zuniga

By Alexandra McLeod

The Life of a User

Another so desperate for a hit
Using dirty needles- whatever it takes to get lit

Fingers melted to the bone
Can this life even be called home?

Stealing to provide the feeling
Why is this Devil so appealing?

Scars on your face to mark the choice
Long ago you lost your voice

No sleep, no food
Why does this no longer feel good?

All you crave is a chemical bliss
Your family and friends you no longer miss

A bottomless pit of sorrow and pain
This is no longer just a game

What seemed like fun has turned into a nightmare
You want to stop, but once again you return to the Devil's Lair

Your addiction and yourself you want to kill
You've only created your own hell

The Devil has you and you will never be whole
Pathetic and lifeless you've sold your soul



The Warmth of a Loving Family

Rachel Ryan

When I woke up this morning, I knew it was going to be a great day. It all started when my feet hit the floor. I turned around and my son, wide awake, was smiling at me. I got up, stretched, and got my son and myself ready for the day. I sat anxiously, waiting to see my aunt and uncle. It had been a long time since I had seen them last. I could hardly wait. We were going on a road trip to Wichita Falls. Finally they pulled up, and I grabbed our bags and my son. Of course, when I got outside, they took my son and started playing with him. I watched them, with eyes full of excitement, and it brought tears to my eyes. Caleb was happy to see them, too. He laughed and threw his hands all over the place. We visited the whole way. I look out the window. It was so pretty outside, the perfect morning for a road trip. Everything glowed with the morning sun and the morning air was a refreshing smell. The trees waved "hello" to us as we drove past. The wind painted our vehicle with waves of soothing motion. The morning air and the minty taste of toothpaste was a chilling combination on my tongue. My heart began pounding as we grew closer to our destination. My aunt and uncle playing with one another as if they were sixteen again made me laugh to myself. Finally, we arrived at our destination. Just then I started feeling guilty. I knew why we were here. We waited in the parking lot. I watched as my cousin pulled up in his big black truck. His truck had a trailer on it with a really nice white shiny car on the back. His wife Krissy was in the car on the trailer waving and laughing. Just then a knot grew in my throat, my eyes swelled with tears, and I tried to hold it back, but I couldn't. The car was for



me! It was a 2000 Olds Mobile Alero. I gave my cousin and his wife a great big hug. "There is only one thing I want you to do for me," my cousin said.

"Whatever you want," I said.

"Don't ever look at me like you have to repay me."

Once again there was that knot in my throat. I pushed it back and said, "Thank you." Krissy told me that they were blessed to get to give me the car. I couldn't believe it. They gave it to me, asking nothing in

return. Then we went to a restaurant to eat. The restaurant was very nice. The walls were painted green, yellow, orange red and black. The lights were turned down low. Family laughter and chatter filled the restaurant. The waitresses all walked, talked, and smiled in the same manner. Across the table I could feel the warmth of family. We visited, laughed, and told old stories. Caleb played in the high chair. He nearly jumped out of the high chair to get the chips and salsa. He was ready to eat. Gracin, my cousin Rusty's son, was telling the waitress he was a champion. Laughs set off around the table like a wild fire. It was so funny. After we were finished eating, we went outside and the kids played. Caleb had a handful of dirt, and it was heading right for his mouth. That would have been a mess. Gracin raced my aunt Tina to the end of the parking lot. He had grown two feet since I had seen him last. As we sat outside, I felt sad. I didn't want to leave. I sat in my new car and my cousin Rusty was showing me how everything worked. The leather of the seats felt cold on my finger tips. He turned on the radio, and there was that red dirt music we both loved so much. He burned me a CD for the ride home. Just before we left the restaurant, my cousin Rusty stood next to his wife and held my son Caleb. My son gave him the sweetest hug. As I watched this, I realized that my son may not have a father, but he has great men to look up to all around him. My cousin Rusty has done so well with his life. I look up to him so very much. He is a fire fighter, and is in school to do deep sea diving. He is also a great father! My cousin's wife Krissy also is doing well with her life. She is in school to be an RN and is a great mother. I look up to them both. We only have one life to live. So we have to give it our best shot. They are a perfect example of this. We don't realize the bonds we have in our family, until we aren't able to see them anymore. That day, I felt the feeling I had missed so much, the warmth and tight bonds of my lovely family.

Post-traumatic Stress Disorder: Over or Under Diagnosed?

By Kinsley Brown

Many people experience something traumatic in their lives, but never tell anybody about it. That may seem like the best way to deal with it, but trying to deal with the problem alone may cause the development of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder. My grandfather suffered from PTSD after returning home from World War II. At night, my mom said he would wake up screaming at the top of his lungs. He was experiencing a flashback of the war in his dreams. "He would never talk about the war when he got back. Not even to my mother" (Brown). According to the mental health experts on NIMH.gov, "Approximately 7.7 Million Americans suffer from PTSD" (NIMH). It is a very serious disorder that may develop in a person's mind for many different reasons. Some of the main factors that cause PTSD may be returning home from a war, witnessing someone being murdered, being a victim of rape, and sometimes even losing a family member. The effects of PTSD are also very serious if not treated. These effects can be either physical or psychological.

The number one most common reason why a person develops PTSD is returning home from war. A war veteran has seen a lot of violence that Americans are not used to seeing every day. For example, living in a life or death situation every day would be very stressful. Also, fighting in the war and having to watch a fellow soldier die right in front of their eyes would be very depressing.

The second reason a person may develop PTSD is having been raped in the past. "Most people who have been raped don't tell anybody about the event until they get older" says Lynn Dougherty, a doctor specializing in child abuse. Having to always wonder and be afraid it may happen again may lead the victim to develop PTSD.

The third main reason is losing a close family member. Being close to someone for a long time and suddenly losing them could cause psychological problems in a person's life. When someone loses a close family member, they keep their feelings to themselves. That can be a leading factor of PTSD. There have been many reports of people developing PTSD following the loss of somebody they loved.

There are many different effects of PTSD. A person may not develop PTSD immediately after the tragic event they experienced. They could develop the disorder years after. A war veteran may experience trouble sleeping, or be easily disturbed by loud noises. A rape victim could also experience trouble sleeping. Rape victims might also have trouble being around men or women, depending on what sex raped them. Last, but not least, a person who has lost a close family member may experience trouble going to family events, or being around the family during the holidays.

There are many causes and effects of PTSD. War, being a victim of rape, and losing a family member are only a few examples of why a person might develop the disorder. There is no medication that cures PTSD. The only remedy for the disorder is psychological. This is a disease that only the person suffering from it can cure for themselves. PTSD is a serious disorder that is overlooked by many people. There should be more studies on this to get people the help they need.

