

Fall 1998

## Skunk River Fall 1998

Kelly Wilson

Samantha Kane

Frank Holmes

Georgina Maeda

Brenda Lea Edgington

*See next page for additional authors*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://openspace.dmacc.edu/skunkriver>

 Part of the [Fiction Commons](#), and the [Nonfiction Commons](#)

---

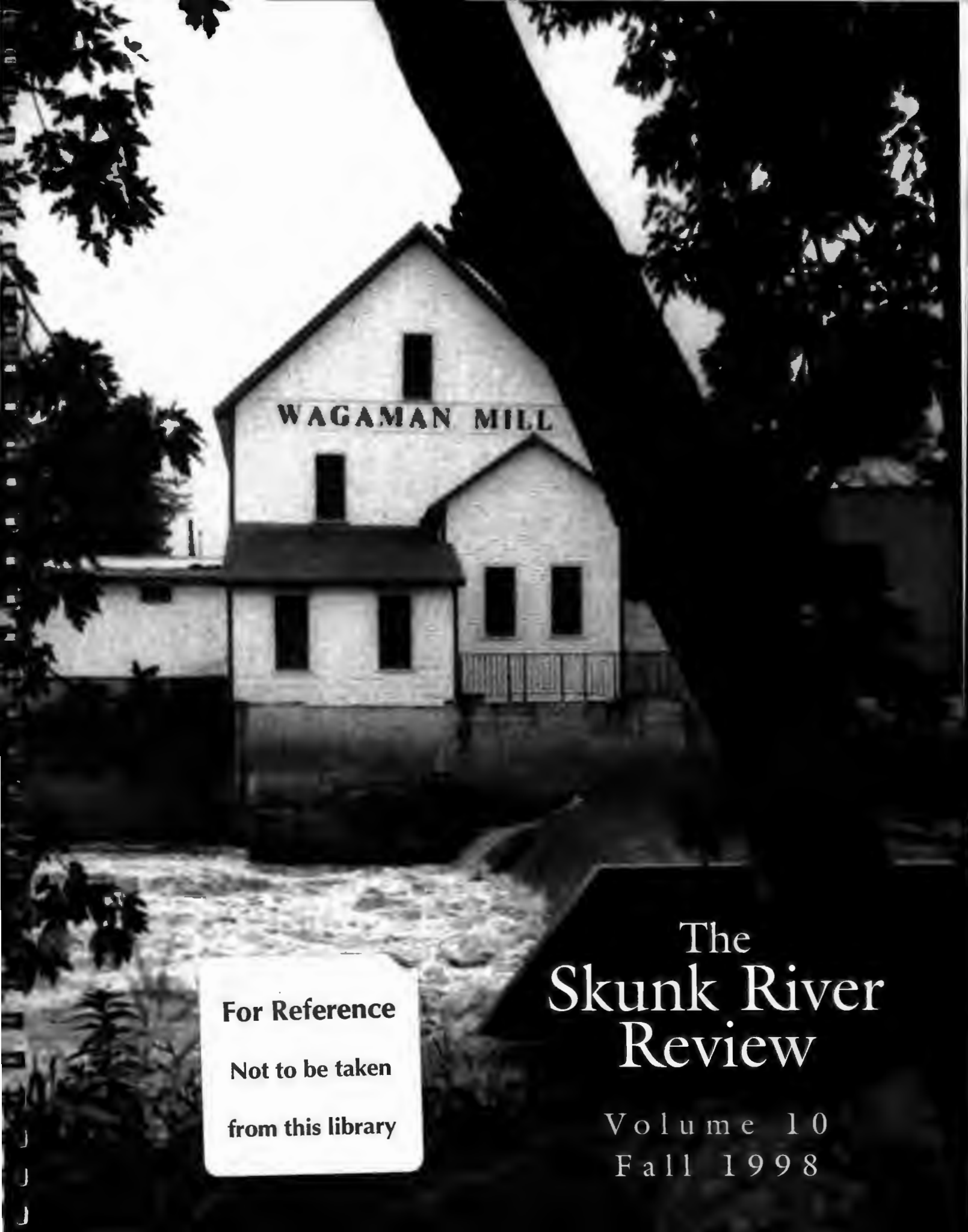
### Recommended Citation

Wilson, Kelly; Kane, Samantha; Holmes, Frank; Maeda, Georgina; Edgington, Brenda Lea; Evans, Zach; Jauhari, Andree; Vonnahme, Karen; Wood, Jason; Royer, Anthony; Mains, Melinda; Speedy, Matt; Koester, Erin; Reinertson, Trish; Johnson, Ron; Schiltz, Emily; Cooper, Kathryn S.; Hilton, Cami; Craig, Shirley; Crouch, Justin; Seil, Lesa; Zazveta, Cathy; Clinkenbeard, Bonnie; Roberts, Michael; Jones, Heather; Holmes, Frank; Shaffer, Teresa; Galm-Harson, Patrice; Garwick, Kim; Larson, Pete; Walker, Danni; Eckhart, Carri; Roberts, Mike; Van Rheenens, Shawna; Doner, Melinda; Avon, Patricia A.; Aplant, Scott; Stark, Shelley; Allman, Jeremy; Williams, Deana; Walters, Lynn; Waalk, Melissa; Gwinn, Ray; and Whipple, Paul, "Skunk River Fall 1998" (1998). *Skunk River Review*. 21.  
<https://openspace.dmacc.edu/skunkriver/21>

---

**Authors**

Kelly Wilson, Samantha Kane, Frank Holmes, Georgina Maeda, Brenda Lea Edgington, Zach Evans, Andree Jauhari, Karen Vonnahme, Jason Wood, Anthony Royer, Melinda Mains, Matt Speedy, Erin Koester, Trish Reinertson, Ron Johnson, Emily Schiltz, Kathryn S. Cooper, Cami Hilton, Shirley Craig, Justin Crouch, Lesa Seil, Cathy Zazveta, Bonnie Clinkenbeard, Michael Roberts, Heather Jones, Frank Holmes, Teresa Shaffer, Patrice Galm-Harson, Kim Garwick, Pete Larson, Danni Walker, Carri Eckhart, Mike Roberts, Shawna Van Rheenen, Melinda Doner, Patricia A. Avon, Scott Apland, Shelley Stark, Jeremy Allman, Deana Williams, Lynn Walters, Melissa Waalk, Ray Gwinn, and Paul Whipple



WAGAMAN MILL

**For Reference**

**Not to be taken**

**from this library**

The  
Skunk River  
Review

Volume 10

Fall 1998



---

---

# THE SKUNK RIVER REVIEW

VOLUME 10

*Fall 1998*

*Edited by*

Randy Jedele

Kris Bigalk Keeney

*Des Moines Area Community College*

**Forbes**

CUSTOM PUBLISHING

60 FIFTH AVE • NEW YORK, NY • 10011

Copyright © 1998 by Des Moines Area Community College. All rights reserved.

Cover Photo by Lauri Muller.

No portion of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage or retrieval system without written permission from the copyright holder.

CIP Data is available.

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

ISBN 0-8281-1260-6

# CONTENTS

---

## I. Basic Writing/Writing Skills Review

Christmas Traditions <i>Kelly Wilson</i>	3
Amy <i>Kelly Wilson</i>	5
Personal Advantage <i>Samantha Kane</i>	6
Games Brothers Play <i>Frank Holmes</i>	8
The Memorable Wedding in Our Family (Scholarship Essay) <i>Georgina Maeda</i>	10
My Father's Metamorphosis <i>Brenda Lea Edgington</i>	12

## II. Composition I

The Kate Shelley Museum <i>Zach Evans</i>	17
Computer Virus: How to Deal with It <i>Andree Jaultari</i>	19
Family Bonding <i>Karen Vonnahme</i>	22

A Mafia Hit <i>Jason Wood</i>	23
Social Security <i>Anthony Royer</i>	25
Moonlighting <i>Melinda Mains</i>	28
A Shadow of Guilt <i>Matt Speedy</i>	30
Forced Abortions in China <i>Erin Koester</i>	32
Thanks, Dad <i>Trish Reinertson</i>	35
War Games <i>Ron Johnson</i>	37
Performance for My Mind <i>Emily Schiltz</i>	39
Ronnie <i>Kathryn S. Cooper</i>	40
My First Race <i>Cami Hilton</i>	43
Rearview Recall <i>Shirley Craig</i>	46
The Final Hours of Glory <i>Justin Crouch</i>	48
PMS: Is It Real? <i>Lesa Seil</i>	51
Phantasm <i>Cathy Zazveta</i>	53
Though I Walk Through the Shadow <i>Bonnie Clinkenbeard</i>	55
Guardian Angels <i>Michael Roberts</i>	57



---

The Ocean in Iowa (Scholarship Essay) <i>Heather Jones</i>	60
Exposure? <i>Frank Holmes</i>	63
A Legacy <i>Teresa Shaffer</i>	65
In the Aftermath of Violence: Meeting the Challenge of Letting Go and Living in the Present <i>Patrice Galm-Harson</i>	67
Shades of Miami <i>Kim Garwick</i>	70

**III.****Composition II**

Achievement of Desire <i>Pete Larson</i>	75
My Favorite Place to Play? <i>Danni Walker</i>	79
Separate Is Not Equal, Separate Is Better (Scholarship Essay) <i>Carri Eckhart</i>	82
Does Gangsta Rap Deserve Its Bad Rap? <i>Mike Roberts</i>	85
Bilingual Education: Is It a Problem? <i>Zach Evans</i>	88
Unfair Treatment <i>Shawna Van Rheenen</i>	90
What If I Were a Show Dog? <i>Melinda Doner</i>	93
Women: We Are Not What We Once Were, But We Are Not What We Could Be <i>Patricia A. Avon</i>	95

---

TV	98
<i>Scott Apland</i>	
From School To Work	100
<i>Shelley Stark</i>	
Syntax Error in Computer Education	103
<i>Jeremy Allman</i>	
Hang Your Hat Here	106
<i>Deana Williams</i>	
Letter to Martin Luther King, Jr.	109
<i>Lynn Walters</i>	
The "Banking" Concept	112
<i>Erin Koester</i>	
Last Wish of Peace and Serenity	114
<i>Melissa Waalk</i>	
Women in the Military: Equal or Not	117
<i>Ray Gwinn</i>	
Walk Like an Egyptian	120
<i>Paul Whipple</i>	

# Introduction

Welcome to Volume X of the *Skunk River Review*, Des Moines Area Community College's collection of student writings. This is our second scholarship edition. Because of the revenues from last year's sales, we are able to continue the program and once again offer the following scholarships: a \$600 scholarship for the most outstanding Comp I submission, \$600 scholarship for the top Comp II submission, and a \$100 scholarship for the best Basic Writing/Writing Skills Review submission.

Perhaps it was because of the available scholarship funds that prompted the extensive response from this year's students. The task of selecting the essays to be published was made extremely difficult because of the number and quality of the essays submitted. The panel of composition instructors who read the essays for scholarship recipients were impressed and challenged.

These essays in the *Skunk River Review* are representative of the community of writers studying composition at DMACC. We suggest the compositions be read, analyzed, and enjoyed, as well as studied as models. It is our policy to do as much as possible to maintain the student writer's voice while editing these essays. Therefore, it should be noted that these are samples of student writing, not perfect examples of student essays. Students may choose to evaluate their own writing by reviewing these samples. We encourage instructors and students to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the selections.

As in previous editions, we have included an MLA styles sheet at the end of the book. Hopefully, this addition will continue to encourage students to seek proper documentation when they cite outside sources in their writing.

Thanks to all DMACC students who participated in this edition. Thanks also to all instructors who encourage their students to submit essays and who use the *Skunk River Review* as a supplemental text in their writing classrooms.

# Acknowledgments

Special thanks to Curt Stahr who encourages summer photography students to take photos at various locales on the Skunk River. These photo submissions attract reader attention and complement the book's contents.

And special thanks to our dean, Burgess Shriver, whose constant encouragement and support enables this publication to become a reality each year.





I.

**BASIC WRITING/  
WRITING SKILLS REVIEW**





# *Christmas Traditions*

*Kelly Wilson*

Traditions come in many ways, through song, food, events and even climbing through tunnels. Christmas is a time for families to come together to renew those family traditions.

We have had a Christmas or two when there were up to five generations together. There was always plenty of laughter, music, food and gifts. Every year we would pack all our gifts and candies that Mom made into the car and off to Grandma and Grandpa's house we would go. Arriving at their house we were greeted by everyone. We were greeted by everyone who was there, which did not include Uncle Jim. We knew he would be late and we would have to wait for him before we could eat. Of course, the gifts could not be opened until we had our meal. Every year my brothers, sisters and I would beg and plead with our grandma to either let us open the gifts before we ate or forget that one uncle; after all, he had most likely eaten. Grandma always held firm; every year we waited for our uncle to arrive and make his grand entrance.

Grandma had the longest table, as if we were expecting the entire Packers Football team! It was so big I couldn't always tell who was at the other end. The table was completely covered with food, not any food but with our traditional Swedish meal. It began with a prayer recited in Scandinavian. I had no idea what they were saying, but I was pretty impressed with my whole family and hoped someday I would learn this beautiful language. Our main meat dish was called *shishubul*, a potato bologna ring. As I grew up, I realized how much work went into making this meal. The bologna had to be boiled, fried and then baked. We also had whole boiled potatoes, *lutafisk*, pickled herring, lots of strange vegetables, rye bread and of course *goobagut*. It was our

dessert which was made with applesauce, whipped cream and cinnamon. *Lutafisk* is a white fish gravy and the best way to describe the taste is wall paper paste. I have yet to meet anyone under fifty who likes pickled herring. The herring had a rancid smell that pierced the nose, like a skunk.

While the adults were cleaning up after our meal, my sisters and I would go off to explore the great unknown in the deep tunnels: Grandma's laundry chute. She had a laundry chute that went through the entire house, large enough for my sisters and I to make our way up and down, popping our heads out once in a while to see where we were. We would pretend we were going to different parts of the world via secret tunnels. They were the perfect place for a spy to find out any information, like what gifts they would receive. As the adults would clean up the kitchen, they discussed what they had bought for the children. We were finally caught when my brothers tried to go through the tunnels, got stuck, and the secret was out.

Soon we moved into the living room where gifts were stacked so high they surrounded the tree and covering the lower one third. It never took long to open our presents. The hard part was to remember who gave us what gift. We had to remember because we went around the room to show off our new treasures and to announce who the gift giver was. I would pretend my gifts were the prize and if I could guess the correct gift giver, I won and kept the prize. When I couldn't remember who gave me the gift, I still kept the prize! How could I lose?

The entire family would gather around Grandma's piano to sing Christmas carols. It was like listening to a choir unless I was standing next to Uncle Jim. He even

*The Skunk River Review*

sang "Jingle Bells" off key, all six notes in the song. Uncle Jim thought he sounded wonderful and would bellow out the words as if we were singing to a full crowd at a football stadium. Grandma would play the piano with so much passion. She really enjoyed listening to Christmas songs, especially sung by her family.

It isn't really one particular event or meal that time that our family came together to spend time together. Gathering together to repeat our festivities at Christmas is what has created our traditions that we hold so dear. Traditions remind us of the fun times our family has together and how important everyone is; yes, even Uncle Jimmy.





## *Amy*

*Kelly Wilson*

Most of us have felt the awful feeling of loneliness as the loss of hope for peace and happiness slips through a black hole somewhere. There once was a time in my life that I was losing faith and hope. Then God sent me an angel to lift me up and remind me of His love and care, and I was touched by an angel.

Many people are amazed at what a strong individual I have become. I am a single parent who works fulltime and is a student. These individuals would not recognize me as the person I was just a few short months ago. I was very much in love with my husband. Then after twelve years of marriage he needed to leave, and I fell apart like tiny crumbs of blue cheese. It seemed as though nothing worked when I tried to regroup. I could not form into a block of cheese. My emotions were flowing into the children's lives too, sometimes raging like a river, being completely absorbed in their lives. My spirit was heavy and loaded down. I was not like myself. I felt like I had become someone I didn't know.

This is when Amy reached out, helped me pick up the crumbs and helped to pull me together again. Amy appeared quite normal on the outside when I met her at work. She was an attractive, lively 26 year old.

I vividly remember a frightening night when I was informed by my husband that he would never come home again. I could tell he meant to keep this promise. My world fell apart and so did I. I had already gone through a painful divorce and I knew my life would change completely. It wouldn't confine itself to just me, but would spread into the children's lives too. This new life would change even our daily living rituals.

That awful night I was alone in this world, until Amy gathered her courage and reached out to someone she barely knew at the time. I was in my dark bedroom alone when I took Tom's call. I remember the intense

pain I felt throughout my body. It was painful; I almost felt numb like a protection mode my body went into. I felt immobilized, unable to reach out for help even if I wanted to. Amy was waiting for me in the living room. Then she heard and felt my pain. Amy thought about leaving, but only briefly. She entered the bedroom and laid her hand on my shoulder. I can still remember her warm caring touch. She didn't say a word, and she didn't need to. I knew that I was not alone, nor would I be alone. Somehow that night Amy sent me a strong message that I could never be alone in this world as long as I allowed others into my life. Amy's courage gave me strength that I still carry with me. She knew exactly what I needed even when I didn't. It was as if someone had told her what to do.

I was blessed to see Amy's ability to show such compassion again. This time I watched from the outside looking in. Amy's grandmother passed away quite suddenly. Her family was not prepared to lose her. I saw Amy come to comfort her family, while giving them strength, courage and hope. She was there to listen to her family members and remind them of God's loving grace. No criticism, anger, or negativity came out of her. I could see she allowed herself to feel the loss, but never lost sight of hope that her grandmother was in a better place.

Although I had an overwhelming feeling of separation and despair in my own life, it was for a brief period. God knew it was necessary for my growth and well being. I firmly believe He will never give us more than we can handle. When we feel overwhelmed with our lives God sends us angels. My angel's name is Amy. She is someone whom I will always admire for her strength, love and courage. Knowing Amy has given me a deep understanding of divine intervention.



## *Personal Advantage*

*Samantha Kane*

Walking down the street, I can spot a person who is doing drugs or selling drugs. If a person is stealing something or selling something that is stolen, I can see it in the eyes. I have had those eyes before myself. I used to be the one whom a police officer would look at and know what I was doing. I abused drugs for about three years and would steal from anyone who wasn't looking. Along with the people I hung around, I used to get in a lot of trouble.