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Photo by
Leslie Shawn

A Stormy Situation

Tessa Shae Page



I learned at an early age storms should not be taken lightly. It was a beautiful June day in Orlando, Florida. I was twelve years old. My family and I were on a trip to Disneyland. It was my dad, my mom, my three little brothers, my baby sister, and me.

From the moment we walked through the front gate, I was put in charge of my little brother Cody. As we entered the grand amusement park, the smell of popcorn and candy were almost overbearing. The laughter of children was inviting, and the atmosphere was warm and invigorating. Cody had on a leash so I thought to myself, "Cool, he can be my puppy." We were having an amazing time. We danced with Pinocchio, went to MGM studios, and rode a few rides, some of which had nauseating side effects. While we were standing in line to ride the tea cups, it started to rain. It was at that moment the whole blissful situation turned to turmoil and confusion.

My dad's voice bellowed through the crowd, "Shae, be sure and hang on to Cody." "Alright," I screeched above the maddening crowd.

The rain still belting down on us began to fall even harder. Then, out of nowhere, a crash of lightning struck and dismantled the massive trams above our heads. The already anxious crowd was like a brutal herd of elephants frantically fighting to escape from a cage. Cody and I were shoved apart by these maniacs of all shapes and sizes. I yanked Cody's leash, only to have it flung back at me. My nightmare had begun. My brother was gone. I screamed, but felt drowned out by the abundance of noise and chaos that surrounded me. It was like being in a house of horror. I couldn't see my family anywhere. I frantically searched by crawling around on my hands and knees, scanning the ground all around me and yelling, "Cody, please answer me!" The people were running for their lives, not paying attention to the lost souls around them.

Finally, just as I had given up hope, I saw a little ball of clothing nestled tightly beside the decorative trashcan. It was Cody. I stood up and shoved my way through the frantic crowd of people. With lightning still streaking the night sky and rain beating down on me, I reached my frightened, helpless little brother. I yanked him up and hugged him tightly as I shoved through mobs of idiots, screaming for my dad. I yelled angrily at everyone I passed for trampling on my brother. When we finally reached the gates, there stood my dad with a look of despair. He had been patiently praying we would find our way. I threw Cody at him and said, "I am way too young to be responsible for a five year-old, Dad. We could have been killed." I told him what we had just gotten through and how careless people can be. I never will forget what he said to me.

"I knew I could trust you to keep him safe."

"I guess so," I said, a little confused. Then we walked two miles to our van because the lightning had shut down all transportation. I left there with a sense of pride, knowing my dad trusted me. I was also very thankful for my family and very aware that things like the weather could turn a blissful day into a twisted nightmare.



~Dandi Ré Clark

Preparing for the Best Tailgate Party

Sarah Thomas

Tailgating before a football game, or any sporting event is the most enjoyable party a person could have besides having fun at home. There are many preparations that have to be done before going out and having a good time. The preparations can sometimes be time consuming, such as shopping, reserving a spot to sit, and preparing a meal, but these things are very essential to having a successful tailgating party.

Taking the first step to having a successful party is shopping! Shopping can be very tedious job; one can't buy too much, or too little of the meal items. While shopping and picking up menu items and ingredients, one must think about if there will be kids coming to the party or if it will be all adults, and plan the food according to the guests. This is a hard task to do to meet all guests' expectations for what is being prepared for them.

Reserving a spot for the game can sometimes be compared to a pleasant hunt, unless the right spot has already been previously picked out, or it has been rented out in previous years. It is always a good idea to call ahead to make sure the spot is still secured in the right name and that all guests are taken care of before the game. Always make sure what size space is available for the party and set up accordingly.

The next thing is to drive home and start preparing the meal. Preparing the meal is time consuming and can take up to five hours. It is usually better to prepare the meal the night before the big game, so that way there is no stressing out the next morning. Putting the meal in re-heatable containers to set out on the tables works well so that people at the party are not trying to cook. It will be a more enjoyable party that way. Make sure to grab the utensils that were used to cook with so they will be more accessible.

Sitting at the house watching a game is fun, but getting to be outside at a place and talking with friends and sometimes even strangers makes for an enjoyable experience. Putting time and effort into the party gives pride and is more meaningful altogether. That's why having a tailgating party is so much fun! It does take hard work and dedication to have a party at every home game, but with the right kind of support, it can be done. Tailgating is like a present; the anticipation just kills us to open it.

A Taste Of Life



Everyone has a place and reason in this world we live in. The tricky part is figuring out what it is and what we are called to do. Lexi an eighteen year old woman was just getting out of high school jumping into college knowing what she wanted to do with life but not knowing how to get there. Her oldest brother Damian, 19 was already in a huge astronaut school in California. He was doing great in his classes and already a top student.

Working his job as a vet assistant while going to school was hard on him. He was doing all of this on top of raising his baby Jr. He was not scared of anything.

Lexi always looked up to her older brother. In her eyes he had his life on track being married to her new best friend, Baylee, and raising their beautiful son Jr., he is still working hard and finishing his degree to be a famous astronaut.

Lexi wanted to be a teacher for kindergarten students. She had a boyfriend, Tristan that she was with for 3 years and planned on marrying. He worked on a drilling rigs and was gone a week at a time.

Lexi had a big fear of being alone in a house and always had Baylee come see her when Tristan was gone. Overnight, her mom let one of her little brothers, Jacob or Cody, stay the night while he was at work.

Her mom then told her after she got in rolled for her first semester of college that she would have to get use to being alone in a house.

Lexi was feared that, as she seen in movies, someone would break in and abuse and/or kill her.

Her mom said that is something that everyone is going to have to worry about that every day and that it's not anything different from anyone else's life.

Lexi did not like that she had this fear that would not go away.

One weekend that Tristan had to work Lexi's mom went on a family vacation with the boys for that same weekend. No one around would be able to stay with her. When Baylee came over that day to see her, Lexi asked if she could stay the night. Baylee told her how Damian was sick and that it would have to be a different night because Baylee's brother and sister was visiting.

Lexi, in the middle of a conflict, knew she had to overcome her fear.

It started to get dark and Lexi was at her house alone. She was sitting there doing her homework on her laptop and kept hearing something tapping the window.

She ignored the sound and kept working.

Frightened, she kept hearing the same tapping so she saved her work and got up and looked out the window. She saw that it was only her tree branch tapping the window.

She went into her room locking the door and turned on the TV to block out the little sounds that she was hearing.

Her cell phone rang and it was Baylee calling to say she wouldn't be able to make it

the next day because she was going to take care of Damian.

Devastated, she hung up because she knew she would have to go to the whole next day and night alone.

She looked at her phone one last time and seen Tristan saying, "I love you, Goodnight" in a text message. She replied, "I love you to babe, make sure I am alive tomorrow!!" and rolled over in her bed.

Lying in bed she was really tired but kept looking over her shoulder to make sure no one was standing behind her.

She finally passed out and slept through the Saturday night.

The next morning she woke up to one loud bang on the door and jumped up scared. She went out the front door to look in the peep hole and see who or what it was.

She didn't see anyone so she slowly opened the door and seen a newspaper on the ground.

Relieved she picked it up and went and sat on the couch, knowing she would have to go through the fright another day and night.

She got through the day mostly by calling people to not concentrate on the fact that she was alone.

Then the darkness rolled back around again for the last night and she couldn't get Tristan to text or call her back.

She kept hearing the tree once again on the window and scared sat on her couch.

Holding her knees she sat there in silence rocking back and forth.

She was drifting off to sleep when she heard scratching on the door.

She stood across from the door just staring, frightened by the constant scratching.

She finally realized, I have to get over my fear, and walked to the door when she got close the scratching stopped so she opened the door just a little bit and seen a puppy and a person's feet.

She flipped on the porch light and seen Tristan standing with a puppy saying

"Happy Anniversary, he is a guard dog and will always keep you safe; I got off early to get him for you"

"Feeling happier than ever, she replied, "AWWW Thank God you're here I missed you, that was not so bad but I never want to do it again! Without the Dog that is! I Love You Baby." "I Love You Too Sweetheart" he said giving her a hug.

Lexi realized that there is ways around your fears like get a dog and don't feel alone anymore. She was so happy and named her puppy Courage because he gave her the courage to be safe knowing her puppy would always be there.

She told all her friends about her experience and anniversary and told them all how she was so glad she got over her fear and tried to help all the others close to her with their fears too.



Jaime Mayorga



The Key to My Dad's Success

My dad, Vicente (Vince) Mayorga, was born on April 5, 1964, in Queretaro, Mexico. Vince was the second of eight brothers and sisters. His parents were poor country farmers in the Sierra Madre Mountains. When he turned fourteen, Vince saw that his parents were struggling to put even one meal on the table per day. Finally one day, my dad decided he was tired of seeing his family suffer. He decided to have a talk with his uncle. His uncle



told him that he would take him to the United States only if my dad was willing to work and provide for himself. My father immediately

took the offer. He was young but had a mind and

determination to save his family. When he arrived in the U.S., which was no easy task, he was left by his uncle in Southwestern Oklahoma, while his uncle left for Georgia. Now on his own, my young dad had to look for work. Finally, he found a farmer who believed that a man's work was more important than the nationality or social status. Now that my dad was starting to see what it really meant to be in the land of great opportunities, he decided to become a citizen of the United States. On his way to achieve his

goal, my dad had to battle working, learning English, and learning the history and political aspects of the country he wanted to be a part of.

On the road to his citizenship, my dad had to first struggle with work. The farmer whom he worked for was a middle-aged man. My dad would have to rise every morning at five-thirty to tend to the livestock. The farmer had numerous pigs, cattle, and chickens. One day the farmer needed to leave for a personal matter, but he still needed his land to be tilled. He then called my dad and just put him in the tractor without much instruction except "till the soil." My dad had trouble, but within an hour he had learned how to drive a tractor.



The next obstacle my dad faced was learning English. In Mexico, the schools taught English only in the tenth grade. My dad was forced to drop out of school in elementary to help his dad make ends meet. My dad knew that if he was to achieve his citizenship, he would need to take English classes. He then decided to go to the Oklahoma City for English classes. He found a person that taught English and also spoke Spanish, but the only problem was the classes were Monday thru Friday, eight to eleven in the evening. This discouraged my dad, but he took the classes anyway. He would work by day, and by night he would be studying English in the city.

about two weeks my dad, with the help of the English teacher, had learned everything possible to pass the naturalization test. Now that he was ready, he signed up and went through the process of becoming a citizen, and on his first attempt, he passed the test and became a citizen of the U.S. He reached his greatest goal, which to this very day he refers to as, "The Key to My Success."

Even as a child my dad struggled. His parents were very poor, and he had to quit school to help his father. When he came to this country, he immediately knew he never wanted to raise a family in Mexico. He saw the opportunities. He thought ahead in his future, a thing young people these days really need to learn how to do, and saw what his future family would be. His citizenship was the most important event in my dad's life. With this he went from a boy who worked for a farmer to owner of a small oilfield business. This truly was, "The Key to My Dad's Success."



Graduation

Meaghann Paige Snell

Twelve years have passed in the classroom. Oh my! How they flew
I can't believe it's now our time to start all over new.

We started out so small, Remember all the things we knew?
Twelve years have passed in the classroom. Oh my! How they flew

Thinking back to those days when my biggest worry was play time
Fighting over whose friend was whose and who had the bigger dime
Pictures in the old albums... oh we were all partners in crime!
Thinking back to those days when my biggest worry was play time

We've gone through all this together; laughter, love, and tears
We've grown and changed together, working through our fears
I'm not sure I'm ready, this is my family of the past twelve years
We've gone through all this together; laughter, love, and tears

It's finally here! the day we've all been waiting for, now what do we do?
I'm actually kind of scared, not sure about the rest of you
It really truly makes me sad, splitting up our lasting loving crew
Twelve years have passed in the classroom. Now what do we do?



Love

Maghann Paige Snell

Always walking down the street
Giving you someone new to meet
All dressed up in the little black dress
Hiding all the disastrous mess
Takes you under its enormous wing
Every once in a while leaves a diamond ring
Even better than the bloom of a rose
Running goose-bumps from your head down to your toes

Spicy as garlic sweet as honey
Giving no value to any amount of money
Can make any single heart melt
By giving a feeling that has never been felt
Swallows you up with only the first sight
Making you wish for more than one night
Happily comes and sadly goes
Leaving some of us as friends and a few of us as foes

Sometimes it is a little shy
Though it is always nigh
Follows you wherever you go
And yes, it will brilliantly show
Once there, it will stay for a while
Letting you walk in those shoes for a mile
Whenever it may leave your life
It will stab you in the heart feeling like a knife

Kendra Morgan

MY FAVORITE SPORTS

For as long as I can remember, sports have always been a huge part of my life. I remember the excitement I felt as a third grader walking onto the court for my very first basketball game. As I grew older and progressed into Junior High and High School, I started to branch out and try all of the sports our school offered. Being a senior, I have finally narrowed my sports of choice down to my two favorites. Throughout my years as a passionate sports player, I discovered basketball and cross country to be at the top of my list.