One day I was coming down, after being awake for three days on dope. I said to myself, "I don't want to be doing this for the rest of my life." I thought for days about what I would be good at. Then in the middle of the night, just like a lightning bolt, it hit me. I want to be a police officer because I know what to look for in a person who is breaking the law. Why not? I have been around all kinds of people who have committed crimes. I know what they were thinking of while they were committing the crime and how they did the crime. I decided to research a career as a police officer. In researching I found the kind of work, working conditions, kind of training and schooling, amount of pay and the benefits that I will need to have for this career.

In researching a career as a police officer, I found that police officers are responsible for knowing many different kinds of duties. Police officers are responsible for enforcing laws and regulations to protect life and property. They must carry out investigations to prevent and solve crimes. While investigating a crime, officers must interview witnesses and make arrests, if necessary. Officers may need to testify in court. Police officers are required to do a lot paperwork. They have to file reports on all their activities in a day's work. Officers patrol designated areas, looking for things that look out of the

ordinary, for example lights on or an open window in a vacant building. They write tickets to people who are violating laws and regulations. Officers might have to give first aid, if they get to an accident before the emergency crew. Police officers may have to direct traffic. Most jurisdictions require that officers exercise their authority on or off duty. In a day's work, officers may be assigned to do one specific type of duty, but they are trained to do many, if needed.

I think that I will be good at this occupation because I have a good eye for things that don't look right or out of the ordinary. For example, if there is a house on a street that has a lot of people coming and going at all hours of the night, I would know that the people who live there are either selling drugs or selling stolen merchandise. There is a lot of paperwork involved in being an officer but paperwork does not bother me. I think if I can make it through college, no amount of paperwork will scare me away from something that I want to do. Giving first aid to a person will be no problem because I have had some training. Mostly, how to give CPR. I know that I will have to learn more emergency techniques than just CPR and I'm prepared for that.

I also researched the working conditions in a career as a police officer. I found that an officer's working conditions varies. Police officers generally work 40 hours a week, but paid overtime is not uncommon because police work is needed around the clock. The most common time for overtime is when an officer is investigating a crime. I know that to be a success in my career choice that overtime will be a part of my success. Officers may have to work outdoors for long periods of time in all kinds of weather. I live in Iowa, so I'm used to

all kinds of weather. The injury rate is higher in police work than in many occupations because of dealing with public disorder. The risk of injury can be reduced by using good teamwork and good equipment, for example, a good bullet proof vest. Police work can be very stressful on an officer and an officer's family. The amount of stress doesn't scare me. I have handled stress well in my life. My family has said that they are scared about the career I have chosen, but they will stand by me no matter what.

To have a career as a police officer, I must be at least 20 years of age and must be a U.S. citizen. I'm almost 21 years old and have been a U.S. citizen all my life. Civil service regulations govern the appointment of police officers. Candidates must meet physical and personal qualifications. I have one problem with the physical qualification; I will have to quit smoking cigarettes. If I have to chase a criminal, I will have to stop and take breaks because I will be out of breath from smoking. Eligibility depends on performance in competitive written examinations, education and experience. Physical examinations often include tests of vision, strength, and agility. Personal characteristics are very important in police work, for example, a sense of responsibility, honesty, good judgment and decision making. Because of the importance of these qualities candidates will be interviewed by senior officers. Candidates may have to take a personality test. I have very good personal characteristics. Drug tests are required to continue employment. They can test me for all the drugs they want. I have been clean of all drugs since the day I decided to turn my life in the right direction. It's been almost 2 years. I will never go back to that abuse again.

The amount of schooling required has increased in recent years. To become a police officer, state and local departments require that applicants have a high school education, and some college education. That is what I am working on right now. I'm enrolled in Des Moines Area Community College's Criminal Justice program. Some states may hire people if they have had some experience in a field of law enforcement, such as experience in corrections or have been a guard before. Training is required to enter the job, such as training from a police academy. Such training teaches entrants the abilities to enter this occupation. After I graduate from DMACC, I

plan to go to the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy in Des Moines.

The amount of pay for this career varies, depending on one's position. The 1996-97 edition of the Occupational Outlook Handbook states "in 1994 the median salary of nonsupervisory police officers was about \$34,000 a year. The middle 50 percent earned between about \$25,500 and \$43,900; the lowest 10 percent earned were paid less than \$17,900, while the highest 10 percent earned over \$56,100 a year." Salaries tend to be higher in urban areas, which usually have better funding. Also in the Occupational Outlook Handbook it stated "police officers in supervisory positions had a median salary of about \$42,800 a year, also in 1994. The middle 50 percent earned between about \$30,100 and \$52,500; the lowest 10 percent were paid less than \$19,800, while the highest 10 percent earned over \$62,100 annually." The amount of pay doesn't matter to me because this is really what I want to do. The stated salary frequently exceeds due to paid overtime.

In addition to the common benefits, paid vacations, sick leave and medical and life insurance are provided. Most departments provide special allowances for uniforms, and furnish weapons, handcuffs and other required equipment. In addition, because police officers are covered by liberal pension plans, many retire at half-pay after 20 or 25 years service, allowing them to get a second career if that is what they want to do. I don't think that enough jobs offer medical insurance and I'm glad this one does.

Now that I know what kind of work, working conditions, the kind of training and schooling, amount of pay and the benefits I will have, I have decided that this is the perfect career for me. I can picture myself in uniform in about five years. I will be patrolling an area and be looking for the person I used to be. I'm determined to do the best of my abilities. I know that I can handle even the worst situation that police work can throw at me.

#### **Resources:**

Occupational Outlook Handbook 1996-97;  
The Choices program at Des Moines Area  
Community College



## *Games Brothers Play*

*Frank Holmes*

When I would let go of my end of the rubber bands, they would whip around each corner of the house, looking for my brother. The impact was like Bugs Bunny pulling on Daffy Duck's beak and letting go. The end result was my brother landing on his butt with a mess of rubberbands sitting in his lap, with a look of surprise on his face.

There was a four year difference between Scott and me. When we were growing up, my balance, coordination and reaction time came to me a little sooner than Scott's did. We were creative youngsters; just by using everyday common items, we would invent games. Scott was my only brother, so we entertained ourselves, using our imaginations.

When I was twelve, my parents let me have a paper route on our street. When I got the job, I received a large bag of rubberbands. I would fold my papers and use a plastic bag for daily deliveries, so I really had no need for the rubberbands.

One day Scott said, "Let's tie all the rubberbands together and we'll use the four trees in the front yard. We'll stretch them around the trees three times and tack the ends. We'll call it our wrestling ring." We got bored with the wrestling idea quick. We had to fake the moves and the ring wasn't real enough. So we decided to see how many times the bands would stretch around the house. After one hundred and fifty feet, our biggest fear was what happened if one rubberband broke.

"I'll go down this side of the house and you go down the other and we'll see if we can't go around twice," I told Scott. With every step we took, another pound of pressure would be added to each individual rubberband. When we got to the west end of the house, we started walking toward each other and passed by

each other. The tension was getting greater by the second.

"Frank, you better not let go," Scott said with a worried look on his face.

"We can make it another time around," I replied as I laughed going into the final stretch. Then I thought, if one band breaks, we'll both get smacked.

The bands were the good heavy-duty kinds so they all held together. But there wasn't enough rubberbands tied together for loop number two. We could feel the tension of the rubberbands pulling on the hand that was holding the end. Scott and I could see each other standing on the north and southeastern corners of the house. We were amazed how they held together, so we decided to take one more step back.

"Hey Scott, there's a bluejay," I said as I pointed to a tree in the opposite direction. He would always miss the first pass as the rubberbands would pass him, picking up speed for the second loop. I was his big brother; I had to let go. I even had to watch out, or get smacked in the leg. In the end, Scott would get it in the chest and to the ground he would go.

We even gave our games names. The rubberbands wrapped around the house was called "Wrap Around." "The Ladder Game," was more of a physical challenge and a neighborhood favorite. I invented it when I was ten.

Our ladder was eight feet high with a top and bottom rung and six rungs in the middle. It was made out of some kind of metal that started with an A and was hard to pronounce. The bottom rung was about three inches from the end; the top was one inch. We would stick the three inches in the ground and the ladder would stand by itself. The object of the game was to climb over the thing, up one side and down the other.

*The Skunk River Review*

"This time I'm going to the top and I'll sit down to think about coming down," I would explain to Scott. I could keep my balance really well and always made it to the top. How long I was up there was a different matter. My record was twelve seconds and I always ran down the other side before the ladder came crashing to the ground.

Scott looked like a statue as he stood there in shock. He couldn't believe what had just happened. So he asked me to do it again. Up and down I went. That way there was no doubt that it could be done. It was Scott's turn.

Scott would always take a deep breath, stare at the ladder, run and start climbing only to get to the third rung. That's when he started fighting for his balance and wondered where was the ladder.

"It's not funny, Frank! Don't make me laugh," Scott would say with the look of deep thought on his face. I could tell that he wanted to get to the top, but the landing was the best part.

Scott could get the ladder to go end over end after landing like the Wile E. Coyote in a Road Runner cartoon. He could never balance at the top, which was now the object of the game. Scott landed on the soft soil and left an imprint on the ground. I think Wile E. Coyote leaves his in rock, and in reality Scott was only eight feet above the ground.

Being an adult isn't quite as fun, like when we were young. However, our sense of humor is still with us today. We enjoy laughing about the games we used to play and think about how lucky we are having each other for brothers.



# *The Memorable Wedding in Our Family*

## *Scholarship Essay*

*Georgina Maeda*

I was tired of participating in my friends' weddings, and I hoped someone in my family would one day make a commitment. Fortunately, one day my dreams came true when my brother Johnson, 26, announced his wedding to Jane, 24, after they had been engaged for two years. So I thought of all the special events we have ever had, this one was going to be the most memorable one.

Johnson was the first born in our family of twelve kids. He used to live in his house about 10 miles away from our home. He was working as a supervisor in our Gemstone company and Jane was his secretary. The news of his marriage impressed everyone in our family, especially my father. According to the tradition of the Northern tribe the *Chaggas*, my father was now able to be honored as the head of family because of his son who was to get married soon. Jane was from one of the Eastern tribes called *Nyakyussa*. It was an interesting thing to us because we were going to live as a family even though we belonged to different tribes.

A week before the wedding, our parents, my brother, my sister Martha, 25, and I travelled to Jane's home, which was an eight hour drive. We were supposed to attend the send off party on Wednesday evening. This is a party especially for the family, relatives and friends who by any means would not be able to attend the actual wedding day. Everything that takes place is almost the same as the wedding, except the girl does not wear the wedding dress. The party started and there were a lot of people, inside and outside. There were traditional dancers who played one of the favorite send off songs called *kwaheri mwanangu* or "goodbye my daughter." Then, they gave their presents like goats, two cows and clothes, like *Vitenge*, one of African women's outfits. She received a big picture of a man and

a woman holding hands and a set of living room stuff from her father. Her mother gave her a set of kitchen stuff. All these indicated their willingness for their daughter to start a new life. After the gift giving, people started to eat.

Then followed a cultural puzzle where by Jane and other three girls went inside and dressed in a traditional outfit called *Khanga*, which is a cotton material in two pieces; one is worn on the waist downwards to cover the legs. The other one is worn on the head to cover the face and the hands. All women have to be of the same height, and they arrange themselves in a straight line and start to march in front of the guests. While marching, the people sang "*tafuta wa kwako, tafuta wa kwako*," or "find your bride, find your bride." Here my brother was to choose Jane among the four girls. If he failed, he would be fined something funny like an old coin which was not in use. If a groom fails to find his bride, this indicates that he is not well prepared for the wedding. But most of the times the bride shows a certain sign to her groom, for him not to be embarrassed. Jane did the same thing, otherwise there would be no means he could have known.

Because my brother won, it allowed her father to send her off officially. Then we ate and prepared to return home the following day, but Jane and my sister went to stay in New Mwanza Hotel because traditionally she was not allowed to stay in her home anymore. The following day we picked them up and drove back home. Her parents, her brothers and sisters also drove with us and stayed in our house. She went to stay with my sister, for she wasn't allowed to be seen by my brother or other people.

We rented a New Arusha Hotel Hall for the wedding ceremony. We decorated the hall on Friday.

The hall has a maroon carpet which matched with the chairs. There were round tables and two long high tables which were covered by white material. Every table had a vase of white and maroon roses. In every corner of the room we hung a bunch of different colored balloons with other decorations. Others decorated the church and the cars which were to be used the following day, except for the car which carried the bride and groom and parents' cars were decorated by special people who worked in arranging the wedding.

On Saturday everything went smoothly. Every department was very well organized. The workers from New Arusha Hotel helped us with cooking the meals, like rice with different types of soups like beef soup, mixed beef, carrot, and potato soup, green beans and meat soup. Roasted chicken, fried beef, and *pilau* the most common fragrant food in our holidays. It is prepared first by deep frying the onions. Secondly, after they have turned brick-red you add a required amount of ground garlic and leave for about 2–5 minutes. Thirdly, to the mixture you add a measured amount of spices, cinnamon, green pepper, ginger, cloves, cardamon and salt and leave the mixture to boil for 3 minutes. Then add a required amount of boiled meat or unboiled chicken followed by fresh potatoes, sliced carrots, and green pepper and add some water to cover the mixture and leave it to boil until the mixture turns to dark brown. Finally, add a required amount of rice and let it boil until all the water dries off. Reduce the heat and cover the food; it is ready to serve.

Jane was taken to a certain salon to make herself up. She wore a wedding dress which my brother bought her from London. It was white satin with a lace material on top. It was backless-lace long sleeved with a butterfly

belt attached on the waist to the back. It had a long train about ten inches behind. They straightened her hair and on top they put a tiara with a veil attached on it down up to her shoulders. She wore white lace gloves, golden earrings, and gold jewelry. She marched with white stockings and white shoes. The small girl in front who was our young sister, Livia, wore exactly the same as Jane, except her dress was short up to her knees without the veil. My brother put on a black suit, white socks, black shoes with long sleeved white shirt and a black tie. The small boy in front of him was Jane's young brother and he wore exactly the same as Johnson. The wedding service was held in Arusha Lutheran Center.

After the church service, they posed together in pictures, and they went around the town standing in a car waving to the people, with the bridesmaids singing together with the trumpets choir. The two motorcycles in front were followed by a number of cars. The cars' lights were on and the horns too. After half an hour we arrived at New Arusha Hotel Hall. Everyone was there waiting for them to enter. There were nearly hundred people and they all ate and drank. After eating, the groom and bride shared cutting the *Ndafu* a roasted goat which has only the legs and the skin removed. *Ndafu* is used instead of cake, but not often.

Finally, they went for their honeymoon to the Island of Zanzibar at the Coast of Tanzania. After that we gathered together in a dinner party the following day and we thanked everyone for their participation. For us it was the most memorable wedding in our family, which gave us new experiences. To me, it was a challenge that I have to be patient until my wedding and have all these things happen to me.



## *My Father's Metamorphosis*

*Brenda Lea Edgington*

In 1977, I was a freshman in high school. I felt different from everyone else. I couldn't put my finger on it, but I knew there was something about me. The truth of the matter was I was feeling things that I did not understand, and I knew my family would never accept. I needed to tell them, but how? Who would I tell first? What would I say?

Telling my mom that I was feeling unusual was going to be my first step. It took me weeks to get up the courage. I went over my lines, as if I were rehearsing a play. "Mom, I like women." No that wouldn't work. "Mom, I have been feeling ill in my head." Oh, God then she would probably send me away. "I know, Mom, you know several of my girlfriends are starting to have sex with boys, and they don't care if they get pregnant. Well this won't happen with me." That wouldn't work either. I was just going to sit her down and tell her. I waited for just the right moment, when she was in a good mood. This was not something I was prepared for; we had never discussed homosexuality in our home. I didn't think she even knew what it meant. My stomach started to hurt; I felt these waves of pain, like something was tearing my inside out.

One night after we all went to bed, about 11:30 p.m. I called Mom into my bedroom. "Mom, I need to talk to you." The look on my face was sheer terror, white as a ghost.

Mom said, "What's wrong honey?"

I responded stuttering, "I don't know how to tell you this."

She interrupted me, "Are you pregnant?"

"No," I said with a smile.

"Oh thank God; your father would kill you."

"He just might, Mom. Mom, I have been feeling this way for a few months now, and I need to talk to you about it. Mom, I am gay; you know, a lesbian?"

She just sat there looking at me, then the tears started to flow. She got up, went to my door and said, "Get some sleep, I'll wake you up at 5:30 A.M." She shut the door.

I didn't hear any footsteps for several minutes. Then I could hear the slide of her slippers against the wood hallway floor. When she shut her door, I heard her and Papa mumbling.

I didn't sleep at all that night; I didn't want to face her the next day, so I thought that maybe if I didn't sleep morning would never come. But, the sun did come up; as it was peering through my window shades, I could hear Mom in the kitchen, clanging pots and pans, and I smelled my dad's strong coffee. I got dressed and went down to the kitchen; I peeked around the corner, and Mom saw me and said sadly, "Are you hungry, Brenda?"

She never called me by my real name. "No," I leaned into her and said, "Love you, Mom."

There was no answer back, just a faint smile and tears. When I got home from school that day, it was like nothing had been said. I didn't want to press the issue, so several weeks went by before I would bring the topic up again.

I knew I couldn't take the "Let's not talk about it, and it will go away" scenario. I was going crazy inside, and my mom acted like nothing was ever said. I needed someone to talk to. "Mom, can we talk?"

"Sure, what's wrong?"

"Well I want to talk more about me, and my problem."



"Honey, it is just a phase you're going through; it will pass."

"Mom, this is not a phase, I have been doing a lot of reading, and soul searching, and I am gay."

"I don't know what I did wrong; I tried to raise you the best I knew how." The tears started to flow. "Your father thinks this is all my fault."

"You told Papa?"

"Yes, and I wouldn't talk to him about this, Brenda, just leave it alone for a while."

Well, I did leave it alone. I went through the next four years hiding my life and my feelings from my family and the kids at school. I never did find anyone to talk to. I just went on every day getting more and more depressed, trying to be what everyone else wanted me to be. It wasn't till I moved out that the subject ever came up again.

Christmas morning 1983, I called my mom and asked if it was ok if I brought Lisa, my significant other, with me. She hesitated and answered with a weak "ok." I had been out of high school for two years, with just brief conversations with my mom and dad. I asked Lisa if she would like to go with me and meet my parents. I knew this was not going to be easy. This was putting the problem right in their face. To them I had a problem, to me it was a life that I could not share with my family. I had become a distant relative that they tolerated, and it felt that way. I would continue to live my life as a lesbian, for the next five years, with Lisa.

The day I called my parent's house in tears was a turning point for my father and me. I had been struggling in my relationship for a year and I knew it was over. I had nowhere else to go, and I need to leave her.

My dad answered the phone, "Good morning."

"Papa, are you going to be home for a while?" I asked, sobbing.

"Yes, what happened? Are you ok?"

"No, I need to talk to you; I am leaving Lisa."

I knew by the way he said, "Yes, come on over," that he thought I was finally coming to my senses. He

went on to say, "It will be ok; we will get you through this." I knew I was going to be dealing with two different issues here, but I needed him, and his wisdom. I packed a few things and left.

When I got there, Mom and Dad were sitting at the table. My eyes were swollen shut from crying all night. I sat down. Mom asked me if I wanted any coffee.

"No, thank you."

Dad had a soft look about his face. I knew this was the time I could talk to him about me. "Dad, I am not here to tell you I want to change my lifestyle; I am here because I need to talk to someone about my breakup."

The first words he said were, "Brenda, you will never be able to have a long and happy life the way you are going. It is not God's plan for you to be with, well to do what you are doing; you do not see a black bird going with a blue bird. It is not natural; we are put on this earth to be fruitful and multiply."

"Dad, I know you feel this way, I don't feel I am doing anything bad, but if I am doing something wrong I will deal with it when I see Him. I just want to be happy and love someone and get that in return." We talked for several hours on the topic of homosexuality. It boiled down to this. He loved me, and he would tolerate it with me, but he wasn't going to accept it with anyone else.

Through the years a lot of questions have come up about me, and my dad reminds me of how I have shocked him, the small town farm boy. My mom tells me she has led a full life through all the things I have done and experienced.

Slowly, I have come out to every member of my family and they have all grown to understand a little bit more about who I am, and my world.

I am very proud of my father and the steps he has taken to get to know the real me. Last Thursday at Thanksgiving I asked him if he would walk me down the aisle at my holy union next year. He responded with "I wouldn't miss it honey; Jeanne seems to make you happy."





**II.**  
**COMPOSITION I**





# *The Kate Shelley Museum*

*Zach Evans*

As I drove up the dirt road to the Kate Shelley Museum, I approached a sign that said "Kate Shelley Museum, Next Left." Below it, there was a small, weather-beaten sign that said, "Please have your passports ready." I couldn't help but grin at the sign, before proceeding to turn left and have the museum come into view.

I stared at what looked like a scene from the earlier part of the 20th century. A small train depot, with train tracks running right in front of it, stood out prominently against the forest background. An elderly man was pumping water out of an old-fashioned hand pump. "What have I gotten myself into?" I thought. "This guy looks as if he hasn't ever used electricity before." I strode up to the older gentleman, shook hands, and then he introduced himself as Mr. Groves. Mr. Groves looked to be about 70, bent over ever so slightly, but with a booming voice that still could give orders with the best of them. His blue overall's were remarkably like those worn by the conductor of a train in those old John Wayne movies. I couldn't help but admire him, it was obvious that the railroad was his life.

"So, you're the boy that's going to do a report on my museum." Mr. Groves' voice was still as strong as ever, with the deep bullhorn tone; this covered up the fact that he was getting up there in years.

"Yep, that would be me," I replied meekly, slightly awed by this older gentleman.

"Let's head inside," he said. "I'll give you the grand tour there."

I smirked as I headed for the door, figuring the "grand tour" wouldn't take but ten minutes. I quickly changed my mind as I stepped into the ancient train depot. Relics from the past covered the walls. Old pictures hung on the wall, each having something to do

with the life of Kate Shelley. A snapshot of her running a train station later in life, a picture of her boarding a caboose, and a more recent photo of the Kate Shelley High Bridge adorned the aging walls of the old train station.

"Have you ever heard the story of Kate Shelley, son?" Mr. Groves made the statement almost as a rhetorical question. I was going to hear the story again whether I wanted to or not.

He coughed once before he began. "Kate Shelley was a mere girl of fifteen when she did her good deed. This here picture," he paused to jab his finger at one of the black and white photos on the wall, "was taken of Kate shortly after. One thing that needs to be remembered about Kate is that her father died when she was only twelve. Her older brother drowned in a creek shortly after, causing her mother and she to look after the family by themselves." He paused to take a breath before he continued.

"Well, one particularly stormy night, the railroad depot about a mile from where Kate lived decided to send out an old pusher steam engine to see if the bridges were safe to ride over. The Chicago Northwestern Railroad had a passenger train that was due to come through at about midnight. The steam engine crossed the first bridge, an old, rickety wooden bridge, fine before heading on to the Honey Creek Bridge. The engine got about 8 feet out onto the bridge before the whole thing collapsed, sending the train and its crew into the swollen Honey Creek." He paused again to jab his finger at another picture, an old black and white photo of a small bridge.

I was trying desperately to jot all of this new information down in my notebook. He paused for a second

as he realized that I was having trouble keeping up. He cleared his throat before diving back into the story.

“Kate heard the commotion from her cabin and decided to find out what had made all of that noise, against her mother’s wishes. Remember, she just lost her oldest son not too long ago from drowning, so she wasn’t too excited about sending her oldest daughter into the driving rain, in the pitch dark. Nonetheless, Kate was adamant about it, so she grabbed her coat and headed out into the storm. She took her lantern down to the creek, and when she peeted in, she saw the engineer and one of the other crew members hanging onto a large branch. They told her to go get some help at the railway depot. He jabbed his finger at another picture on the wall, a black and white photo of some people standing by a railway depot. I guess that small, rather unimportant looking girl standing in the middle was Kate.

“Anyway, when she got to the old rickety bridge, her lantern blew out. So here she is, in front of this rickety old bridge, couldn’t see your hand in front of your face in the driving rain. Remember, Kate is only fifteen at the time. Any adult would be scared out of his shoes to go over that thing. I’ll bet you can imagine how Kate was feeling.” He pauses here, gives me a grin, and then returns to the story. “So she presses on, crawling across that bridge. And let me tell you son, those planks she crawled across were spaced pretty widely. A good pace is what I’ve heard. Imagine trying to cross that in the pitch dark. Anyway, when she gets to the other side, she runs and goes to stop the train.” He looks a little undecided here, but then leans over towards me like he was going to tell me a big secret essential to national security. “Son, I’m going to tell you a secret that they don’t put in the books. The passenger train that she was rushing to save; it never even was started up. The railway had closed off all train traffic that night. So Kate Shelley went all that way for almost nothing. She did save those railway men, though, and for that she does deserve the fame she received.”

With that he finishes his story. He then proceeds to show me around the museum. The museum had quite a few things from the time period that Kate Shelley lived in. Among the things that I am shown are a telegraph that still works; with the flip of a switch, the telegraph starts clicking up and down, just like the way it did in

“The Good Old Days.” A telephone from the 19th century, about the size of a computer, a wash basin from the 19th century that are still being made today for missionaries who live in places without electricity or running water, and a baseball jersey from the 1800s. The jersey is a faded white that has been covered by dust, but the faint blue pinstripes and the word ALGOINA across the front can still be seen. One small picture on the wall struck me especially, though; it was a picture of Kate a few days before she saved the railway men. She were very plain, and didn’t have nice clothes. In fact, she would be considered “ugly” and “unimportant” if she were living today. I thought about all the times that I had made bad judgments based on appearance.

Mr. Groves also told me that he has quite a few international visitors. One of his visitors was from Taiwan, where the Kate Shelley story is taught in every school as an English story. “It was always my favorite story,” he told Mr. Groves. “When I came to America to go to ISU, I decided that I had to see it for myself.” Another visitor, a teacher from Egypt, said that he especially liked the Kate Shelley story because in his country, it’s one of the few stories about young women, especially showing heroism amongst young women.

“You know, son,” he said after he had finished giving me the entire tour of the museum, “I just had a group of fifth-graders out here today. You know what I told ‘em?”

I shake my head, knowing that I was going to hear what he told them whether I wanted to or not.

“I show ‘em Kate Shelley’s picture and tell ‘em that she wasn’t a pretty girl by any means. In fact, she was downright ugly. I tell them that she had a job to do, and she got it done. Now, she has international fame; people from all over the world know who she was. She wasn’t rich, and wasn’t pretty, but she got the job done, and that’s what matters in the long run.”

As I thought about this as I drove away from the museum, I realized that he had addressed one preconception I had without me even asking about it. In a culture that centers so much on beauty and material wealth, such as the case with Princess Diana, the story of Kate Shelley shows that there are people who are honored for attributes like courage instead of wealth or beauty.



# *Computer Virus: How to Deal with It*

*Andree Jauhari*

Computer viruses have been causing more and more problems every day. Some of them do moderate damage while others basically destroy the whole computer system. Having a computer crash for an ordinary user who does not deal much with it is not a very big problem. Nevertheless, it is a whole different case when it comes to a network or a company system. Imagine how much it will cost to reformat all of the hard drives and to fix tens or even hundreds of computer units, let alone the time wasted during the renovation.

Before we learn how to prevent the viruses from getting into our computer systems, we must first know the characteristics of the virus themselves. Many definitions are made about what a computer virus is all about. A virus is a program that reproduces its own code by attaching itself to other programs in such a way that the virus code is executed when the infected program is executed ("Tutor" 1). Another source said that a virus is a computer program designed to disrupt normal operations in a computer (Reinwart 1). It also mentioned the idea of the computer virus taking control of our computers, making it difficult for us to do anything with them.

Computer viruses are created by the "bad" computer programmers, also known as hackers, for causing disorder rather than inventing something useful for the society. Generally, a virus has to go through two stages before it can really do damage to all of the programs in a computer. Those are the infection stage and attack stage ("Tutor" 1). It may take days, weeks or even months before it passes the first stage of the infiltration process. The purpose of this is simply to have the virus spread among as many computers as possible before any of the users finds out that he has "caught" a

virus in the computer. Usually a virus can be easily and quickly spread over a LAN (Local Area Network) system. It is a network system where many personal computers are linked together and use the same programs generated from primary computer servers. Once a program in the computer servers gets a virus, the computers executing the same particular program will acquire the same virus as well. Should the users copy the program to install in their own computers at home or pass it on to their friends needing the program, the virus will make its way to reach many computer systems. A user having this kind of experience wrote, "A few months ago, I received a disk from someone working in an oil company downtown. . . . Since I had never seen the disk before, I was wise to instruct my anti-virus program to scan its contents for viruses. There was indeed a virus on the disk" (Reinwart 1). The man immediately informed the company about the presence of a virus in the disk originated from its network. The network administrators were skeptical at first because all of the computers in the company were working just fine. Yet, they did find out the information was true after they verified it with an anti-virus program. This example is merely an illustration of how a virus does not always attack instantaneously after it enters a system. It tries to hide its presence for some time while infecting every disk or executable file in the infected computer and hoping that the user will share these files with someone else, thus also sharing the virus (Reinwart 1).

Nearly all viruses will do many unpleasant things such as changing data and even deleting files in random order when they come to an attack phase. Few viruses do less damage such as making irritating sounds and creating absurd messages on the computer screen every

once in a while. Even so, these kinds of viruses cannot be considered harmless viruses. A virus program may do unintentional file damage that even the virus programmers did not plan (Reinwart 1). Most viruses have bugs in them and these bugs often cause unintended negative side effects (“Tutor” 1). They could cause a disorder in determining file sizes or even corrupted files. In addition, even if the viruses are not harmful at all, they still deprive system resources. Every virus will eat up disk space as it needs “room” to place the results of reproducing its own codes. It will also take advantage of the CPU time and memory during its replication process when those system resources can be used to operate application programs more efficiently and conveniently.

There are three major types of viruses. They are system sector viruses, file viruses and data file viruses. System sectors are the special areas on a disk containing programs that are executed when the computer is started (“Tutor” 1). Some system sectors viruses, such as Pakistani Brain virus, will mark the spot where they hide their code as bad sectors. They usually stay resident in the PC memory and infect any floppy disk that is accessed from that very computer.

The simplest file viruses work by locating the files they know how to infect such as the ones ending with .EXE or .COM and overwriting part of the programs they are infecting (“Tutor” 1). When the program is executed, the virus code executes and infects more files. This kind of virus usually does not take long before it is discovered because the overwritten part of the program executed causes the program itself to function improperly.

Pure data files cannot propagate viruses, but with extensive macro languages in some programs, the line between a data file and an executable file can easily become blurred to the average computer user (“Tutor” 1). Pure data files may not be considered as viruses because they do not execute. A virus, regardless of its type, is a program and must operate before it can do any harm to the computer infiltrated. Despite that fact, data files produced by using Microsoft Word® and Microsoft Excel®, programs designed with large amount of macro languages, are the most common targets for this specific kind of viruses. Most computer users refer them as macro viruses. An editor of *PC Computing* wrote, “For several days in early February, . . . a file called REVCODES.EXE sat on Microsoft’s Web page. When opened, that file produced a document called WORD97-1.DOC, which holds a

new kind of macro virus that exclusively infects PCs running Word 97” (qtd. in Lyon 40).

The Internet can certainly become a source of bumping into macro viruses. However, this does not mean that computer users should not download any file from the Internet to avoid getting the virus. It is not the part of downloading files that “invites” a computer virus to our systems. As indicated throughout the paragraphs, a virus can only get into a system if and only if the file containing it has been executed. What we should do after downloading a file from the Internet is check it with an anti-virus program. This will be a very smart thing to do, especially if we have never encountered the file before.

Sometimes, computer users get an e-mail message from some people giving warning about other e-mail letters believed to contain a self-starting program that can destroy the hard drive after the letters have been read. According to them, most of the major application programs will not be able to run properly or even crash as soon as they are attacked by the virus carried by the letters. This phenomenon is very popular nowadays. More and more people receive this kind of e-mail message but most of them are hoaxes. Yet, how do we know if the information is true? Most of the messages sound very convincing as the senders usually use the proper technical terminology. One of them wrote, “If the program is not stopped, the computer’s processor will be placed in an nth-complexity infinite binary loop which can severely damage the processor” (qtd. in “Internet Hoaxes” 1). The first time we read this, it sounds like it should be something real and serious. However, with a little research, we will find that there is no such thing as an nth-complexity infinite binary loop.

CIAC (Computer Incident Advisory Capability) team from the U.S. Department of Energy recommends us not to circulate virus warnings without first checking with an authoritative source such as a computer system security administrator or a computer incident advisory team (“Internet Hoaxes” 1). One thing for sure, simply reading an e-mail message will not cause a virus to enter our systems as long as we do not run the file attached to it without checking it first. E-mail messages are pure data files, therefore they are not viruses.

Ann Humphries, a columnist of *The Des Moines Register*, has some tips to mitigate the effects of giving or receiving computer viruses: “Update your virus detection system regularly. . . . Use new disks to transfer information. Limit the computers you interact with” (17). Whenever we use a disk from someone else, it will



be very wise to check the presence of a virus first before operating the disk. Reinwart's example above shows us that a program can still run properly even when a virus contained in that file is still in its infection phase. Hence, having no trouble with running a program does not mean that the program is virus-free. Some e-mail programs and Internet Browsers allow you to click on a data file or program that might be attached to a message or displayed on a web page and have that file or program load and/or run automatically ("Tutor" 1). We should not let this happen because we never know if the file attached is infected by a virus or not before checking it. The best thing to do is to save the file or program attached to a disk and then verify it with an anti-virus program prior to loading or executing it. Virus development is always ahead of its antidote. It is very hard to keep up with it even for the most experienced computer programmers. Using the newest version of an anti-virus program will be the option to prevent new kinds of viruses to infiltrate our computers. Prominent anti-virus manufacturers, including F-PROT and McAfee, issue new versions of products on a regular basis. Now, IBM researchers are taking a hint from medical research by following a similar epidemiological model in studying and hopefully quelling the spread of computer viruses (Pepper 32). The concept is to have an anti-virus program that can form its own "antibodies" and has the

capabilities to respond to new viruses. This kind of technology is needed to anticipate the new viruses as they are spread over the Internet more rapidly every day.

## *References*

---

- Humphries, Ann. "How to behave—tactfully—when computer virus infects your turf?" The Des Moines Register 4 August 1997 : 17.
- "Internet Hoaxes." 12 December 1996.  
<<http://www.mci.com/aboutus/company/corporate/consumer/hoaxes.shtml#penpal>> (5 December 1997).
- Lyon, Jack. "Virus Attack!" PC Computing May 1997: 40–41.
- Pepper, Jon. "Immunizing the Net." Popular Science May 1997: 32.
- Reinwart Jr., Bill. "Virus Help." 10 December 1996.  
<<http://www.cadvision.com/reinwarw/eaglevir.htm>> (8 December 1997).
- "Tutor.com—Viruses." Computer Knowledge Tutorial. December 1996.  
<<ftp://oak.oakland.edu/pub/simtelnet/win3/virus/vtutor20.zip>> (9 December 1997).



## *Family Bonding*

*Karen Vonnahme*

Each summer I have to help my family lop off the heads of about twenty chickens and gut them besides. Over the years, I have somewhat adapted to this process, but if I had the choice, I would definitely have to pass up the opportunity.

On this dreaded day, my family and I rise bright and early so we can finish this hideous job by mid-afternoon. I pull myself out of bed and pick out the oldest, most stained pair of jeans I can find. I throw on my rattiest T-shirt and slip on my muddiest shoes. I also make sure to pull my short hair back so it's less likely to get chicken blood on it.

I slowly walk down to the chicken house. I wonder if they know what's in store for them today. First, we have to chop off their heads using an ax or a corn knife. Either one works fine. We will also need someone to catch the chickens. This is always my job. Once we've beheaded five chickens, we hold them upside down to let the blood drip out of their necks. Their muscles are still twitching spasmodically. This leaves our jeans splattered with blood.

We are now ready to scald them. My dad hurries up to the house and retrieves the pot of boiling water from the stove. He carries it down to us, and we hold the chickens in the boiling water for a couple of minutes. This is done so the feathers are easier to pull. My brothers and I each take a chicken to pluck its feathers. It's a good idea to pull the pinfeathers out first because they are the most difficult. The pinfeathers are the thicker feathers located at the wings and at the rear end of the bird. We proceed quickly yanking the rest of them out before the chicken gets cold. As the chicken

gets cooler, it becomes more and more of a problem to remove the feathers.