Basketball has always been at the top of my list when it came down to choosing my favorite extracurricular activities. There is nothing better than walking onto the court for a Friday-night basketball game and hearing the roar of the crowd. Not only hearing the crowd, but looking into the stands to see the faces of family members, friends, and people of your community cheering me on gives me a rush of excitement.

The over-all aroma of basketball games is the smell of buttery popcorn and other snacks coming from the lobby. My personal favorite part of basketball is the importance of team effort. Without teammates, winning is practically impossible. Teammates all depend on one another to work their hardest and make the team better. Apart from actual family members, teammates are like a family. There is an



extremely strong bond between them. Not many people will give everything they have for a few months to a sport.

Another one of my favorite sports is Cross Country. This sport is very different from basketball, but yet there are a few similarities. Cross Country is without a doubt one of the hardest sports that I have ever played. The amount of time and miles that are put in throughout the season are unbelievable. Cross Country does not bring a huge crowd because of the distances that are traveled to the meets, but the fans that do make the long trips are extremely supportive.



It is thrilling to stand on the starting line until the shot is fired, and to take off as fast as possible. The feeling runners get as they cross the finish line knowing they



did something not many people will do is wonderful. They may be out of breath and exhausted at the end, but it goes away and pain is replaced with pride. Sometimes the meets are run in the blistering or even the frigid cold. As in Basketball, Cross Country requires a large amount of team effort. Without a team, trying to make it to the state meet is an extremely difficult task. The team unity is outstanding because of the countless hours spent together running.

There are many different things that people enjoy doing. For me, sports have always been a major part of my life and something I really enjoy doing. However, not every sport has my complete interest. My favorites out of the vast majority of sports are basketball and cross country. These two sports have been exciting and rewarding experiences for me. I strongly urge anyone who is considering playing sports to try them.



Sports

Julia Mason



Throughout my life I have many achievements. My accomplishments consist of my own personal achievements and others that are publicly recognized. For instance, this year, in track, my sprint relay team has qualified for the state track meet. I have never been to the state meet in this event, but I

have qualified in the high jump and long jump for three years in a row now. Track is not the only sport where I have achieved my goals. In basketball I have been a three- year starter, and every year I have made our All Conference Team. This year I finally won Most Valuable Player; it was one of the best moments in my basketball career, besides when my team qualified for the state tournament when I was a freshman. When my team qualified for state, it was a very satisfying feeling. No one expected us to be able to make it, but against all odds we made it.



Participating in sports has also allowed me to grow as a person and make new friends that I would not know otherwise. Without these experiences in my life, I would not be the person I am today. It has given me confidence in sports to be the best I can be. Being a good athlete is not always perfect; it has its ups and downs. For instance, when I play other teams in basketball, my opponents know what will make me play worse mentally, and they use that against me. Whether it is saying things to me or just frustrating me, it's very difficult to



overcome. As I have gotten older, I have found it easier to block the negative words out and do my best, but the words will always be somewhere in my mind.

Practice is difficult. Some days when I want to quit I can't, because I can't imagine my life without sports.

I know sports have taught me how to work for what I want. The outcome can never be perfect, but if I quit every time something doesn't go my way then all my hard work would be pointless in the end. So, without playing and being involved in athletics, I would be a completely different person. I would rather go through the hard work and other obstacles than be someone that I am not.





Photo By Jordyn Roberts

The Hard Task and a Glass of Tea

Casey Bloomer

I had driven over 150 miles already, and still the infinite pile of work orders seemed to plague my clipboard. As I sluggishly dropped my feet to the ground to start yet another job, I let out a disheartened sigh. My body cried out for rest as my stomach grumbled loudly, only to remind me I hadn't eaten anything since early morning.

I stiffened my back and lightened my gait as I walked to the bright red door that stood before me. I managed to crack a slight smile as the small and feeble elderly woman opened the door, welcoming me into her home. "So you're needing some help with your house cleaning?" I asked politely.

"Sure am," she replied. "Ever since my husband passed, I just can't seem to find the energy to stay caught up!"

I assured her I would be more than happy to help her out with the overwhelming task. This brought nothing but a smile to her wrinkled face. She asked if I would like a glass of sweet tea, but I declined, as I thought about the plethora of work still to be done.

I started with the basic stuff first, picking up the few dishes scattered on the table and on the counter tops. I grabbed the broom and stiffened mop as I braced my back for the task at hand. I could tell she had tried to keep up the floor, but there was quite a stock pile of crumbs that littered the contour of the kitchen cabinets. She repeatedly apologized for the despicable mess, but each time I assured her, I was here to help and that it was no problem.

From there I moved on to the bathroom and bedrooms. Scattered through the house were pictures and the magnet collection that belonged to her husband. I couldn't help but smile as my mind wandered, and my heart warmed as I noticed an old pair of boots that were tucked in the corner. My grandpa always wore boots as well, and I just seemed to take flight back in time, reminiscing in the memories of my childhood. My grandfather always smelled of dairy cows a hard worker he was. I finally plunged myself back to the present moment of time, realizing I still had more work to finish before the day's end.

I made my way to the final room. It was a beautiful sight, with dark brown leather furniture, a massive elk skin rug on the floor, and a fireplace that just called out to warm the heart. There was something different about this room, though. I noticed a cup with dried coffee in the bottom next to the burly recliner that faced the small television in the corner. The mantle, end tables, and hutch had more dust than any other room in the house. As I wiped and sprayed, I heard a snuffle from behind.

"I haven't been able to come in here yet." She spoke feebly with tears in her eyes. My heart pounded in my chest, as I struggled to fight back the tears that flooded my eyes. Before thinking I rushed to her side, and hugged her neck, offering any comfort that I could. As I released her from my embrace, I gazed into her reddened eyes and asked, "How about that glass of sweet tea?"

Kaleb Cusack

My Senior Season

Despite what many people think, the high school football season starts in the spring. At Okeene, we started spring practice about two weeks before school got out. Towards the end of spring practice we had the Lift-a-Thon, a fundraiser where we get sponsors to donate so much money for the total amount of weight that we lift. After we got through with spring practice, we had our first team meeting before summer started. Coach Wardlaw gave us all of our camp forms, and we formed our team goals and rules. After the spring meeting, Coach released us for the first part of the summer.

We had about three weeks to use for our own purposes before Summer Pride began. Summer Pride is Okeene's summer weight-lifting program. We had to report to the field house at 6:30 A.M. to start lifting, and then we would do running exercises. Every Thursday we would have to run the mile to the pool to do exercises in the water. During the summer we would attend all the camps for help on our technique. Luckily for me, I attended lineman camp at Westmoore High School. This lineman camp was originally a three-day camp, but thanks to the torrential rain that we received in the middle of June, it was condensed to two days and moved to Moore's game field. This camp was an opportunity for our lineman to get a chance to go against lineman from bigger schools. We were the smallest school at the camp, coming from Class A, which is the smallest division that plays 11-man football. I took full advantage of this camp to improve myself and also to get a reputation among the schools as a good lineman.

After playing for the same team for four years, a person can start to feel the groove of things. Everything that one does has been done before, and it approaches like clockwork. For me, it was two-a-days that came up like the feeling that geese get when it's time to head south. I quit eating as much and tried getting as much sleep in as possible before it started. But August 12, the inevitable had arrived. We

had a meeting at our field house the night before to get our equipment and forms. I will never forget what Coach Wardlaw told us. "You boys better go home and hug your mothers like you never have, because at six-thirty tomorrow morning you're mine." After hearing that line three times before, I still had the same chills. My life was about to change in a big way.

Two-a-days are the last opportunity for us to get in shape for the upcoming season. It started at six-thirty with stretching. With two-a-days comes the worst twenty minutes of mid-August, Four Corners. Four Corners is Satan's way of telling you that no matter what, you aren't in the shape that you should be in. It consists of four stations of intense agilities, that despite my best efforts I can't help but relieve my stomach of my breakfast via the way it came in. In the afternoon session we would work on our plays and techniques.

After the trials and tribulations of two-a-days, we started the preseason. During the preseason we have about two weeks to practice, and we usually have a couple of scrimmages against some teams from different classes. This year we played Chisholm and Perry, two teams that we wouldn't play during the regular season. I considered these two weeks being the most nerve wracking of the season. We would practice day after day, just waiting for the season opener.

The tradition at Okeene is that we don't vote for team captains until the week of our season opener. It gives every senior the chance to show his ability to lead, or lack thereof. I remember sitting down watching all the seniors worry about who got voted in. I really didn't care, because what I was worried about was just playing. Then, in my opinion, the unthinkable happened: I was elected as one of team captains. Every day since that day, I had felt the eyes of every player on me. I had been given the responsibility of leadership, and I had to give everything that I had to my team. My first test of leadership came at the season opener. We were to play Fairview at home, and we were told all summer that Fairview, a team that lost every game the year before, was riding on the belief that beating us would show that they could play with anyone. Despite the hype, the final score was 54-0 in our favor.

I never felt nervous before a game. I didn't even feel nervous when we played the number one team in the state, Cashion. That game was for the district championship, but I still didn't feel nervous. Looking back I would call my emotion a strange sense of calm. That game was the hardest game I have ever played. Despite the fight that we put up, we were beaten 27-21. I felt the pain of loss, but it didn't mean that we were done. I did my best to play just as hard the weeks after that to keep our team's momentum going.

We finished the regular season with only one loss, so we made it into the playoffs. Our first game was against Oklahoma Bible Academy. After winning 34-7, we had the next week to prepare for the toughest team we would play this year: Velma-Alma. They were a smash mouth football team that loves to run the ball right down the throat of any team that comes in their way. After a week of preparation, I arrived at my opponent's field ready for the game that I would never forget. We had battled Velma-Alma for 48 long minutes, but in the end we fell short. As I walked to the dressing room, the numbers 28-14 burned in my eyes. We had lost, and my year was over.

As I sat in the locker room, I couldn't see the floor through my tears. I looked at the other seniors, and I felt the same pain: we would never play another game with each other ever again. We had all sacrificed that year. I will never forget my teammates. I had bled, fought, won, lost, and cried with them. We had bonded, and it was only after the bond was broken did we realize what we had. I will always consider the 2010 football team as my brothers. I had the time of my life, but I know deep down that I have to go on. My senior season is only just one page of my life, and it's my responsibility to turn the page to bigger and better things. The greatest lesson that I learned from this team was saying that our coach constantly told us, "It's not that the outcome of the game that matters. It's if you played the game the way it's meant to be played."

Offshore Drilling

Cameron Brimage

The ban on offshore drilling should be lifted. Lifting the ban on offshore drilling would benefit the United States in many ways. Lifting the ban would help to lower fuel and natural gas prices. It would put hard working Americans who have been out of work for months back into the job market. United States offshore drilling would also help us to wean us, the people, off of foreign oil dependency. Many people say that there are too many risks in allowing offshore drilling to continue, but what things in life or the world don't come at some price. Everything people do on a daily basis has risks, but these risks are just another part of everyday life.

Since the beginning of the oilfield, there have been incidents, and the same goes for the start of offshore drilling. Offshore drilling started as early back as 1869 by a rig that was designed to operate in shallow water, but the anchoring system resembled the systems used today by offshore rigs. Although the start of the offshore well can be backdated to 1869, the first "out of sight" offshore rig wasn't put into use until after World War II. Logs on harmful incidents have not always been kept very thoroughly, but according to the National Research Council, logs on incidents do date about to at least 1979. Even in 1979, the safety of drilling has been significantly higher than other dangerous fields such as mining, transportation, and heavy construction. According to "Accident During the Offshore Oil and Gas Development," there are two types of accidents; one of which involves a catastrophic situation that involves doing damage to the environment in a way which is hard to contain but not impossible, which has an approximation of one incident for every ten thousand wells drilled. The latter of the two involves an incident in which damage may occur to the environment but is able to be contained easily and quickly. There are lots of risks in using the offshore drilling technique, but the statistics of these incidents outweigh the consequences.

Lifting the ban on offshore drilling has many perks in the U.S. economy as well. According to Josh Brown, the offshore drilling could generate anywhere from 1,500 to 15,000 jobs just in the state of Virginia from drilling off the coast in the Atlantic Ocean. The United States already spends approximately \$1.5 billion per day importing oil from other countries. So, instead of spending all this money on importing oil into the U.S. from other countries who already dislike us, why don't we lift the ban on offshore drilling to create jobs, and stimulate our economy?

I'm not saying that there shouldn't be regulations placed on offshore drilling. I do agree with reviving the way offshore drilling is done, but even if it were left as it is, it isn't as unsafe towards people or the environment as people make it out to be. Offshore drilling is important to the United States because it wouldn't just stimulate our economy for a short period of time. The U. S. is sitting on oil reserves in the Gulf of Mexico that make up a third of our entire oil reserves. So, I say lift the ban and stimulate the things that are important to our country. Don't shut it down and help other countries when we need the help right here at home.