Next, we have to cut off the legs. I do this by slicing the leg at the joint and snapping it backwards. There is no need to be appalled by the cracking sound it makes; this is normal. We hand the legless chickens to my mom who makes sure that all the feathers are off and the chickens are clean. She uses warm water to wash the chickens before gutting them.

Gutting the chicken is the most gruesome step of this gory process. First, we make two incisions around the insides of the legs. Second, I place my thumbs on top of the legs and my fingers under the backbone. I press down on the legs and up on the backbone. This action breaks the hip joints and lays the legs flat open. Using a razor sharp knife, I make a "V" cut right below the breast bone of the chicken. Then I stick my hand under the breast bone and pull up with all my might. The innards are now revealed. With my hand, I rip out the heart, liver, lungs, gizzard, intestines, stomach, and whatever else there may be in there.

We're almost done with the first five chickens. Five down, fifteen to go. The last thing we have to do is rinse them in cold water and put them in plastic bags. My brother carries the finished product to the house and places them in the freezer.

As you can see, there are many steps you must go through to arrive at the finished product. It's a bloody and unpleasant job, but somebody has to do it. Now when you select a frozen chicken from the grocery store, you will realize how much work someone had to go through to make this available to you.



## *A Mafia Hit*

*Jason Wood*

Driving past Tursi's Latin King, you may wonder what to expect from a dining experience there. Perhaps hurrying past on Hubbell Avenue, from the seat of your car, you have never given it a thought. Maybe the blinking neon sign saying "fine food" has turned you off. Possibly the fact that it is located in the part of Des Moines that is known as dying, lacking any form of new business has held you back. Could it be simply the name that worries you? You think that maybe this restaurant is part of some cartel mafia family. Possibly Guido and Tiny are waiting inside to break the knee caps of any unsatisfied customers, just to keep them quiet. If any of these things have ever stopped you from eating at this restaurant, you need to look past your inhibitions, bite the bullet and try it. Simply driving to the rear of the building will probably change your mind. The scenery changes from a windowless wall covered in six months of road grime to a very pleasant, down home earthy motif. This look welcomes you in and the fears of being mugged or beaten coming out in the dark of night simply vanish.

The large open parking lot offers well lit, convenient parking. Step through the revolving glass door entrance and the hostess will take your name and let you know the approximate wait. There is usually a wait because of its quiet popularity. However, the wait is no problem. Simply head into the bar, have a seat, and order what ever tickles your fancy. They were more than happy to mix up a cherry Pepsi (using real grenadine) and throw in three, yes, count them, three extra maraschino cherries for me. We were out early on a Friday evening and expected our wait to be considerably longer, but much to our satisfaction only a fifteen minute wait was necessary and we were whisked to our

seats. I might also add that there was no impersonal paging system; the hostess came out and tapped me on the shoulder when our wait was over. After we were seated, a waiter came and filled the awaiting water glasses and refilled our drinks from the bar. He was soon to return to let us know the nightly special, swordfish, and check to see if appetizers would be necessary. Our waiter was extremely pleasant, but English was his second language. His grammar was fine, but he didn't always catch what we wanted the first time around. Actually, it was a little humorous because no matter what was said, he looked like he were going to laugh, as if he were constantly holding back this boisterous giggle with the sly smirk he sported across his lips.

We ordered no appetizers on a warning that the meal comes with plenty of extras. The table's meal order consisted of fettucini alfredo for Rob, swordfish for Brian and sirloin for myself. All of our meals came with salads and a small bowl of pasta. The bread was a little over baked, but for the most part the above was a good start to the meal. The main courses were soon to follow.

The presentation of the fettucini alfredo was lacking of color. The other main courses were presented very nicely, sporting steamed vegetables and other assorted greens. My steak was fantastic, rating in the top ten of my twenty-two years, over a pound of tender, juicy, perfectly cooked sirloin. Rob assured me that even though lacking in color, the alfredo was very good. My friend Brian, who got the night's special, swordfish, was a little skittish at first even to try the strips of delicately baked fish. It was not quite what the great white outdoorsman expected. After convincing him that trying it wouldn't deface his manhood (seeing as how it wasn't deep fat fried) he was actually very impressed and

## *The Skunk River Review*

had it eaten in no time. My steak was not such an easy task and I ended up getting the last of it wrapped up so I could save room for dessert, which brings me to the best part of the meal. We all ordered the tira-mi-su, pound cake soaked in espresso, topped with whipped cheese cake and shaved chocolate. This description I'm sure doesn't do this small piece of heaven justice. I wish every meal could end with such an encore.

The total bill including drinks at the bar and tip was under eighty dollars. This is, granted, getting to the top of the reasonable scale for an evening with a couple of old high school buddies. We decided to pay the bill with my debit card and my friends could pay me back later in the night. The check took what seemed like an awfully long time to get back for my signature, but the waiter was still smiling so we weren't too worried. We left the building with conversation of how full we were. Midway through the parking lot we heard Smiley (our waiter's new nickname) yell at us. I turned in confusion

and saw him hustling across the lot with the remainder of my steak in hand. I had forgotten it at the table; this overly kind gesture made me glad that we didn't skimp on the tip.

Overall, on a scale of one to ten, I would give the service a very friendly six. This is based on the fact that they were always more than willing to help out (if you could get them to understand what you wanted). The ambiance was upscale yet casual, and my atmosphere of choice based on this, I would give the physical surroundings a rating of six also. The food was really the strong point, as it should be. Everything from the drinks to the dessert was top notch, that is why I'm not hesitant to give the meal a rating of nine. This is a restaurant that everyone will probably view differently, depending on what part of the dining experience is important to them. I would have to say that if good food is what you're looking for, Tursi's is recommended.



# *Social Security*

*Anthony Royer*

Social Security should be managed by a private company rather than the U.S. government. The government has subsidized, or taken enough money out of Social Security already. Social Security was brought to congress in 1934 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt to provide a continued income to retired workers of age 65 or older, not to fund programs that the government wants to have but does not have enough money to support (The Social Security Act).

Social Security should be run more like a 401(k) or an IRA. The money that the investor puts in a 401(k) or an IRA can be invested and can make money for the investor. Money that is invested into stock marked compounds allows your investments to grow faster (Sasanow 48). The money that is made by investing it in a 401(k) or an IRA is tax free money. Money in a 401(k) or an IRA can be invested in several different ways, from stocks to bonds and anything in between.

Those who oppose setting Social Security up like a 401(k) or an IRA argue that most people would end up being worse off than when Social Security was run by the U.S. Government. If Social Security is set up like a 401(k) or an IRA and contributing is optional, people will not contribute to their fund. There are a lot of people who have a 401(k) and do not contribute to it. There are even more people who do not have an IRA. A lot of the people who do have an IRA do not contribute their maximum of \$2,000 a year. A new public option poll surveyed by the Employee Benefit Research Institute and The Gallup Organization in the National Underwriter states that younger adults are beginning to save earlier for retirement. But, like the critics, it states that younger Americans may still not understand the extent to which they need to save ("National Under-

writer" 10). According to Phyllis Borzi retired women are even more likely to have incomes below poverty level (Borzi 46-48).

However, this problem is already solved. The only people who have the option to contribute to their Social Security fund are ministers. Everyone else has no say in whether they contribute or not. The money is automatically taken out of each pay check. This practice can be carried on just as it has since 1937. The way Social Security is set up now, basically anyone who pays taxes pays into their Social Security. No one will have to worry about people not paying enough into their fund or where the money will come from.

Another argument for those opposed having Social Security set up like a 401(k) or an IRA is that people would be able to take their money out early and thus end up with no money for retirement. With a 401(k) and an IRA, people can take their money out early, but are penalized stiffly. This penalization is to discourage people from taking their money out early. After money is taken out early, it can not be put back into either fund. There is a maximum amount of money that can be contributed into these funds. People taking their money out would just drain their accounts and leave them wondering what they are going to do when they retire.

On the other hand, a problem can be taken care of before it ever becomes a problem. When the rules are first set up they should clearly state that no money can be taken out for any reason. That way the money is set aside for retirement and not for a down payment on a house. The money that is put into the Social Security fund is in there for retirement, not for a new car, down payment on a house, in case of a emergency, or anything

else. People will have to be told that they will not see any of this money until they turn age 65. This will not be a rainy day fund. This is what most people will live off of after age 65.

An opposing argument of the problem with letting people invest their money is that they could lose it all. The stock market has crashed before. When the market goes down and people sell stocks that they have bought at a higher price, they lose money. How about when a company does not do as well as expected and their stock drops? There are as many ways to lose money as there are to make money, but losing seems to be much easier. Approving financial institutions would reduce the risk of investors losing money due to bad judgment on the part of the financial institution.

There is no definite way to solve this problem. However, 64 percent of people surveyed, according to Financial World/Mita Fax Opinion pole, believe that the Social Security portfolio, which is used to pay benefits, should be privatized and run by professional managers (Financial World 12). One way to fix this is there could be a limit on how much money could be placed in high risk investments. Or maybe no money could be put in high risk investments and can only be put in moderate risk or low risk investments. Bruce Schobel suggests that the government could offer a list of "approved financial institutions of sufficient size and sufficiently well regulated to be acceptable depositories of money" (Connolly 21). The options could go on and on, but there can definitely be a solution that works most all of the time. Even if the market fluctuates over time, the return will still be higher than just letting the money sit and do nothing.

Another argument against changing over the Social Security is what will the people who are about ready to retire going to do? They will retire and will not have enough money in their new Social Security account to retire on. The people who have already retired will have no money in their account. What are they to do? It seems to them that more people would be worse off than when the government was running it. The only people who would get the benefit of the new privately run Social Security would be the young people. Another concern would be about people who are disabled. What would they do when they reach retirement age? The only income they have is a government check coming. They will not be able to contribute to the Social Security fund.

However, something has to be done some time. According to analysts, if long-term reforms are not made in the Social Security system, the Social Security

trust fund will go bankrupt by 2029 (Social Security panel can't reach consensus). The Social Security money that isn't given to retired people will just be spent by the U.S. government. The money that is still in Social Security could be put in a big slush fund. The people who have already retired would use this money. Everyone else would start their new Social Security fund from ground zero. Everyone will use up their one retirement fund until it is empty. After that they will draw from the slush fund. Eventually, over time, it should even out so most people will not have to dip into the slush fund because they will have enough money in their account to retire on. Some people will die before they use up all of their money in their account. This money would then be transferred into the slush fund. Transferring that money would take care of the people who live longer and use all of the money in their fund. What about people who are on disability? The Supreme Court of West Virginia ruled that it is unconstitutional for Social Security payments to be reduced to permanent total disability people (Retirement benefits do not reduce disability payments 9).

There are questions. For example, can one company run Social Security and can we trust them? Will they just end up swindling the money out of the people like the government already has? There would have to be one company that would oversee everything to make sure people aren't double dipping or trying to cheat the system. That company would pay out the money to people and would also be in control of the slush fund. They would also have take the money out of people's paychecks and help people manage their money.

It would be nice if one company would do all of this but we all know that no one will do all of that for free. Rather than paying more tax or paying any tax money to the company running Social Security, the company could take a very very small percentage from the accounts. Brokers are one example of this idea. Some brokers take a flat fee, but there also are some who take a percentage of the money that is made. This would only need to be a very small percentage because basically every one in the U.S. will be contributing to Social Security. This would also help individual's personal Social Security account because the manager of the account would be looking for the best deal for the holder of the account. The more money the holder of the account makes, the more money the manager of the account makes.

Another benefit of having a private company running Social Security is the money will go to whom it belongs. A recent poll of Americans toward retirement

saving and Social Security states that 84 percent say that they believe that the government is mismanaging the system and allowing the funds to be wasted. This pole was taken by Public Agenda, a nonpartisan, nonprofit, public opinion research and education organization (Employee Benefit Plan Review 56). If Social Security was set up like a 401(k) or an IRA, money will no longer be subsidized by the U.S. Government. The leaders of our nation will no longer be able to say, let's spend some more money, or fund another project because there is some money sitting over there in the Social Security fund. Privatizing Social Security would at least keep people's Social Security funds safe from being pillaged by the U.S. Government.

Most everyone dislikes change, but a Washington (AP) pole states that most people think that small changes to the Social Security system will not be enough. Fifty-seven percent believe that "big changes" are needed. Also, a third of Americans think that in 20 years Social Security will be completely broke. An additional 37 percent think that in two decades Social Security will only have enough money to pay half the benefits owed (Most Americans think Social Security needs big changes). Even though this was just a poll and not expert statement on these facts, most people's opinions are reality to them. If people think Social Security is a sinking ship, no one wants to jump on, let alone throw their money at it like everything is okay. People want to see change and see it in a positive direction.

There are arguments both for privatizing Social Security and letting the government still control Social Security. No matter who controls Social Security there is one thing that is for sure, and that is something big will have to change with Social Security. Experts have proven that before very long Social Security will be bankrupt

and will no longer be able to support anyone. People will learn the hard way that they should have been investing in their own retirement fund, rather than placing their trust in Social Security. However, if Social Security was run by a private company, the way Social Security is handled would change and people could all have a better future to look forward to.

### *Works Cited*

- Borzi, Phyllis C. "Women and their retirement income: will it be enough?" Government Finance Review. Oct. '95 46-48.
- Connolly, Jim "Proposals sketchy for privatizing social security." National Underwriters (Life & Health/Financial Services Edition). Aug. '96 22.
- "Poll: Most Americas think Social Security needs big changes." April 16, 1998 3:50 P.M.  
<http://cnn.com> (21 Apr. 1998).
- "Retirement benefits do not reduce disability payments." Managing Office Technology. (1997): 9.
- Sasanow, Richard "The benefit of 401(k) plans." Black Enterprise July '96: 48.
- "Social Security." Financial World. 162 (1993): 12.
- United States "Social Security History."  
<http://www.ssa.gov/history/history6.html>  
(14 Apr. 98).
- "Study: public is saving earlier for retirement." National Underwriter (Life & Health/Financial Services Edition). 98 (1994): 10.
- "Survey taps savings attitudes." Employee Benefit Plan Review. 52 (1997) 56.

**For Reference**

**Not to be taken**

**from this library**



# Moonlighting

Melinda Mains

*This piece is dedicated to all waiters and waitresses who endure the countless dining idiosyncrasies of the public.*

As I drive to work, I wonder if I'll luck out today. Will I get the breakfast crowd that realizes I must roll out of bed at 4:30 A.M. to transform myself into the beautiful, charming, and witty waitress who will fulfill all their tiniest requests? Could I be fortunate enough to have the attentive bus boy show up?—the one who actually clears and resets my tables, earning the tip he will request from me at the end of the shift. Will the hostess with the mostest be there today?—the one who knows NOT to double seat my section. Am I early enough to get the section closest to the kitchen, so I don't have to display my track ability as a sprinter? For the 1,956th morning, I arrive at 6:00 A.M. to serve my charming breakfast bunch.

I love my part-time job. I adore working seven days a week in order to pay my electric bill and put food on my table. I delight in knowing that I can afford luxuries such as garbage service and gas for my car. I especially enjoy sharpening my public relations skills when all fifteen of my tables are simultaneously filled with sixty hungry customers. They, of course, need to be somewhere else in forty-five minutes.

Have you ever attempted to serve sixty people at one time and remain pleasant? It can and has been done under certain circumstances. The perfect criteria for this achievement is that no one requests coffee or water. Another important factor is that each customer must pay attention to me; the moment I offer to take their order, a response must be complete within three seconds. It is critical that the kitchen help isn't outside having a cigarette and gossiping about the other employees when I need the milk dispenser changed. It is

paramount that a customer from another section, who's being ignored by his waitress, doesn't ask me for more coffee. Last but not least, I can successfully serve sixty people at one time if the chef isn't hung over and really obstinate.

The almighty tip speaks loudly. How far will I go for a reasonable gratuity? I waited five gruelling minutes for a procrastinating customer to choose between two items on the menu that left teeth marks in my tongue. I restrained myself on numerous occasions from strangling mannerless children whose parents chose to ignore the fact that food was being dropped by handfuls to the floor. I chose not to pour hot coffee on the guy who grabbed my butt when I walked by his table; I was carrying two full trays of food. My choice was not to kick one woman's handbag clear across the restaurant when she carelessly left it directly in my walkway. I do love serving the public and am so grateful when they choose to leave a tip.

When the restaurant empties, I refill the salt and pepper shakers, replenish the sugar packets, vacuum the food-covered floor, restock my work station, then sit down for a moment to rest my aching body. My imagination starts to run rampant, and I wonder if my customers may have noticed the blood running down my chin resulting from my severed tongue. I feel assured that the parents of those "food dropping" children would want me to visit the hospital where those kids are recovering from neck abrasions, and I am positive the parents would apologize to me for only leaving a 50 cent tip. I am confident that the butt grabber's third degree burns will heal, and he will be forever indebted to me for the millions he'll get from the lawsuit. I can hear the roar of the crowd when I make a touchdown over the pastry display sneezebar with that woman's purse. Then



*The Skunk River Review*

I snap back to reality, knowing that I really am harmless and incapable of any of those deeds.

As I leave to go home, I am so fulfilled that I have a supplemental job with a challenge. What would I do without it? I know my family loves to hear the stories it creates—over and over and over. It's hard to believe that they think I'm complaining.



## *A Shadow of Guilt*

*Matt Speedy*

Clear and sunny, the day was typical of many lazy summer days. But on this day, February 6, fate would deal me a cruel blow.

In the morning of February 6, my little brother Ben and I eagerly awaited the arrival of family friends, who would join with us in celebrating Waitangi Day (the New Zealand Independence Day) in the traditional Kiwi manner, which is a barbie and a swim in the pool. Little did I know that today would be anything but normal and would profoundly affect me for the rest of my life.

The people arrived and warm greetings were exchanged. My best mate Bruce, my brother, and I mucked around in and out of our house, running around like young Banshees. As the adults cooked the food on our barbecue, the smoky aroma of meat cooking left us salivating in anticipation. Being impatient kids, we decided to do something before the food was ready. Through the house we ran, down the long, narrow hallways and out through the ranch slider in our parent's bedroom to our driveway. We chased each other like willow o'wisps. In and out of the house we ran, and then we crashed into my Mum and Mrs. Abernathy, who was taking a tour of our house.

Mum shouted hopelessly, "Slow down or you will kill yourselves!"