Parents Know Best

Jaime Mayorga

I can still remember my first day of 5th grade. I was excited to start the New Year and was so happy to see what was ahead. Most of all this was the first year we were able to have a say in the classes we took. Even though it was just one class, I still enjoyed having the opportunity to choose between band and vocal.

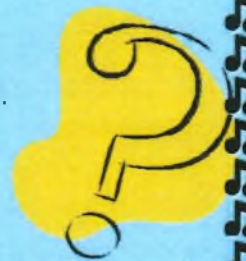


For me the choice was a no-brainer! Vocal is what I wanted to do. I wanted to be in vocal because the vocal teacher was my favorite in the entire school, Mrs. Chaloner. She was a great pianist and an amazing person. She could always make me happy when I listened to her play the piano.

After the first two days of school, it was the weekend and I was to prepare for the first full week of the school year. After the first Monday, my mom called me to the table the next evening. I could not help but notice that something was wrong and that she was not happy. When I sat down, she let me know what was on her mind. She had somehow found out about our ability to choose between band and vocal and how I had chosen vocal. She was not happy because she wanted me to be in band. I protested because I was not very fond of the band teacher, but I had no say so in the decision and was forced into band.

The next day I told the administration I wanted to switch into band. As I walked into the band room, I saw friends, many with their instruments all ready. I did not know what to do because I had been forced into this class. Mrs. Scott, the band director, greeted me, and I told her I had no idea which instrument I would like to play. She began showing me all the instruments she had. I honestly did not care for any instrument, but I made the decision to try to make the best of my situation. She showed me the drums, and I knew that was what I wanted to play. I could see myself playing the snare drum and having great fun. I told Mrs. Scott that I wanted to play the drums, and she said for me and my mom to come by after school because the music shop was bringing instruments and I could buy one later that day.

After school, my mom and I went to the band room and waited in line for our turn. When it was our turn, I told the music man that I wanted to play drums. He led me and my mom around the table and brought out a sort of backpack. He opened the bag and pulled out a bell set. I looked at him and restated that I wanted to play drums. Mrs. Scott came over and explained to me that if I wanted to play drums I had to play bells because that was part of being a percussionist.



My mom looked at me and asked if that's what I wanted. I could not help but feel the pressure of buying something then and there. I finally just told the music man that I would think about it and decide later. I did not feel comfortable at all. I did not want to play the bells and therefore could not play the drums.

The next day I went to band. Some more of my friends had gotten instruments, and I saw what they had chosen. I knew I had to pick an instrument soon and decided to get an instrument that would be easy to play. I went over to my friend Colby who had gotten his instrument the day before. I looked at his case and asked him what he was going to play. He told me he was going to play the trumpet, and I asked him if he could show me. He opened his case and pulled out a brand new shiny gold trumpet. My first thoughts were: "It's small, it's shiny, and it has only three buttons!" What could be easier than three buttons? I had made my decision. I wanted to play the trumpet.



Later that week we went to the music store, and I bought my first gold-plated King Trumpet. After a few months, I forgot about being forced into band, and I actually began to enjoy it. At the end of my 5th grade year, I was taken to my first honor band, Route 66 Honor Band. That honor band was when I really began to have a passion for playing the trumpet. I now have so much fun and success playing the trumpet. After eight years of playing my trumpet, I have had the honor of playing in more than fifteen Honor Bands, two of which I recently claimed the number one spot as the best trumpet player in the band! I look forward to attending SWOSU next year on a music scholarship and playing in the band. Parents may seem like they control your life, but sometimes they really do know what is best.



The Haunting at Patterville Mansion

By: Michael Brinkley



No matter where you live there will always be ghost stories, some more believable than others. They usually involve death, the manifestation of demons, or even aliens. According to some people evil does not die, but lives on in some form.

My name is James and I am here to tell you a true story that happened to me. Some think I am crazy, and I may be. But what is crazy anyway. Just over a hundred years ago, the concept of a horseless carriage or even flight seemed crazy.

The date was Wednesday June 15, 1988. This date will forever live as the date that changed my life.

The day started out like any other. I went to school late as usual. Throughout the day events seemed to fall into the same patterns as usual. Nothing was out of the ordinary.

Later I met up with my friends Bill and George. They were having fun joking about the ghost of the Patterville Mansion. Bill was having fun torturing me; he knew I was afraid of ghosts. He kept telling stories of how old man Jefferson's ghost had been seen in different parts of the house, adding other instances of strange sounds, and lights that are spotted from time to time. I felt the need to argue the issue, which lead to a dare. The life changing dare. This is where the day took a wrong turn. I can still hear the words hanging in the air. Bill said, "I dare you to spend the night in the mansion. That is, if you are not too chicken!" My response was, "Sure, I will do it, just to prove you wrong."

The Patterville Mansion sat at the edge of the woods just on the outside of town. It was said that the house had been built as a gift to Mr. Jefferson's wife Clara as a wedding gift. During the war the two were killed in a raid on the mansion. Legend says they still roam the halls of the mansion seeking to protect what is rightfully their own. It is said from time to time people break into the old house to spend the night but they never stay longer than that one night.

Feeling the regret of taking on the dare, I packed my things for a stay at the old mansion. I walked to the end of Hollow Oak road with my backpack of supplies. As I topped the final hill

In my quest, I found myself staring at the mansion. The place looked like a manifested nightmare, somewhere between Edgar Allen Poe and Stephen King.

As I slipped through the old rusted gate I asked myself, why are you here? Every footstep further into the property filled with more and more dread as though I was walking through the gates of hell. The overgrown yard, the decaying house, and the looming thought of danger were almost enough to convince me to turn back, but I pressed on. Upon reaching the house I noticed the front door was open so I decided to make my way inside. I slowly started to open the door. Just as I got the door fully open, a large black car ran out with a loud, blood curdling screech. After a moment to compose myself, I entered the house.

Entering the house was like stepping into the past. The furniture, the wall hangings, and everything else was clearly untouched, belonging to the original owners. I pressed forward, not knowing what to expect. The stories I had been told were still fresh on my mind. Upon reaching the master staircase, I decided to explore the second story first. I grabbed the banister to ensure my footing, and climbed the massive staircase.



When I was three steps from the top of the staircase, the banister broke and sliced my hand deeply. I went in search of a bathroom, hoping to find medical supplies. I finally found the second floor bathroom. As I entered, an unearthly chill filled the air. I reached for the medicine cabinet door and opened it, only to find it completely empty.