Of course we didn't listen—we probably never will. As three flashes of color (we three) went by them, they calmly followed us out the glass door and closed it after them. The threesome met out at the pool, where I decided I should throw my brother Ben into the pool. For some demented reason, I thought that this would be insanely funny. Ben, however, decided that although we

had been in and out of the pool all afternoon, he was not going to let me have my stupid fun. He took flight like a startled deer. I hunted my prey mercilessly, consistently closing the distance between us during his futile flight.

We entered the hallway that leads to my parents' bedroom. I was now close enough that he could feel my breath on his neck. My soon-to-be victim panicked, and his terror-filled eyes looked back into my triumphant victory stare. The adrenalin pumped through my body, since I knew that the race was nearly over. As we turned the corner to the bedroom, Ben turned to look one more time and crashed through the transparent glass ranch slider that we assumed to be open.

I stared in disbelief, open mouthed and dumbfounded, not really comprehending what had just happened. A hole the size and shape of Ben was in the door, just like in the cartoons. This, however, was becoming a sick, twisted cartoon in which I was just an observer, unable to have any effect on the outcome.

As I looked through the hole, my eyes widened in horror as I saw my little brother standing on the concrete. His face was an expressionless mask. A gash on his left arm pumped a wide arc of bright ruby-red arterial blood into the air. Blood covered the wall, the floor—it seemed as if it were everywhere. Transfixed by this gruesome montage, I opened my mouth to scream. Silence. My voice would not function. I panicked, turned, and ran, unabashedly screaming and calling for my parents. Somehow, some way they were quickly aware that this screaming was not just a part of our game. They were by Ben's side and administered first aid, while his life flowed onto the ground. The seven

*The Skunk River Review*

minutes it took for the ambulance to get there lasted what seemed to be several years of my life.

This incident brought home to me the importance of my family to me, and as I waited, inconsolable, for news of his condition, I vowed that no one would hurt any member of my family again. To this very day, the emotions from that tragic afternoon have clouded my mind. I have never been able to clear my conscience. Every time I look at him, I wish vehemently that it had been I who had suffered. Or perhaps maybe I should

have left him alone. If only I had stopped him sooner, before he reached the clear door. If, only, but.... the excuses of losers. The bottom line was I had failed in looking after my baby brother, and that would stay with me forever.

The horrific scars and pain my brother endured have faded with time, that greatest of all healers. But if one looks behind the green of my eyes, there one will find the shadow of guilt, the holder of the memories that will haunt me forever.



## *Forced Abortions in China*

*Erin Koester*

In America the right to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness is protected and guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. Human rights are an important part of individual freedom. Although “public and private violence against women is recognized as an abuse of human rights,” women’s rights are not equally protected in all countries (Matson 17).

Women’s reproductive rights are heavily abused in China, where the one-child-per-family law is strictly enforced. This policy was enforced because of China’s vast unemployment rate, widespread famine and homelessness, as well as other factors. In many parts of the world, women are brutally denied basic human rights. There are forced abortions and sterilizations, genital mutilation, forced prostitution, and denial of basic education and property rights . . . (Knippers). China’s Ministry of Public Health has proposed a bill that is designed “to avoid new births of inferior quality people and heighten the standards of the whole population” (“Birth”). By this statement China is wanting to stop the births of baby girls. They feel that this is one way to control their population and help their economy as a whole. In China, many people traditionally prefer boys because girls marry out of the family and don’t support their parents later in life. The government acknowledges that a son is necessary in the countryside to inherit the land and to take care of elderly parents (“Rethinking” 44). In my opinion, China’s one-child-per-family policy is combining their traditional and customary beliefs with their belief that the population is out of control. What I mean by this is that I feel China could better control the population by aborting the male babies because adult females can only be impregnated every nine months or so and carry one to (in a

rare case) seven or eight babies at a time, while males can impregnate several women at one time and potentially become fathers of ten or more children every day. This, however, is not to say that I feel China should begin aborting male babies, but simply that their means of controlling the population is probably not the most effective or efficient way.

China’s population control policies are known to include both coerced abortions and forced sterilization of women who become pregnant in defiance of the government’s “one-child policy.” This policy encourages sex-selection abortion (selecting of baby girls to be aborted) and even infanticide of baby girls. It has led to the killing of tens of thousands of female children who have been destroyed for no reason other than their sex (Casey 40). Infanticide of the baby girls is carried out by simply abandoning the babies in orphanages, where they may die of neglect. Female infanticide has been common in China for centuries, but “the current level is unprecedented” (Hilditch 39).

Infanticide of females, death by neglect in orphanages, and selective abortion following gender determination by ultrasound have become widespread. In January of 1996 the Chinese government struggled to explain away charges of abuse of children in orphanages. State-run orphanages were accused of deliberately letting children die of starvation and neglect. The Chinese government admitted that most of these children were not “orphans” at all; they were abandoned children, victims of the policy of allowing only one child per family (two if you’re in a lucky province) (“Rethinking” 44). Even after these charges were brought against the Chinese government, there is no evidence that China will consider abandoning their one-child-per-family

policy. The Chinese government feels that their policy has been a big success because in 1970 the average Chinese woman had six children and by 1996 that average had dropped to about two children per family (45). According to results of 1-percent population sample survey in 1996, China's population growth rate has declined over the last five years, even though the actual size of the population is still increasing ("Population"). The population of China in 1982 was 1,008,175,000. In the 1990 census China's population was 1,133,682,501. China still remains as the world's largest country in population. The estimated population for China in 2001 is 1,319,959,000 ("China"). In the Far Eastern Economic Review, John Aird stated that

the coercive (forcible) nature of China's population policy has been ignored by many leading international family-planning agencies. Despite harsh enforcement of the one-child limit in 1979, widespread forced sterilization and abortions of 1983, and the present Draft Law on Eugenics and Health Protection, the Chinese government still receives support for its population program from organizations such as the United Nations Population Fund and the International Planned Parenthood Federation. (Aird)

The Religious Right has been carrying out an extraordinary lobbying effort in Congress against granting China most-favored-nation (MFN) trading status. The campaign will probably not convince Congress to do away with granting China the MFN status because of its catalog of human rights abuses ("Making"). In 1995, President Clinton sent Hillary to Peking to the Fourth United Nations Conference on Women, but despite their obvious concerns and the efforts of the Religious Right, China, at this point, still remains a totalitarian police state that systematically violates every civil liberty, especially those of women and the issue of forced abortions. I don't feel that it did any good to send Hillary to this conference because all it did was stir up angry emotions within the Chinese government against changing their one-child-per-family policy. Just to recapture the point of this essay, I feel that the one-child-per-family policy is a main cause of the growing problems of female infanticide, forced abortions and sterilizations, and selective abortions. As a result of the one-child policy, many women have entered the United States realizing that this may be their only option of avoiding the abortion of their baby girls.

I feel that there are many actions that we, as citizens of the United States, can take to help solve the problems of human rights abuses of women in China. First of all, we can create a demand for adoption of Chinese baby girls here in the United States. The U.S. has a waiting list for adopting babies. The demand is very high. If we could create this demand for Chinese babies, it may decrease the number of forced abortions and female infanticide.

Furthermore, the Chinese government could bribe the people with options that would help them in the long run, for a promise to abide by the one-child policy. One method that is proven to be effective is a program sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation which offers women a choice of contraceptive methods. With this program the Chinese have started manufacturing better-quality contraceptives. The government has bribed couples who use this method of birth control or other methods with interest-free loans, cheaper fertilizer, and retirement funds if they pledge to stop at one child. The government also supplies fruit trees to couples with only one daughter. These trees are supposed to provide an income or food for the parents in their old age. The economic growth rate has cleared twelve percent a year because of this agreement between the Chinese citizens and the government ("Rethinking" 45). This clearing of the economic growth rate could increase if the government would increase their bribes to the people of China.

Another action that could help slow the population growth rate, forced abortions and sterilizations, and sex-selection abortions could be to educate the people of China about contraceptives. If Chinese people were better educated about this, then maybe more of them would be willing to use a method of birth control. As I mentioned before, educating the government about the possibilities of men fathering more babies than women could produce might help them to change some of their prejudices about female babies and females in general. Educating the government may decrease the number of forced abortions.

The U.S. could also hold meetings and conferences to educate Americans about the demand needed to adopt female babies from China. This would be a good method of publicizing the evils going on in China, while at the same time making the American people see the struggles of the Chinese government and people. The U.S. could raise funding for the adoptions programs (in the U.S.) through the U.S. Adoption Agencies and through the International Planned Parenthood Federation.

## *Forced Abortions in China*

In conclusion, I believe that China has a growing problem of female infanticide, forced abortions and forced sterilizations, sex-selection abortions, and death by neglect in orphanages. As Robert Casey suggests,

the message that the U.S. should be sending to the world is that family integrity and women's equality are not antithetical ideas. Expanding economic opportunity for women, equal pay for equal work, and other principles of non-discrimination need not be linked to a devaluation of the roles of wife and mother. Instead, we should promote programs and policies that offer women meaningful alternatives to abortion, poverty, and exploitation. (Casey 41)

I believe that the United States can do many things to help the Chinese people eliminate their prejudices about women and to help women in China gain respect. If we don't do something to help the women in China and slow down the population growth rate, the problems with human rights abuses against women will only worsen and we will only have ourselves and each other to blame.

## *Works Cited*

---

- Aird, John S. "The Force Be With You." Far Eastern Economic Review 27 Jan. 1994: 21.
- "Birth Of A Nation." Far Eastern Economic Review 13 Jan. 1994: 5.
- Casey, Robert P. "Just Don't Go." National Review 14 Aug. 1995: 40-42.
- "China." The World Book Encyclopedia. Chicago: World Book, Inc., 1997 ed. 474-506.
- Hilditch, Tom. "A Holocaust of Girls." World Press Review Sept. 1995: 39-40.
- Knippers, Diane. "The UN's Antifamily Manifesto." Christianity Today 14 Aug. 1995: 19.
- "Making Conservatives Antsy Over China." U.S. News & World Report 30 June 1997: 34.
- Matson, Rosemary. "Women Make Gains Globally." The Humanist Nov/Dec 1995: 16-19.
- "Population Grows Slower." Beijing Review 11 Mar. 1996: 6.
- "Rethinking Family Values." Newsweek 22 Jan. 1996: 44-45.



## *Thanks, Dad*

*Trish Reinertson*

Dear Dad,

It's Thanksgiving. It's the time of year to reflect and give thanks for what we have. As I think about all the things I have to be thankful for, I think about you, Dad, and the gifts you gave me. I have these with me always. You gave me my values, principles and beliefs. You taught me by example how to be dependable, hard working, and generous. You taught me about honesty and integrity. You instilled in me a love of books, music, the arts, and the importance of education. You had a strong, definite and clear set of values. You taught me love, loyalty, family values, love of my country and belief in God. For all these gifts, I want to say thank you.

When I was growing up, you were always there. We were a family unit. When you came home from work, we always had supper together. After supper, our family spent the evening together, watching television, reading or playing games. If we needed help with our homework, you were always there to help. When we were very young and it was bedtime, you would tuck us into bed, give us a kiss, and play your guitar and sing "Guardian Angels." It made me feel so safe. You gave me a sense of security. I have tried to raise my children with that same sense of family that you gave to me. Thanks, Dad.

Thank you for introducing me to music. You bought me a piano when I wanted so badly to learn to play. And when I was tired of practicing and taking lessons, you wouldn't let me be a quitter. Thanks for teaching me to follow through and finish what I start. When I wanted to join the band in school, you encouraged me, even though you knew from experience that I'd get tired of practicing and going to lessons. By going to all my piano recitals and band concerts, you taught me love and loyalty. And even though I no longer play the piano, I still listen to and enjoy music and have tried to expose my children to a

wide variety of music. I think we all believe that music soothes the soul. Thanks, Dad.

Thank you for teaching me to love to read. When I was growing up, there were always plenty of books in the house. I can remember you lying on the couch reading a book on Sunday afternoons. I can remember, as a small child, wanting desperately to know how to read. I couldn't wait to go to school so that I could learn how. Once I learned, you enrolled me in my own book club. I couldn't wait for that new book to come each month. I've always loved to read and my house today is full of books. Thanks to you, as long as I have a good book, I have a friend.

By always going to work everyday, rarely calling in sick and not being late, you instilled a good work ethic in me. I'm never late for work or school and I never miss either one unless I'm very sick. You taught me to be dependable, work hard and be honest. Thanks, Dad.

As long as I have known you, you were in the military service. You were on active duty during WWII and the Korean Conflict and in the reserves for many years after that. You never missed your monthly meetings. You had a love for your country and believed in serving. Because of that love of country and call to duty, you taught me how important it is to vote. Because of you, I have voted in every election since I was 21 years old. Too many people made the ultimate sacrifice for me not to exercise my right to vote. You make me realize that America is still the best country in the world and we should be proud to be Americans. Thanks, Dad.

And yes, thanks for making me go to church. Growing up, we never missed church and you never missed choir practice. By being a good example, you showed me how important a belief system is. By making

*The Skunk River Review*

me go to church, even when, as a teenager, I didn't want to, I have developed a set of values and beliefs that I can draw on and have with me anywhere—even if I never attend church again. I know that what is in my heart is what is important, but for it to be in my heart, I had to first be taught.

Never was that more important to me than when you were diagnosed with cancer. It helped me through those dreadful weeks. It helped me deal with the denial, the frustration, the anger, the pain and the acceptance. You were so brave. I'll never forget when you told the doctors to stop the treatments when you knew they weren't helping. And then you looked at me and said, "Did I do the right thing?" You taught me what true bravery is. You taught me self-sacrifice when you told the doctors that you wanted them to do an autopsy on you so that maybe they could find a cure for cancer. I felt such pain and pride at the same moment.

There have been so many times since then that I have needed your advice or your opinion. I wish you

were here now. When I have a question, I have to think, "what would Dad say or do in this situation"? I can remember as a teenager, you told me if I'm ever in a situation that I wasn't sure what I should do, just stop and think: If Dad were here right now, what would he think? Thanks, Dad.

Oh and Dad, if I sometimes didn't show it or tell you, I want you to know how very much I love you and how proud I am to be your daughter. You are the person who has influenced my life the most; the person who taught me my values, principles and beliefs. I've tried to instill in my children the same values that you gave me. I think you'd be proud of them. A part of you lives on through them and will through future generations.

So Dad, when we meet again, will you tell me some of your corny jokes—you know, the ones I used to roll my eyes at! And then will you play your guitar? Will you play "Guardian Angels"? Thanks, Dad.





## *War Games*

*Ron Johnson*

My first priority was finding a place to hide. As I slid along the wall I kept my gun in front of me in the ready position, just like I was trained to do in the military. Not knowing where the others were worried me. I knew they would be looking for me soon, so I decided that it would be best if I kept moving. I crouched down to keep my head low as I moved down the hallway. It was very dark and my heart was pounding so loud I could hear it in my ears. As quickly and as quietly as I could, I made my way to the corner at the end of the hallway. I peeked around the corner quickly, then swung around barrel first, but there was no one there. I was used to hunting deer and rabbits, but here the hunter and the hunted were all equally equipped. It was certainly more of a sport when the hunted could shoot back. That is why I came though, wasn't it?

Laser tag is an exhilarating game that is far more intense than any other game of its kind. In this sport, combat simulation is the name of the game and the game is played with lasers. Here I could take part in the greatest hunt of all; I came to hunt for man. I wondered what the winning factor would be when each of us had the same weapon? Would it be skill, strategy or just plain luck? These combat simulation games draw a large crowd from various walks of life. Each one comes to compete in a mock life or death duel. I wanted to understand why they would choose this game to play and to find out what enjoyment they got from doing it.

Two different games currently dominate the sport. The first type is played with guns which fire paint balls. Getting hit with a paint ball not only leaves a blotch of paint on my clothes but often a welt on my skin. This game is usually played outdoors. The special guns operate on compressed air. With the purchase of the gun, paint balls, and air tanks, the cost of the basic

equipment can easily exceed a hundred dollars. The other type of war game was developed by the army to train soldiers. Using laser technology, special vests were designed that would flash lights to show that a laser beam had hit the vest. Each player has a special laser gun that is strong enough to have a good range while not strong enough to hurt other players. This sport has gained a lot of popularity in the last few years with children and survivalists alike. The price is around seven dollars per game with games lasting approximately twenty minutes. It is played in very large rooms, usually at an arcade.

Before the laser tag game begins, each player is briefed on how to play and how to read the digital display on the back of the laser gun. Each player wears a vest which is connected to their laser gun. If I should get hit, the lights on my vest light up and the laser gun remains inoperable for five seconds. During this time others may continue to shoot me but I am unable to shoot back.

My wife is also playing tonight and I decided that there is no one I'd rather shoot than her. If I didn't get her first, I'd undoubtedly never hear the end of her teasing. So I went looking for her. I was not as cautious as I had been in the beginning. I had a purpose now and the clock was ticking. Games usually last fifteen to twenty minutes and during that time every player can shoot as many shots as they want and there is no limit to how many times they can be hit. A computer keeps track of the score of each player. This includes whom I shoot, who shoots me, and how many hits or misses I make.

The playing area is shaped like a maze. In the background a very fast-paced, hard rock song beats against my ears as the strobe lights play tricks with my eyes.

## *The Skunk River Review*

Dried ice is also used to enhance the mood. All of these effects, combined with the dim lighting set the perfect scene for suspense.

As I made my way down the hall I saw two girls cross in front of me. They were looking the other way when I shot them. It is quite a rush to know that I got them before they got me. I felt like the great white hunter. If this had been real life I'd have lived and they wouldn't have. However, I was very disappointed that my laser gun didn't make any noise when I shot them. After all, the sound is the evidence of how powerful a gun is.

I kept on searching for my wife. I didn't have to search very long because she was also looking for me. As I came around the corner, I saw her sneaking off in the other direction. I fired instinctively before I even took time to aim. My shot missed but she saw the tell-tale red laser-beam go by her and she spun around and shot me. The lights on my vest lit up. I had to get away so that my gun would have time to recharge. She saw her opportunity and pursued me as I tried to lose her in the maze. Soon my gun was operable again and I was able to light up the lights on her vest. We both had a pretty

good laugh and when we had finished laughing and shooting, we decided to work together. This seemed to work out very well. With someone to watch my back, I could concentrate on what was in front of me. When I did get hit, I could drop back while my partner kept the others from overrunning us.