I closed the cabinet door, and noticed the room getting very cold indeed. I glanced in the mirror and to my surprise saw the words, "Get out now!" written in the fog from my breath. With my coat sleeve, reached up to wipe the words away. As I pulled my arm away, my reflection was replaced by ghoulish woman, her appearance that of someone summoned from the very depths of hell.

Frightened, I ran from the bathroom and tried to find a place of refuge. Halfway down the long hallway, I paused to catch my breath. I started to hear the sound of footsteps following me. When I turned to look, however, there was nothing there. My heart began racing, and the hairs stood up on the back of my neck.

I continued running, and as soon as I reached the end of the hall I was greeted with the ghostly figure of a man holding a lantern. Immediately I turned and ran the other way. As I rounded the corner I slipped and fell. I hurried back to my feet, and as I looked at the floor I saw a puddle of blood. I heard a scream and the sound of a door slamming. Unable to find the

source of the sound, I looked back at the floor, only to see the puddle of blood was no longer there.

Unnerved by what was happening, I looked for an exit. I walked quickly down the hall, and as I passed each door, they slammed shut. I could hear the locks as they fell into place. I reached the end of the hall and heard the old woman give a demented laugh.

Now in panic, I headed back to the stairway. As I reached the first step I felt a shove from behind, sending me tumbling down. Halfway down I blacked out. When I awoke I heard the sound of knocking on the front door. To my surprise the sky was beginning to lighten with dawn.

I stood slowly, amazed to find that my body was still working. I didn't appear to have any broken bones, or even a single bruise. The knocking continued, growing louder and louder. I walked to the front door and attempted to open it. Nothing happened.

"James, quit fooling around. If you don't hurry up and open the door we're leaving." I looked out the window to see my friends Bill and George stamping their feet impatiently in the cold. I tried the doorknob again, and I couldn't get it to turn. "Fine. We'll see you at school," they said, turning and walking away.

I sank to the floor sobbing, wondering how I would ever get out of this house. I heard a soothing sound, and looked up. There to my shock was the woman I had seen last night, only she was much more beautiful. She seemed like a kind person, motherly even, as she continued trying to calm me down. "Don't worry. Everything will be alright now. We will take care of you, just as if you were our own son," Clara said.

I looked over at the staircase and saw my lifeless body, covered in blood from the massive blow to my head. Apparently the fall from the top of the stairs was too much for my body to handle. "Why did you do it?" I asked Clara. "We never had the chance to have children of our own. You seem like such a nice boy. I promise we will take good care of you now."

So if you are ever around a little town called Patterville and find yourself lonely, come take a look at the old mansion. If you stop by at night, take a look in the window, and you may just see me looking back.



X-Men and Social Diversity

Tim Ravadio

The world we live in is one of great diversity. With 6.8 billion people walking the earth it comes as no great surprise that not every man woman and child share the same beliefs, and the countless number of differing cultures, religions, and races make for a very uneven existence. The concept of segregation and social diversity is so well-known it has been employed in countless books and films as a dramatic storytelling device for the purpose of getting the audience's attention with a socially relevant theme. Well known among these stories is that of The X-Men, who's thinly veiled plot greatly echoes the real life issues of world-wide prejudice. While admittedly exaggerated, The X-Men Universe greatly parallels our own in regards to segregation and prejudice. But when dealing with something as serious as racism and prejudice, one must ask "Does the story of The X-Men justly and accurately portray the concept of diversity and segregation?" While many of the topics of debate such as racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, gay rights, and religion are easily recognizable in a plot, the X-Men universe offers a unique and interesting way of paralleling these issues and is able to very clearly show us where this kind of thinking has gotten us and how much worse it can get. Like Cable says to the first mutant child born since the disaster that was House of M, "Suns comin up kid, we made it. Now comes the hard part (Brubaker)."

Characters within the X-Men mythos hail from a wide variety of nationalities. Just like us, these characters are living in a very diverse world, but, unlike us, their problems come from more than just different skin color or language. To sum up the X-Men all one would need to know is that this is a story of society's overreaction to things that don't follow a certain cultural norm; but that may be putting it too simply. These characters also reflect religious, ethnic and sexual minorities. Examples of Jewish characters include Shadowcat, Sabra and Magneto, whilst Dust is a devout Muslim, Nightcrawler a devout Catholic, and Thunderbird is a follower of the Hindu faith. Aside from differing faiths and races the X-Men Universe also delves into the issues of multi-culture characters. Storm (Ororo Munroe) represents two aspects of the African culture as her father was African American and her mother was Kenyan. Karma was portrayed as a devout Catholic from Vietnam, who regularly attended Mass and confession when she was introduced as a founding member of the New Mutants. This team also included Wolfsbane (a devout Scots Presbyterian), Danielle Moonstar (a Cheyenne Native American) and Cannonball, and was later joined by Magma (a devout Greco-Roman classical religionist). Also notable in the story is the fact that mutants from all over the planet are able to come together as a whole and defend their equal rights despite being a group compiled of largely varied cultures and homelands. Different nationalities included Wolverine as a Canadian, Colossus from Russia, Banshee from Ireland, Gambit who is a Cajun, Psylocke from the U.K., Armor from Japan, Nightcrawler from Germany. With this, we can begin to see how well the X-Men mirror our own times.

Rather than trying to include the many factors that create diversity, or choosing only one, the X-Men use the plot device of the "x-gene"; a gene that is held by mutants and the cause of their unique abilities. It is this gene that is the focal point and main cause for social unrest in the X-Men Universe. It is also this gene that opens the story up to any number of possibilities, including social commentaries. Explicitly referenced in several issues is the comparison between anti-mutant sentiment and anti-Semitism. Magneto, a Holocaust survivor, sees the situation of mutants as similar to those of Jews in Nazi Germany. At one point he even utters the words "never again" in a 1992 episode of the *X-Men* animated series. The mutant slave labor camps on the island of Genosha, in which numbers were burned into mutant's foreheads; show much in common with Nazi concentration camps, as do the internment camps in the classic "Days of Future Past" storyline. Another notable reference is in the third X-Men film, when asked by Callisto: "If you're so proud of being a mutant, then where's your mark?" Magneto shows his concentration camp tattoo, while mentioning that he will never let another needle touch his skin. Matthew Sanders said it best in the song Danger Line, "Suffering a man should never know, I'm leaving my fear on the danger line."

Another metaphor that has been applied to the X-Men is that of Gay Rights. Comparisons have been made between the mutants' situation, including concealment of their powers and the age they realize these powers, and homosexuality. Several scenes in the X-Men films illustrate this theme. The second film, *X-Men United*, featured a scene in which Bobby Drake (Iceman) "comes out" as a mutant to his parents. In response, Bobby's mother condescendingly asks him, "Have you tried not being a mutant?" referencing the belief that homosexuality is not inherent but rather a lifestyle choice. Also in *X2*, Nightcrawler has a conversation with Mystique in which he asks her why she doesn't use her shape shifting ability to blend in among non-mutant humans all the time (an option Nightcrawler evidently wishes he had). Mystique replies simply, "Because we shouldn't have to." Delving deeper into the sexuality issues we can see that transgender issues have also been explored in a mutants' ability to "pass" as

non-mutants - in the origin of Angel, he binds his wings. Shape-changers like Mystique can change gender at will. The comic books delved into the AIDS epidemic during the early 1990s with a long-running plot line about the Legacy Virus, a seemingly incurable disease similarly thought at first to attack only mutants. Ironically, while the X-Men had the Legacy Virus, they are incapable of getting AIDS due to their genetic mutation being able to combat the disease.

In some cases, the mutants of the X-Men universe sought to create a subculture of the typical mutant society. The X-Men comics did this by introducing a band of mutants called the Morlocks. This group, though mutants like any other, sought to hide away from society within the tunnels of New York. These Morlock tunnels served as the backdrop for several X-Men stories, most notably *The Mutant Massacre* story arch. This band of mutants illustrates another dimension to the comic, that of a group that further needs to isolate itself because society won't accept it. The quote "We're all miserable together. It's the opposite of a victimless crime (Palahniuk)" comes to mind. In Grant Morrison's stories of the early 2000s, mutants are portrayed as a distinct subculture with "mutant bands" and a popular mutant fashion designer who created outfits tailored to mutant physiology. The series *District X* takes place in an area of New York City called "Mutant Town." These instances can also serve as analogies for the way that minority groups establish specific subcultures and neighborhoods of their own that distinguish them from the broader general culture. The mutant condition that is often kept secret from the world is very similar to feelings of difference and fear usually developed in everyone during adolescence.

Religion is also an integral part of several X-Men storylines. It is presented as both a positive and negative force, sometimes in the same story. The comics most notable explore religious fundamentalism through the person of William Stryker and his Purifiers, an anti-mutant group that emerged in the 1982 graphic novel *God Loves, Man Kills*. The Purifiers believe that mutants are not human beings but children of the devil, and have attempted to exterminate them several times. By contrast, religion is also central to the lives of several X-Men, such as Nightcrawler, a devout Catholic, and Dust, a devout Muslim. This acts as a kind of parallel to the religious roots of social activists like Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, as well as their opponents such as the Ku Klux Klan or Nathuram Godse (the Hindu radical who assassinated Gandhi.)

So, does the story of the X-Men justly and accurately portray the concepts of segregation and diversity? With the basic knowledge we all have on the subject, along with a little bit of reading between the lines, it is quite clear to see that the X-Men Universe greatly parallels our own in regards to segregation and prejudice. The unwillingness of some to accept what is different and the desire for those different to be willingly accepted is the perfect metaphor for our imperfect times. "A hero cannot be a hero unless in a heroic world (Hawthorne)." Whether we be black, white, Asian, Hispanic, or (in some cases) dark blue and covered in fur, we must all learn to stand together before we fall apart. A lesson learned from a book is no rare occasion, but one learned from a comic book is almost unheard of, and we should be so willing as to take any wisdom we can from anyplace that offers it.

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Necessary?

Caleb Sandusky

The current divorce rate in America is estimated at between forty-one and fifty percent. Why is it that so many people have problems finding a compatible person to marry? It seems for many that once they realize they lack compatibility it is easier to just divorce and search for a new mate, but what are the main reasons people see as such insurmountable obstacles that they lead to divorce? Marriage is like an engine, to keep it running well it takes work, and sometimes it needs a little oil. While every marriage has its own set of unique hindrances which work against each other, it seems that in many marriages three common problems are money, non-compatibility, and infidelity.

A common source of stress for many people, individuals as well as couples, is money. In couples this problem is made worse because each person has an opinion of how the money should be allocated and which items are necessary. It can be particularly stressful if one person in the marriage feels that he or she contributing the majority of the money for "we" items, while the other is spending his or her salary on "me" desires. Whether the problem is strictly a lack of money or differing views on how the available money should be spent, statistics say the money is the main reason for divorce. Money issues start from before a couple even says "I do." Couples may be responsible for paying for the wedding and everything involved. They must then decide where they will live and what items are necessary for them to set up an acceptable living area. If the couple disagrees about what price range is best for these items, or one person feels the other is spending unnecessary items, it can instantly lead to feelings of resentment. When children come into the picture, they can add to the financial strain. A child costs thousands of dollars to raise, and if a marriage is already struggling, the strain of children can lead to financial crisis.

While money is many times a leading cause of divorce, more and more these days we see that people are just getting married too quickly. People today jump into marriage at the first sign that they are in love, or at least the talk of marriage. These newlyweds do not know everything about their partners until after they wed. Two people can fall for each other before knowing their small differences that can lead to a horrible cohabitating situation. One may have habits which will not change that make the other person's life miserable on a daily basis. For example, it is extremely difficult for a very tidy person to live with a very messy one. Such basic differences may not be realized before a hasty

marriage, but can have devastating effects on a couple's relationship. If couples would take the time to fully know their partner before jumping into marriage, perhaps at least some undesirable surprises could be avoided.

Many people jump into marriage too quickly, and then others are just not committed. Infidelity is a huge problem with couples today. Everyone knows someone that has either cheated on their spouse or been cheated on by their spouse. Having a single partner is what marriage is about; if a person is going elsewhere to fulfill needs or fantasies that person should not have made a commitment. Once these betrayals are found out, the trust is broken and can never be fully repaired.

Marriage needs to be a trusting relationship, as well as a relationship that communicates well. While some common problems for couples which lead to divorce are easily seen, others may be much more trivial or simply involve a lack of communication between the couple. Divorce is a good thing when there is just no way that a relationship was meant to be, but when it is caused by problems of a single stressful event or the world in general, the divorce might have been unneeded. Keeping a relationship whole and being able to have trust in your partner is half of a healthy marriage, yet so many people find themselves needing a way out because of tribulations that occurred that could have been avoided. For these reasons, couples should be very in-tune with their would-be spouses. Being with the right person can help one weather life's battles; which is a major deciding factor in the strength of marriage.