The game ended as abruptly as it had begun. The lights came up, the music stopped and so did my laser gun. I had been enjoying myself and was quite disappointed that the fun was over. I reluctantly took off my vest and stood in line for my scorecard. I realized then that the average age of the other players was probably about fifteen. Just a few minutes before they had all seemed much bigger and more dangerous.

After any successful hunt there is something to show for the work. A prize, usually a dead animal, is carried home. Tonight the prize is different. The only thing I would be taking with me were the memories. That is why I came though, just for the thrill of the chase. As I walked away, with my heart still pounding and the sweat still pouring, I felt just like a soldier leaving the battlefield. Although the bullets are different the rest is just the same.



## *Performance for My Mind*

*Emily Schiltz*

I could smell the developing storm brewing in the west. The cool wind began to flow around my neck, sending exhilarating chills down my spine. I love to be in the musty forest during a heavy rainstorm, and today's storm is going to be quite the performance.

The diminishing sun highlighted the rocky stream next to me, making the surrounding forest seem like a dark cave. As I walked beside it, the raging stream smashed along its banks, creating a thick blanket of moisture that drifted over the forest floor. Rich fog danced lazily over the damp rocks lining the stream and surrounded my feet and ankles. The haze, along with the incoming clouds, chased the woodland creatures into their safe shelters, away from the threat of Mother Nature. As I watched the fog spread along the earth, I saw two squirrels scamper up a narrow tree and leap from branch to branch until they crawled into their large nest. The birds were nowhere to be seen, probably conserving their voices for the celebration after the storm. I briefly saw a chipmunk on the forest floor scurry under a rotted log. It became apparent, as I looked closer at this log, that even the centipedes were disappearing into the rotted bark. Next to the log, a carpet of tiny pink flowers slowly hid their beauty from my eyes.

Through a small clearing in the canopy above my head, clouds ran with the wind. And, as if it had magnetic powers, the wind pulled the clouds closer and closer until the sky appeared to be a green-gray mass. The gale thrust my hair continuously into the air. Strong wind tossed branches of the giant oak trees like twigs in a twister. The other trees surrounding me looked as if they would get up and walk away at any second. Over the violent stream, a little rickety bridge, supported only by the eroding earth and a few weak boards, threatened to collapse despite the hundreds of storms that had clearly disturbed its rest in the past. Illu-

minating the forest for a split second, a bolt of lightning crackled above my head and introduced the rain for the next act on stage.

The rain tiptoed its way into the forest until it completely took over the show. My clothing, wet and heavy, stuck to my chilled body. The canopy of the forest was trying to hold the rain out, but it only caused many fat drops to fall on me. Once every part of the cool forest was moistened, myself included, the lightning crackled again as a cue for the rain to intensify. Icy water saturated the land until the ground refused to drink any more. Puddles became tiny rivers until they wound their way around my feet and eventually spewed into the exploding stream.

As the sun slowly struggled to peek through cracks in the thick clouds, intricate beams of light delicately shining down on the forest placed spotlights on individual scenes. A bright red male cardinal was perched on the delicate bridge. He listened to the distinctive call of his mate and answered back with confidence. I suddenly heard the squirrels' nails scratching down the side of the weary oak tree. The two rowdy squirrels chased each other up and down several trees next to the dangerous stream. One of the whimsical rodents almost fell off of the tree directly above my head! The hundreds of insects that reside in the forest were still in hiding, probably washed away for the time being. I also noticed the raunchy smell of the worms beginning to develop. Hundreds of worms began to surface, and with every step I took, I could feel the slimy invertebrates squishing under my bare feet. The spotlight suddenly brought to my attention the pink carpet of tiny flowers that signaled the end of the performance.

The fierce storm passed me as quickly as it had appeared. Life in the forest and my life will return to normal shortly after I leave. A heavy rainstorm refreshes not only the forest, but also my mind.



## Ronnie

*Kathryn S. Cooper*

One summer night several years ago, I was awakened by yelling and screaming outside my window. My dog Ollie was growling as he lay at my feet in my bed. I was frightened at first and wondered who was outside. I began to shake and got out of bed to look out the blinds. It was difficult to understand what was being said. I finally figured out it was my neighbors, and I could make out the words, "I'm going to fuck you up!" This really frightened me, because it was such a violent statement. I considered calling the police, as I have done in other domestic situations, but I was tired and did not want to go through the effort. This is a very uncharacteristic reaction for me, because I am afraid to get involved, but feel it is my duty. Part of my consideration was that I don't care for my neighbors, and it didn't matter to me if they beat the hell out of each other. They are not good neighbors, and in the past, they have had parties and drunken brawls. They don't take care of their property. The paint on their house is cracking and in some places the wood is bare. Their screened in front porch has only half of it's screens and the screens that are there are hanging from the windows. On their front porch is an old refrigerator, a torn dirty couch, black garbage bags (that some animal has torn open,) dog feces, and various other pieces of junk. They have numerous old cars parked in their driveway that have never been repaired.

The next day, I told a friend about my neighbors' fight.

She asked me, "Did you call the cops?"

I told her, "No."

She asked, "Why?"

I said, "Because I don't care what they do to each other."

That afternoon when I came home, I saw my neighbors' son, Ronnie, walking his bike with his friend Mike. Ronnie was about 11 years old, medium height and weight for his age and had blond hair that laid over his ears. He was just beginning to become muscular and was at that awkward age. Mike was probably 8 years old and small for his age. He had brown hair that was cut in a little boy style. They had been best friends for a couple of years despite their age difference.

I greeted them with my usual, "Hi, guys."

Mike looked at me, as he walked by, smiled his cute little smile and said, "Hi" in his sweet manner.

Ronnie would not look at me, but said, "Hi" in a very quiet voice.

Right then I realized I should have called the police. I had not considered the fact that Ronnie was there during the fight.

Ronnie reminded me of what I felt like when I was a kid and my parents fought. The fights were very loud and physical. We were a middle class family and my father was considered a very good man among our neighbors and at church. He was very active in the church and at one time wanted to become a minister. My parents taught my brothers and me through examples and we got very conflicting messages. They would give old ladies rides to church and take Christmas presents to poor families who had no father at home. We always had lots of toys for Christmas and would get \$200 each for new school clothes each year. We were not allowed to dance, play cards, go to movies, watch the "Monkies" on TV, and had to turn down the commercial for "Ultra Bright" when they said "sex appeal."

My father was a very good looking man. He was 6 feet tall and weighed over 200 pounds. He had black wavy hair and dentures that looked real. He lost his left eye when he was in his twenties through an accident at work, but had a very real looking fake eye. He had a very good sense of humor and a loud laugh. He could be the best dad in the world when he was in a good mood. He would take us on hikes, wrestle with us, and take us on great vacations. He would do unusual things with us such as armadillo hunting in the middle of the night when we went to Arizona on vacation. But when the "black cloud" came over him, he was a very vicious man.

When I was about seven, I remember my parents were fighting one night. My three brothers and I were upstairs playing Monopoly. We nervously laughed and joked about the fighting that was happening downstairs.

I remember my oldest brother saying, "Well, I wonder if he will move out again? It's been about six weeks. He comes back, stays six weeks, they get in a fight and he beats her up. Then he leaves for about six weeks and then comes back."

I said, "We could all pick dates, make bets and see who comes the closest."

My brother said, "No, that wouldn't be right. That would be like gambling and that would be a sin."

We were scared, but had no control. We tried to be numb to it, because we were helpless. We could here my dad loading his gun and threatening to kill my mother and us. We were really scared at this point. I told my brothers I had to go to the bathroom, and I sneaked downstairs to call the police. I was very nervous and was shaking making it difficult to dial the phone. I dialed zero and waited for the operator to answer. I was afraid my parents would here the phone ringing through the receiver. After what seemed like an hour, the operator answered. I whispered to her that my dad was going to kill us and gave our address. I then went back upstairs to await the results of my call. The police came to our door and my dad called my brothers and me downstairs. Whenever my dad called us, we would run to him and stand at attention in front of him. We had been well trained over the years. There were two policemen, who were smaller than my dad, standing by the front door. My dad asked who called them. They said that didn't matter, and they wanted to know what was going on. My dad told them he and my mom were arguing. My mom asked them to make my dad leave. At this point my dad had beaten my mom pretty badly and it was very apparent. Some of her hair was missing from her head, she was beginning to get bruises on her face, and the back of her ankle was cut and bleeding from when

he had thrown her across the room and she had bounced off the wall. She was limping and was obviously in pain. The police said the house was my dad's and if she didn't like it, she could leave. They did take his guns. My dad dismissed us and did not ask who had called the police. We were afraid to leave my mom alone with him, but we were frightened for ourselves, also. So, we ran as quick as we could to get out of sight. I think he ended up leaving that night. It was one of many times he would leave before leaving for good.

My mother did try to kill herself three times. The third time she almost died and was unconscious for three days. The nurses gave me her rings (I was only 8 years old).

My mother told me that when she woke up she thought, "My God; I can't even die when I want to."

Since she was unsuccessful at killing herself, she decided she had to take her kids and move out of state before my father killed us. My father was a very mean, violent, and cruel man. I was extremely frightened of him, since I could never predict what would set him off. We were very helpless against this big man.

Things were different then, than they are now. My father had not allowed my mom to work, so she had no work history and few marketable skills. Food stamps did not exist in Iowa. All we could get were "commodities," which included big silver cans of peanut butter, and bricks of lard, butter, or cheese. I can't remember how we got by.

Eventually, my mom took us to live in California. There we felt our freedom and my mom was pretty permissive with us. We moved into a two-bedroom apartment. My mom and I slept together on a hide-a-bed in the living room. My oldest brother got his own room and my two other brothers shared a small bedroom. We had food stamps in California, but we were very embarrassed to use them. My brothers and I got jobs to help pay the rent and other expenses. My brothers worked in a butcher shop and I baby-sat a mentally and physically disabled child. We did not have any more big Christmases. We did not have all the clothes we used to have (in fact my father threw all of my clothes away and I never knew why.) We each had 1 pair of jeans and a few shirts. We learned about Goodwill and the Salvation Army. We went to garage sales and "flea markets." We took odd jobs and did whatever we could to get by, but we were happy and free. We didn't have to always worry about who would get beat next and trying to figure out what we had done wrong.

Eventually, my oldest brother hitch-hiked back to Iowa, got his girlfriend pregnant and married her. He

## *Ronnie*

was only 16 years old. My other two brothers also hitchhiked back to Iowa and lived with relatives for awhile. My mother arranged for me to return to Iowa and live with my aunt for the summer. I did not want this at all. I spent that summer baby-sitting my three cousins and cleaning my aunt's house. My brother, who was 2 years older than I, moved from place to place and supported himself. My youngest brother and I ended up in a foster home.

As an adult, I still do not understand my father. He hasn't changed and refuses to accept any responsibility for his actions. He doesn't try to explain what he was going through, so we could better understand it all. He continues to be the selfish person he was when I was a child. He thinks he is an island.

All of this came back to me when I saw Ronnie and Mike the day after the fight. I felt sorry for Ronnie and all the kids who have to live with domestic violence. Ronnie had his head down and would not look at me. His shoulders were hunched and he shuffled his feet. I remember how scared and embarrassed my brothers and I were. I also remember how helpless we felt. We still carry our physical and emotional scars to this day.

I felt guilty that I had not called the police. Even though I don't care if Ronnie's dad and mom beat each other, I do care about Ronnie. Ronnie loves his parents, and it is frightening to him when they fight. If Ronnie's parents aren't going to consider his feelings, then someone needs to intervene for his sake. Next time, I will not hesitate to call the police. Someone needs to remember the children of domestic violence.



# *My First Race*

*Cami Hilton*

“Powder puff on deck. Powder puff, you are on deck,” came the call from the announcer over the loud speaker. Tammy and I barely heard it over the roar of the engines. We looked at each other and without speaking, headed towards the pit and to our cars. Butterflies danced in my stomach as I crawled onto the trunk of the car and slid in where the back window used to be. I crept to my seat and looked through the chicken wire windshield at the cars already lining up. Fear crept over me.

“What if I stink? What if I wreck? What if I really screw up?” The horrible thoughts kept pouring through my mind as I reached for the ignition. I revved engine and the scent of burning oil filled the air. Sweat dripped from my forehead as I reached for the gear shift with a shaking hand. I was in my own little world and didn’t even notice Ronnie, the owner of the car, crawl through the back.

“Just remember not to get nervous.” I jumped at the sound of his voice. “Push the gas with your right foot and the brake with your left. Ease into the corners and pay close attention to the center and you should be fine.” His instructions were barely audible over the nine idling engines surrounding me, and in my time of need they weren’t at all comforting. We rode in silence to my place in line. Tammy was right in front of me getting a pep talk from her dad. Ronnie patted my back and hopped out of the car. He was awful trusting to let me drive his car. Tammy’s dad walked by and gave me a thumbs up. I smiled half heartedly and slipped my helmet over my head. I waved to Tammy and began to wonder how I ended up here.

“Are you going to the dance Saturday?” Tammy’s voice came across the phone line.

“No, I’m not. I think I’m gonna go over to Kip’s house and play with Nate. Who are you going with?”

“I’m not. Katie and I are going to go to the figure eight races. Wanna go?”

“Where are they at?”

“The fairgrounds.”

“Sure, why not? It might be fun.”

“I’ll pick you up at six and then we’ll go get Katie, okay?”

“Sounds great. See you then.” Our date was set.

I bundled up Saturday night because it was a typical late September night, very cold. Tammy arrived at exactly six. We picked up Katie and hurried to the fairgrounds. As we walked from the car to the race track I shivered several times. The bleachers were slightly moist, so we pulled our coats under our rears to make sure our pants stayed dry. The track reminded me of a football field. It looked somewhat dangerous with all the tires in it. The tires were put around the corners to keep people from cutting them too close. A man on a four-wheeler drove around the track making sure everything was in order. Announcements were made to the people in the pit. The crowd began to thicken as seven o’clock approached. I had no idea these races were so popular.

“Ladies and gentlemen, will you please rise for our national anthem.” At last, it was time to begin. I watched in awe as the heats began. Cars would come out from the pit two by two and race around the track at speeds between 50 to 60 miles per hour. I held my breath as several cars came dangerously close to hitting each other in the intersection where they crossed. My

heart began to beat faster with every race. I longed to be out there, driving on the track without fear.

"Next up is the powder puff race." I heard the announcers call and knew then and there that this is something I had to do.

"I will race someday," came my solemn vow. "I swear to you, I am gonna race." They laughed hysterically.

"Why am I suddenly scared?" Tammy laughed again "You are a terrible driver. How many accidents have you been in?"

"Well, only a few." I tried to sound as innocent as possible. "So I went into a couple of ditches and I flipped my car. So what if I almost flipped us when I hit the curb last week. It doesn't matter when you are out there." I was mad. How dare she attack my driving skills.

"Well, let's not forget the pedestrian you hit." Sarcasm dripped from her voice. Tammy stared at me for a moment, looked at Katie, and back at me. Her face became serious. "Cami, this is totally unlike you. I met you over a year ago and in the past six months you have changed. You drank for the first time, smoked for the first time, and dated an older man. You are not the same girl you were last year. What's going on?"

I thought about what she said. She was right, why would I want to do this? I'm not a very daring person. Whenever I try something I always get caught or in trouble, so why would I want to risk my life in a car on track with crazy drivers, including me?

"That's just it, Tammy. I have lived my whole life being careful. I have always followed the rules and done whatever I was told. I have never done anything wild or crazy. This could be my chance to prove that I'm not just some wimp, that I have a backbone. I've always tried new things as long as they were safe, but what about things that aren't safe? Why not? It's my chance to live on the wild side, to have something to tell my children and grandchildren about. Life is short and if I die tomorrow, what will they say about me? I was a good girl."

"And a bad driver." Tammy finished my sentence. We stared at each other for a tense moment and began to laugh hard. "Well, I guess we should warn them about you. Who knows how many people you'll run over if you get out there."

We laughed for the rest of the night at the thought of me racing. The next summer I got a call from Tammy and knew I had to make up my mind.

"Cami, if you were serious about racing, my brother's friend will let you use his car." She wasn't sarcastic, she was serious. Tammy had found me a car to

race in and I was going to have a chance to finally do it. "If you've changed your mind, I won't tell anyone."

"No, I will do it. Just tell me when." I was already beginning to feel nervous.

Now here I was, one year later, and I was finally going to do it. The guy in charge signaled for us to pull onto the track. I threw the car into drive and began to pull up the slope. The air was filled with sweat, exhaust and dirt. I could barely hear the announcer over the deafening sound of ten engines gunning, waiting for the green light. We circled the track.

I waited with anticipation. The light would change at any moment and then I would have to floor it. My whole body trembled with excitement and fear. The track taunted me with its size and sharp corners. The smell of burning oil hit my nostrils like a hammer. I rubbed the sweat out of my eyes as we made a second lap.

"It's yellow, yellow, yellow. Gotta wait, gotta wait. Yellow, yellow, yellow, Green! GOOOOOOOOOOO." I was off like a 16 year old in a hot rod. My foot hit the gas so hard I thought it would go through the floor. As I came to the first corner, I made my move. Inside I went and I passed a couple of cars, including Tammy.

"I am gonna die. Hit the brake, no the gas. Watch out for that tire." I came off the second lap and headed towards the intersection. Out of the corner of my eye I saw it flash in the sun. It was another car and it was heading straight at me.

"Go faster, I have to go faster. I'm gonna get hit. FLOOR IT." I felt a breeze as we missed each other by centimeters. My whole body shook. I couldn't believe this was happening. What was I thinking? I was almost killed.

As I entered the corner on my fourth lap, my head jerked back hard, and my helmet hit the back of my seat. Pain shot through my head and neck. I looked to my left and saw a car attached to my car.

"She hit me. The bitch ran into me. This is war." All my fear disappeared, I was mad. I took the next corner so fast that when I came off of it I ran over a tire.

"I hit a tire. Great. Reverse, must go in reverse." I blindly backed up into three oncoming cars. The all had to try to get around me and ended up running into each other.

"I knocked three cars out of the race with one move!!!" I was so excited I barely saw the white flag. It hit me like a ton of bricks, this was the last lap. I had to move quick.

"What place am I in? I have one lap left and I had better make it a good one." I swerved and tried to hit



## *My First Race*

the brake at all the right times. I kept the pedal glued to the floor as I crossed the finish line to a checkered flag.

I ended up placing third and winning \$50, but it wasn't about the money or winning, it was about the thrill. That was the most dangerous event I have ever participated in, and I lived through it. I raced a car at high speeds with dangerous curves. I actually did it. Getting on the track was more of an accomplishment than getting third. It made me realize that I had nothing to be afraid of. I had courage I never knew was there, and in one race, I found it. That courage has led me to try other new and somewhat dangerous events, some even downright stupid. Nothing, though, will ever give me the same feeling as my first race.



## *Rearview Recall*

*Shirley Craig*

The gray overcast skies released a misty rain as I steered the company vehicle west-bound along fir-lined Highway 18. As I approached the overpass of Highway 167, I realized the gridlock stretching up the steep hill ahead. The next exit was approximately one-half mile beyond the sea of red brake lights. I moved into the inside lane immediately behind the Washington State Patrol car, bringing the company-owned full-sized Buick to a complete stop.

Instinctively, I looked into the rearview mirror. Nothing but wet pavement, beautiful green firs and the distant silhouette of the Cascade Range appeared. To my right was another vehicle. Through the rain-streaked window of the door on my left, I surmised two feet of shoulder and a solid wall of concrete dividers separating the east-west-bound lanes of traffic. I knew that I was in a compromising situation, sitting still in the last vehicle in a line of cars on one of the deadliest highways in the state. The clock read 7:36. Normally, I would have checked into the office by that time. Lulled by the fall morning air, I began to regret the extra hour I had spent in bed.

I tuned the radio station to KIRO to hear the traffic report, realizing knowledge in itself would not offer a reprieve from my dilemma. Glancing back into the rearview mirror, uncomfortable as the last car stopped, I saw a truck approaching from a distance. The car remained on my right, the wall of concrete on my left, the state patrol vehicle in front of me. Another glance in the rearview mirror and I realized the oncoming truck had not slowed. Rapidly the distance between us narrowed. The exact sequence of events has long been forgotten. Fast approaching truck. Car on the right. Concrete on the left. I quickly pumped the brake pedal

in a frantic attempt to attract the approaching driver's attention. The patrol car ahead of me had altered its position. The front wheels of the state-owned vehicle were turned, angling the front of the patrol car toward the concrete wall. The patrol officer's car appeared to be touching the vehicle in front of it. I noticed the state license plate and the addition of visible pavement as a result of the increased distance between our vehicles. The repositioned patrol car was my reinforcement cue that impact was inevitable. Fear. Tension. Placing my entire body strength into the brake pedal and steering-wheel, I thought I might protect others if I maintained my vehicle's position.

I recall no sounds from the crash. No sudden jolts of movement. I held my head as if to keep the intense, pounding pain from decapitating me. I struggled with an extreme confused and dazed state of mind as I continued to hold my head in my hands. Greenery. Hill. Unfamiliar cars, scenery and people surrounded me. My 18-ounce latté sprayed throughout the interior of the car. Ashtray, missing. Blueprints, schematics, professional attaché contents scattered everywhere. Dazed. Confused. Trunk lid open. Patrol car rear end . . . smashed. Patrolman slowly approaching my vehicle. Firefighters. Broken questions and simple answers.

Everything seemed clouded to me: Married? Family? Employer? Illegally licensed vehicle.

"Single. Kids. Not my car. Just me and my kids."

The ringing in my ears continued to escalate. The uniformed man spoke into a cell phone. He was talking with someone from my office, yet the words were mostly inaudible to me. Hospital emergency room. Law officers asking fragmented questions of me as I was positioned between X-rays. The pressure behind my eyes

extended into my cheeks. A man in a white jacket picked up the chart from my bed, addressing me by "Mrs." followed by an unfamiliar name. I was frightened and alone. I learned that I was in a small community hospital located in Auburn, Washington.

"I need a cab. Please . . . help me. I . . . have . . . to . . . leave . . . now."

At home I felt safer. Alone. I wanted to be alone. Lie down—*rest*. I needed to go to work. I embraced the inviting, soft down-filled comforter across my bed.

The following day I could not lift myself out of bed. Pain had consumed the entire upper half of my body. The sound of my son in the kitchen startled me. I needed it to be *absolutely* quiet. Alone. *Leave me alone*. Swollen face, blackened eyes. Irrational behavior. Easily agitated. Hostile responses to simple intrusions. Confused. Unreasonable. My children were frightened by the sudden transformation in my personality. I felt internally discombobulated. Almost as if some entity had entered my body, transforming me from a nurturing mom into an agitated stranger; a successful career woman, I was suddenly incapable of making simple decisions.

In one careless brief passage in time, a stranger had forcefully entered my life. Helplessly, I had observed his speeding truck approaching from four-tenths of a mile. At the age of 38, who and what I was profoundly changed through one swift motion. **Doctors:** The count would exceed 32 in total. Each one with their own *opinion*. **Drugs:** steroids, muscle relaxants, Demerol, Doxepin, Prozac, to mention only a few. More doctors with more referrals to physical therapists, psychologists, TMJ specialists, surgeons, chronic-pain experts. **Diagnoses:** (Some accepted, others protested by insurance adjusters). Post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, obsessive-compulsive personality disorder, cognitive dysfunction, traumatic brain disorder, micro-traumatic brain disorder, severe cervical/ thoracic/ lumbar strain, bulging discs, TMJ. **Surgery.** Still more doctors added to

the exploding list of lawyers, employer representatives, insurance adjusters. My life careened out of control. Simple everyday tasks now demanded major decision-making mental processes of me. Days turned to months, then years. My career . . . gone. Ultimately, I became homeless—relocating my kids to live with my parents in the small city of Des Moines, Iowa. I remained in Seattle, literally homeless and alone. I had continued to believe that between the Self-Insured Division of the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries, (the watch-dogs of self-insured employers), liability of the third party insurance, (the self-employed truck driver's auto insurance carrier), or the ongoing claim with the Social Security Administration—that at least one of these governed systems would function and provide relief to my quandary. After several long nights, rest stops as my home, personal vehicle as my bed, I could no longer persevere. I made the 1,800-mile journey to my childhood home. The insurance companies continue to strategically minimize my injuries to ultimately reduce their losses through any future monetary compensation. Forty-one months later, I continue to struggle.

I have no face to visualize or relationship memories to recall with the stranger who forever changed my life. We lacked the social formalities and introductions. I want him to know my story. I imagine this stranger flourishing through life, each work morning making his drive on Highway 18 as I continue struggling, 1,800 miles from my now non-existent home, dependent upon my retired parents for shelter.

Does he laugh easily? Is he a nice guy? Do he and I share similarities or strong differences in our moral existence? In a brief moment a stranger profoundly and permanently changed my life as I comfortably knew it to be. No inquiries. No hint of apology. Continuing through his life he remains detached from what he inflicted upon me to face alone. An accident for him—a life-changing event for me.



## *The Final Hours of Glory*

*Justin Crouch*

There I was in my Dowling High School warmups, getting ready to swim in my final Iowa High School State Swimming meet. I thought that this moment would never come. As I reflected on my past State Swim meet appearances, I remembered how nervous and anxious I was to swim. The meet had just started and I didn't swim until the 100 yard butterfly, which was in the middle of the swim meet.

The first event was the 200 yard medley relay and they were at the blocks ready to start. The sound of the gun went off and all of the backstrokers raced off the blocks into the water. The 200 yard medley relay consists of 50 yards of backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly and freestyle. After the first 50 we were in fourth place. The fans and teams were cheering like crazy and after the breaststroke we were still in fourth place. Our butterfly jumped into the water and had a great start. He swam hard and after his length we were in third place. It was all up to our freestyler, who was one of the fastest in the state. He had to swim the fastest that he had ever swam before to catch the first two teams. Our freestyler had caught up and the first three teams were all neck and neck. At the finish Dowling High School finished a disappointing third.

I felt sorry for the relay. They had worked so hard and went into the meet as the top seed. I know they could have performed a lot better. Then my dad said, "Not a bad swim guys. Now listen up, we got a disappointing third place swim and now we need to make up a little ground. So let's do it!"

After he said that, I reflected all the way back to my freshman year when I wasn't supposed to make the State Swimming meet. Somehow I found a way and qualified. I remembered how nervous I was because not many

freshmen make the state meet. Then my sophomore year, I remembered how disappointed I was when I qualified but swam the worst meet of my life. Junior year the pressure didn't affect me as much but I didn't swim as well as I wanted to.

So now I was trying not to get too psyched out, but it is kind of hard with this kind of pressure on you. I was saying to myself, "You are going to swim the best meet of your life. You have worked hard since you started to swim at age five. The swimming gods owe you this."

By the time I was done reflecting, the 200 yard freestyle had just finished. We had two swimmers in that event. Johnny, who was a freshman, swam the best race of his life and finished fifth. While my good friend Josh had swam one of the worst races of his life and did not even place.

The swim meet had the same scene as the past three. It was being held at the University of Iowa Fieldhouse pool in Iowa City. The facilities there were the nicest in the state. It was a fifty meter, Olympic-sized pool. A bulkhead in the middle made a warm-down pool. The bulkhead would separate the warm-down pool at the twenty-five yard marker because that is the Iowa High School's length. The seating in the fieldhouse pool is about 5,000 people and when the meet started, people were shoulder to shoulder. The atmosphere is very hot and humid, like a hot July day in the middle of an Iowa summer. The water is so cold that it is like jumping into a lake for the first time in the spring. This place was loud and full of people cheering for their favorite swimmer or their favorite swim team.

I began to think about the team aspect of the sport. The West Des Moines Dowling Swimming Team had come up with quite a tradition. We had not received any

worse than a second place finish in the last seven years. This year's team had dominated all season long but after two events we were losing to another traditional powerhouse, Cedar Rapids Washington.

"This is my senior season." I thought while impatiently pacing up and down the pool deck. "I want to win this State Championship for myself but more importantly, I don't want to let my teammates down."

Not only for my team though; my father, who had been the Dowling High School swimming coach for ten years, had turned this program around. The first year my father was the coach, they didn't even have one qualifier. Now we were in the hunt for the state championship. "I don't only want to do it for myself and my teammates, but I want to do it for my father. He has let me pursue my dream and I want to do this for him." I was done pacing up and down the deck, now I was sitting down with a tear in my eye, finally realizing that this would be my last meet. "I can't believe that this is the last race I am going to swim in high school. Let's make this the best race of my life."

By this time we were at the break. The team race was really close. We were trailing Cedar Rapids Washington by nine points, 45 to 36. In swimming, that is a very close score. I could remember back to my freshman year when we placed second to Cedar Rapids Washington by six points in the closest state meet ever. "Wouldn't it be great if we beat Cedar Rapids Washington by a close margin; it would be a great ending to all of the seniors who were on the team as freshman," I thought preparing to jump into the warm up pool.

I was preparing to jump into the warm up pool with only about twenty minutes until my race. I finally got enough courage to jump in the water and with pure shock I screamed, "This water is freezing!" I swam laps and warmed up for my race which was coming closer and closer with each stroke I took.

As I finally finished my warm up, I jumped out of the pool and began walking towards my dad for a preswim pep talk. My dad talked with a little tear in his eye and said, "Well, Justin, this is it. How do you feel?"

I looked him straight in the eye with confidence and replied, "The stroke feels good and I have been in this position before. I am confident that I can swim the best race of my life."

"I am glad to hear it. It doesn't matter what happens, if you swim well then so be it. If you don't swim so well, you will have another shot in college. No matter what happens, Justin, I am proud of you." After he had said that he gave me a hug that I will never forget.

It was time for me to get behind my lane and get ready to swim. I began to walk over to the starting blocks and I could hear my teammates saying words of encouragement. "This is it." I thought nervously. "It's now or never."

I finally made it to the starting blocks. When I got behind lane number six, the announcer began to declare the final heat of the 100 yard butterfly. I wished the guys in lanes seven and five good luck. Then I heard the announcer again saying, "In lane number six from West Des Moines Dowling, Justin Crouch." There was a loud applause from the friends, families and fans for our swim team.

I felt this uncontrollable rush of adrenaline in my veins. I started to smile and jump up and down. Then the lead official spoke in a monotonous voice, "Quiet please. This is the third and final heat of the men's 100 yard butterfly. Swimmers please step up!" I stepped up and my nerves were really starting to get to me and I felt like I was going to throw up. "Swimmers and timers ready. Swimmers take your marks!" Then the loud noise of the gun went off.

I jumped off as far as Michael Jordan when he goes for a slam dunk. I was underwater in my streamline and peered over to see where the other swimmers were. I was right in the middle. I started in the fast pace that my father had wanted me to start with. I was breathing every other stroke and after the first twenty-five yards I was in second place. I went into my turn and I thought subconsciously, "There are only 75 more yards in my high school career, make it count."

The pack had closed in and after 50 yards it was anyone's race. I thought to myself "Whoever wants it the most is going to win the race." I was beginning to get tired because now we were heading into the third turn and the last 25 yards, which is the hardest 25 yards. After the third turn I was in fourth place and we were now heading into the home stretch. It felt like I was swimming the best race of my life.

"I am going to win, I am going to win!" I chanted the last 25 yards, although I was still in fourth place. I was making my move. I kept on looking at the leader when I breathed, trying to see how much further I had to go. He was finally in sight. The pack behind me was making a charge as well and everyone had touched the pad almost simultaneously.

We all turned and looked at the clock and my lane read Lane 6, time :54.36., place sixth. I was out of breath and I had no emotion. Although I had not won the race, I had swam my lifetime best and this was my highest finish at a state swim meet. I turned and looked

*The Final Hours of Glory*

at my dad, he gave me the thumbs up sign, and I knew that I had swam well.

Two hours had passed since I swam. The meet was over. We didn't quite get over the hump and got second place as a team. My father with pride in his

voice said, "This was the best team I have ever coached. I am so proud of everyone, especially you, Justin. No matter what anyone says, you should be proud of your performance."



## *PMS: Is It Real?*

*Lesla Seil*

*Crampy? Moody? Fatigued? Bloating? Headaches? Backaches? Acne?*

Do these symptoms happen to you? If so, maybe you are someone who suffers from Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS). PMS is not a disease nor an illness, yet it is not even a true syndrome. A syndrome is a group of symptoms that happen at the same time, that generates a consistent but predictable pattern from person to person. The symptoms of PMS vary from woman to woman, month to month. This does not mean that PMS is a myth; however, it's not an accurate description of the word syndrome (Witt 11).

Premenstrual symptoms do not usually occur in adolescents, rather they first develop while women are in their early twenties. Doctors believe that symptoms intensify when women reach their 30s, because the production of estrogen starts to decline, leading to greater fluctuations of serotonin (Gilbert 111). For the women out there who have to deal with suffering from premenstrual syndrome, let it be known that there are actually three types of PMS, the first being Premenstrual Change, (PMC) which entails one physical symptom, such as bloating. The second, which is what most women deal with, is the Premenstrual Syndrome, (PMS) where they have two or more symptoms, for example, headaches, cramps and moodiness. The last type is Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder, (PDD). Women with PDD experience at least five symptoms, like depression, anxiety, lethargy, and insomnia (Keton 88, 205). In a few rare instances, women have even felt suicidal while suffering from PMS (Gilbert 89). Still, with all of these symptoms that women suffer from, there is not an exact cause anyone can pinpoint as to why women do have PMS.

PMS has been around in the medical literature as early as the 1930s. It has even gained wide recognition and notoriety in the past two decades. This is due to the British murder cases that occurred in the early 1980s, where the defendants turned to PMS as an extenuating circumstance (Wartik 1). In the United States, a woman who had been charged with child abuse used PMS as her defense, and the case was dropped (Witt 168). Do all women have the notion of killing or harming someone when they are suffering from PMS? The answer is no, each woman is affected differently emotionally and physically the 7–11 days before menstruation. These cases are rare and very controversial in the minds of many people. There is insufficient medical documentation to even prove PMS causes the violent behavior they stated in their cases (Witt 169).

Although there may not be an explanation of why PMS does exist, some people believe it may be related to many different aspects, such as society, culture, and our biological and psychological make-up. Many doctors in the 1980s believed that PMS was caused by a hormonal imbalance. The female body produces such hormones as estrogen and progesterone. These hormones fluctuate every month, caused by either a deficiency or imbalance, which generate the symptoms of PMS. Estrogen aids in the developing and maintaining of the female reproductive organs. In the menstruation cycle, estrogen plays a key role in the maturation of the eggs. It was once believed that too much estrogen released during the post-ovulatory stage caused the symptoms of PMS. Progesterone is an essential hormone for the thickening of the uterine lining that prepares the body for preg-

nancy. The lack of progesterone was believed to bring about the symptoms of PMS (Witt 67).

Now in the 1990s, doctors believe that premenstrual syndrome is caused by women being extra sensitive to the effects of their hormonal fluctuations. They do not believe it to be from a deficiency or imbalance of the hormones, estrogen and progesterone. It seems to be that PMS has multiple causes, for example, serotonin imbalance. Serotonin is a chemical messenger of the brain that has been associated with depression, violent behaviors and sleep disorders. When women suffer from PMS, they have unusually low levels of serotonin in the body 10 days before menstruation (Wartik 3). The fluctuating levels of serotonin explain why women crave chocolate, salty snacks, and high carbohydrate foods while they are suffering from PMS. Carbohydrates work on increasing the brain's use of serotonin, which in turn helps the falling levels of the serotonin. Those late night runs to the store to get the chocolate cravings under control should be limited due to the caffeine content of chocolate. Other caffeine culprits including, tea, coffee, and soda pop, should be restricted during that time period, also. Caffeine should be very limited during the two weeks before your period; granted, it will not take away all your PMS symptoms, but it will decrease the discomfort of your symptoms (Witt 186).

Other causes of PMS include body chemistry, diet and stress. There are many experts who believe that the psychological factors and the woman's life stresses contribute to the premenstrual misery. Dr. James Chuong, director of the PMS program at Baylor University College of Medicine in Houston states, "If two individuals have the same degree of biochemical imbalance, but one woman has marriage or job problems, her symptoms will be more severe." "It's not that PMS is only a psychological problem, but the way a woman experiences it has to do with a combination of biological and situational factors" (Wartik 3).

Some of the best ways to help relieve the symptoms of PMS is to change your diet, start exercising, increasing your vitamin and mineral intake, or try

different ways to cut the stress from your life. There is no quick-fix remedy for treating PMS. Dr. John Renner, a board member at the National Council Against Health Fraud warns, "If they give you an immediate diagnosis or try to sell you a treatment program or special PMS products right away, go else where" (Wartik 4). Most women find that over the counter medicines do help along with exercising more.

Another way to help relieve the symptoms of PMS is by engaging in sexual intercourse. Sex during the premenstrual phase is a great way of relieving some of the tension and irritability. Some women believe that sex is best right before their periods; orgasms may be stronger and more fulfilling (Witt 190). Some women feel their sex drive increases a few days before menstruation. Orgasms have been known to greatly relieve tension all through the body, which would help decrease some of the stress in women's lives, emotionally, mentally and physically (Witt 149).

So is PMS real? Does it really exist? The answer is yes, but the exact causes are still not certain. Many people joke and tease about how they can tell when a woman is having PMS, but is it really a laughing matter? No, many women do suffer from PMS, and hopefully someday doctors will find an exact cause as to why PMS does exist.

### *Works Cited*

- 
- Gilbert, Susan. "Why It Gets Worse in Your 30s." *Redbook*. July 1995: 89+.
- Keton, Jeanette. "Is It PMS? PDD? Or Are You Just In A Really Bad Mood?" *Ladies Home Journal*. October 1995: 86+.
- Wartik, Nancy. "The Truth About PMS." *American Heath*. April 1995: 64.
- Witt, Reni L. PMS What Every Woman Should Know About Premenstrual Syndrome. *Stein and Day Publishers*. 1983.





## Phantasm

*(A distorted perception of reality, as perceived through the five senses.)*

*Cathy Zazveta*

The spring and summer of '95 is a better memory than it ever was living it. It was during this time that reality and normalcy were relative terms. I had unwittingly chosen to render myself incapable of distinguishing real life from phantasm. In late April I was "turned on" to methamphetamine and the enveloping roller coaster ride of a lifetime. It wouldn't be until I took a permanent vacation from crank that I understood and emphatically realized what I had voluntarily been reduced to.

There were various stages and infringements of realities that evidently are inherent of this sociopathic behavior producing drug. The initial stage of this nervous system stimulant, was no apparent alterations or distortions of reality as I knew it. From the first line the suffering began, although it was not noticeable at the time. I had in fact been seduced beyond my capable perception, after the first quarter gram. I felt invincible and in control. I had everything in order, was still functioning and being mommy and wife. I was essentially making more of my days while losing weight.

The longer I did crank the more erratic I became. I was not able to see the true effects of what this drug was really doing to me. In my mind there was nothing wrong with me, I just happened upon the newest diet revolution. I was losing massive amounts of weight quickly on this mood magnifying substance. I was naturally elated with this, so my consumption of crank continued with a passion.

My best friend and I were living together and doing crank together. The more crank we did, the less trusting and more freaked we became of each other. As time passed, it was more obvious to me that her problem with crank far out weighed mine. We had been friends

for eight years, so naturally I thought I knew her pretty well, at least until the introduction of crank. She turned into someone I didn't know or even like, all because of the mental influence of crank. When I wasn't home, she would search my room and go through my things, stealing anything of any value for drug resources. She routinely neglected her two kids, lied to them, and really had no vested interest in them. Seeing all of this was hard, confusing, and eye opening. Unfortunately, my eyes weren't opened enough.

The days were passing, the weight was dropping, and I was being lured deeper and deeper. My infatuation with crank had grown to enormous proportions. I had maintained throughout this time that I didn't have a problem, just a few more pounds to lose. I found myself bludgeoned with reality when my mother referred to me as a cancer victim. I wasn't sleeping or eating with any kind of regularity, sometimes going for as long as a week and a half. I had dark circles under my sunken in eyes, my cheekbones sickly chiseled my face, and I was resembling other more addicted users I knew. I had gone from a size sixteen to size four in less than two months. Everything I knew to be true, trustworthy, and stable, was dramatically and grossly altered. The inevitable strain was taking its toll on my mental well being, my daughter, and my failing marriage. My over-obsessiveness with my weight was about to reach the climax.

In August, the cops were busting dealers and "meth" labs with a passion. This was making crank expensive and scarce. Those loyal to it would use any resource and pay any price for it. My waking hours were consumed with determination to find my drug of choice. When my exhaustive efforts profited nothing, I fell into a depression. After about three weeks of no

crank and no luck, normalcy started slowly seeping in. I was beginning to see things in a less neurotic light, realizing the fullness and detrimental effects of agonizing relentless paranoia and distrust. When I finally stopped the pursuit of crank, I shortly thereafter lost the craving for it too. I never sought professional help for my drug problem, as I probably should have. It was a very hard habit to kick, because of the physiological addiction and seduction. Coming back from the throes of hell to see just how empty and degenerated I had become, was all the help I needed.

It's been three years since my love affair with "meth" ended. It was a compromising time in my life, with no semblance of mercy. There are still times that I am tempted to go buy some, especially in the spring months waiting for summer and bathing suits. I know crank is still a popular drug of choice, and with a little determination I could acquire it. I confidently say that I gain my restraint and steadfastness in the memory of my then meager existence, and that in itself is all the strength I need.



## *Though I Walk Through the Shadow*

*Bonnie Clinkenbeard*

Which way did God go? I've heard He's dead, or on vacation somewhere, or that He sits on His throne in heaven just waiting for a minuscule human being on earth to make a mistake, so He can zap the miscreant with lightening bolts. I don't know where these ideas come from, but they don't describe the God I know, the God who loves me.

Every human has a built in need to believe in something or someone that can control the things that they can't. Oh, the places we search for that ever elusive thing called belief. We search in the stores for "things" that will surely please us and give us something to hold on to, believing that having money and all the latest toys it can buy is what makes us secure. Or we have a drink, a joint, or a one-night stand because we believe these things will make the emptiness go away. They're all traps, like octopi that twine their tendrils around us so softly at first that they feel pleasant. As the tendrils tighten, they strangle us and leave us wondering what happened to the joy and security they used to bring.

Four years ago, my own nebulous belief was tested. After a recent heart attack, I walked along the side of the highway that ran past our house. The doctors had told me that exercise would be good for my heart, but they didn't know the things that were on my heart. I felt no doubt that my husband was having an affair, and this knowledge put me under so much stress that it wouldn't have been good for a healthy person. Regardless of what I did to show him that I loved him, nothing was changing except for the worse. As I walked along the highway with a heavy heart, I felt something snap within me, and I knew I couldn't carry the load alone any longer. I looked up and said, "Lord, there is nothing I can do about this situation. I'm giving this all to You to

do with as You see fit. I'm asking You to heal my marriage, but whatever You do, I'll accept."

Fourteen months later, eight weeks after another heart attack and triple by-pass surgery, when my husband told me that I had better find another place to live, I did as he requested. Some dear friends opened up their home and their hearts to me. They weren't looking for rent money; I didn't have any. All they wanted was for me to be warm, happy, and well-fed.

How could a loving, righteous God allow this to happen to me? During this time God made Himself more real to me than He had ever been before. He was always right there with me, taking care of my needs through friends and family. My insurance premiums were paid by my mother, while a sister sent me cash every month.

Most of my clothes were old and worn and I didn't have a lot of money with which to replace them. That summer I went to rummage sales four days a week and acquired a wardrobe that was astounding and didn't cost much more than one outfit from a store. I had gone to rummage sales for years but had seldom found anything I liked that was in my size. The odd thing is that after that one summer I, once again, find very few clothes at rummage sales that fit me and complement me. A coincidence? Perhaps, but I believe that God took care of my needs in His own special way.

I had a home and a closet full of clothes, but I had no idea what I was going to do with the rest of my life. I had been out of the job market twenty years, my health wasn't the best, and when I inquired about disability from the government, I was told I didn't qualify. The first part of June, on an impulse, I called the Newton Campus of DMACC. My daughter had attended this

campus earlier, and it was within easy driving distance of my home. If I was going to support myself, I knew I must have some kind of training, but I couldn't afford to pay my own way, so I asked Jane "The Financial Aid Lady" about school financing. She sent me a Financial Aid application which I filled out and mailed back in, but knowing how slow the government can sometimes be, I doubted if the application would be approved. I thought, "If the papers are approved, it will be a miracle." They were approved. Once again, God had put me right where He wanted me, and when He wanted me there.

My divorce became final on August 27, 1996, and I started college August 28th. I was thrown into a new world before I had caught my breath from being rudely pushed out of the old familiar one. I jumped into school head first. Just finding my way around the building was troublesome at first, not to mention my new classes, the most frightening of which was COMS 181, an introductory computer course. I had always said I didn't like computers and had no interest in learning to use them, but there I was, typing on a computer, and highlighting and deleting, and cutting and pasting. All of this tumultuous activity helped me keep my mind off the past with its attendant regrets. Again, I believe I see the hand of God.

At school, I was forced into meeting new people. For years I had mostly interacted with my family and my extended family. There were so many people to become acquainted with, I hardly knew where to start. When I met Celia, I felt as if I had known her all my life. Since she drove from Knoxville each day, and I drove from Monroe, it seemed only sensible that we should ride together because we had almost identical schedules that first semester. Celia drove most of the time in winter, which was fine with me. I hate winter driving, and I am almost pathologically afraid of driving on ice. Was this another example of God providing for my needs? I think so.

God hasn't put my marriage back together, at least not yet, but He has been with me every step of the way. There isn't any sorrow I can't share with Him, no request that I can't make. Like a loving parent, God does not always give me what I want because in His infinite wisdom, He knows what is good for me and what is not, but He always gives me what I need, lovingly and on time. Because I know that I can always depend on God to take care of me, I am a truly happy person, even when I'm going through the shadows.



## *Guardian Angels*

*Michael Roberts*

We are carefully speeding through traffic to assist a child with breathing difficulty. With 50 emergency lights twinkling, gyrating, and bursting with color, I look like a rolling fireworks display. The hysterical pinging of my siren has the unintentional effect of increasing my speed.

There is an intense urgency about this call. Respiratory problems can kill kids. By the time children's strong yet fragile bodies begin to show signs of distress, they usually have developed a life-threatening condition.

Suddenly a car makes a turn in front of me. I brake to avoid a collision, and sound my horn as a warning to my passengers in back. I often wonder what people are thinking when they cut me off in traffic. How important would those lost seconds be if it were their loved one I was racing to help? Is saving a minute really more important to them than another's life? Are these people so caught up in their personal existence that they cannot see the real world? There will be time later to ponder these questions; I cannot let them distract me now.

We enter the neighborhood just minutes after receiving the call. I slow down, and our attention is diverted to scanning for any possible dangers. There is a young woman waving frantically to us from the porch of a house up ahead. She is holding a four- to five-year-old boy on her lap.

Jerry leaps out my back door as I pull to a stop. Within seconds he is crouching down slightly lower than the boy. "Hi, I'm Jerry," he says with a toothy smile. "I'm with the ambulance. What's your name?" "Jake," the young woman answers for the boy. Jerry has already taken the boy's wrist gently in his hand and

found a pulse. He has also observed the boy's cool, clammy skin and rapid, labored breathing.

Jerry looks at the woman and asks, "What seems to be the problem?"

"I'm baby-sitting Jake today," she says. "He was playing in the garage and started to cry. I called you because he's breathing funny and he says his tummy hurts."

Jerry slides his hand under the youngster's shirt and feels Jake's stomach as he asks, "When are Jake's parents due back?"

"They won't be here until five-thirty," she answers with a tremor in her voice. "What's wrong with him? Is he all right?"

"I think Jake has gotten too hot; we need to cool him off," Jerry calmly explains. "He should go to the hospital. Is that all right with you?" The woman nods her consent, which we must have before treating and/or transporting a patient.

Jerry wastes no time moving the boy onto the cot in the ambulance. The required history and vital signs can wait. Cooling the child down is the immediate need. We put ourselves en route to the hospital just seven minutes after being dispatched.

In the back, Jerry has taken Jake's clothing off, administered oxygen, and is applying cool, damp towels to the boy's abdomen to ease the cramping. He also cranks up the air-conditioning and fans the boy. We pull up to the emergency room door 14 minutes later with an active child who is playing with the stuffed dog Jerry has given him. This patient will recover just fine, but could easily have gone the other way.

As I travel back to the station, my orange-and-blue Star of Life and Advanced Life Support insignia proudly

displayed on my sides, I catch the look of curiosity from people as they watch us pass. I sense they feel secure, yet perhaps a bit anxious, when they see me.

It is Friday afternoon and the fire station's garage door is wide open. This is where I usually park myself, just inside the door, to idly watch the flow of activity on the street outside. It is a stifling ninety-three degrees outside with a slight, wispy breeze that bathes me in its steaminess. We could be busy today. This sweltering weather is dangerous. It can rapidly cause heat exhaustion, and it also brings out the volatility in people. Quick tempers can cause vehicle accidents, violence, and just plain stupid behavior.

The alarm tones jolt me to readiness. The EMTs come running from the station's kitchen. Jerry will lead this response. He radios confirmation to the dispatcher and jumps up front. Karen and Jeff buckle up in the back. My motor, lights, and siren explode to life—I am a well-oiled machine, ready to navigate the impending obstacle course on the street.

When the tones go off, adrenaline snaps the EMTs' bodies into quick and deliberate action, but at first their thoughts can only form questions. It is the 'fight or flight' reflex. Several minutes later their minds will catch up with their bodies. The adrenaline continues to pulse through their veins, as the EMTs try to visualize the scene they will encounter. This helps them prepare equipment—and themselves—for what they *might* find.

We are responding to a call for an intoxicated man bleeding from a wound to his head. His wife reported that he fell and hit his head on a table. Intoxicated is the word that provokes anxiety in the EMTs. Although law enforcement has not been officially dispatched, officers will move to the vicinity. As we near the residence, we scan for threats.

When my door opens, we hear arguing coming from inside the house. As a precaution, Jerry radios for police backup. The medics will not enter the house until told it is safe to do so. Moments later a squad car appears. The officer hears the shouting and, knowing the drill, cautiously approaches the door. Standing to one side, he pounds on the door and announces, "Police!"

A woman, in tears, opens the door. After a brief conversation with her, the officer motions for the EMTs.

I am left outside, unhappily, to curiously ponder the situation inside. Occasionally, I am offered a glimpse from radio communications, or when one of the crew comes to retrieve additional equipment.

The officer and EMTs have been in the house less than three minutes when the officer radios for backup and an additional ambulance. 'What is going on,' I wonder with alarm. The call was for a single patient. Is one of my crew injured?

The second ambulance arrives shortly after the police backup does. Karen and Jeff emerge from the house with a little girl on the cot. One of the officers is walking beside them, holding an IV bag. The woman who answered the door is behind them, still in tears. Then Jerry and the other officer appear, leading a handcuffed man with a bandaged head.

The man is placed in the other ambulance. Karen and Jeff lift the little girl into my back and secure the stretcher. Jerry buckles in the still-sobbing woman up front in the passenger seat, and climbs in back to be with the little girl. It is then that I see the grave anguish exuding from my crew.

As I pull away from the curb, Jerry radios the Emergency Department to prepare for a critically injured 4-year-old female. He informs them, as he chokes back tears, that she is a victim of physical abuse. Then, unable to contain his fierce outrage any longer, he spews, "and the son-of-a-bitch that did it is coming in one-fifteen." (Meaning the man was en route in ambulance 115.)

I am horrified when the medics expose the little girl. The youngster's belly is a massive dark purple-blue bruise, with some yellowish brown color telling of past torture.

Jeff, with jaw pulsing and teeth clenched in anger, gently examines the girl from head to toe. Karen is perched at the girl's side, holding her hand and lovingly stroking her hair. Karen is unable to contain her tears as they fall softly onto the pillow that cradles the tot's head.

When we arrive at the hospital, twice the normal complement of physicians and nurses are on hand to care for the child. For now, at least, the little girl is safe. The attending hospital staff will endeavor to keep her that way.

On the trip back to the station, the medics huddle in back, drained from the emotional turmoil they just endured. They speak quietly about the little girl appearing in the doorway, bent over and moaning, and about the sick, horrified look on Karen's face as she discovered the injury. Something about that look made the mother snap, as if she saw the reality of her situation for the first time. The guilt-ridden woman told the officer that she and her daughter were being brutalized by the father.

## *Guardian Angels*

"I requested a Critical Incident Debriefing Session," Jerry informs the others. They nod in agreement, knowing the counseling session will begin their healing process, but also knowing that scars will remain forever.

EMTs *will not* ignore child abuse or neglect. They have a legal 'Duty to Act.' More importantly, they feel a strong moral obligation to act as guardian angels for life's little newcomers.

Back at the station, I am parked in my stall, sanitized, and put back in service. The EMTs have gone, but I am not alone. I share my silent preparedness with my cousins—the tanker, the ladder, and the pumper. Behind me sits ambulance 115, my younger sibling.

At night, when the crew has departed, we talk about our day. We hear about rescues—and sometimes

deaths—from fire, accident, and illness. About the tragedy that in a split second can change a person's life forever. About the miracle of birth that answers to no one and follows its own schedule, in the hospital or not. About our purpose, and that of our crew, to be there when needed, to make a difference where we can, and to soothe those left behind if our attempts are in vain.

### *Acknowledgments*

---

I would like to thank Charles White for his critique and suggestions during our workshop.



## *The Ocean in Iowa*

### *Scholarship Essay*

*Heather Jones*

The closest thing to the ocean in Iowa is located on the third floor of the Central Campus building, an extension of Des Moines Public Schools that specializes in advanced placement and career-oriented classes. No where else can one pet a shark, let a cleaner shrimp “clean” one’s hands, or view the thousands of species of coral and marine life, all without taking a plane.

As I ascend the three flights of stairs and start down the hall towards the Marine Biology room, I can already start to smell the unique odor of a mixture between formaldehyde and decaying fish. Upon entering the main room, which is also the lab, I am nearly knocked down by it.

The back half of the huge lab consists of four rows of back-to-back aquariums varying in size from 800 gallons to tiny fishbowls growing aquatic plants. From them emits a soft purple incandescent light; it fills the whole room and gives everything around it the same purple glow. The already brightly colored fish appear neon underneath these grow-lights that hang from the ceiling above each aquarium.

Each of the four tall walls are wallpapered with charts and posters of corals, various species of fish, whales, dolphins, penguins, and other marine life. Visions of these posters, as well as the 200 plus salt water aquariums, send a visitor of the lab straight to the ocean.

The majority of the lab is cluttered, and despite its already large size, it seems there is not enough room for all the equipment and supplies it holds. Trays of crushed coral waiting to be rinsed before lining the bacteria beds of the tanks surround each of the four sinks. Power heads, filter parts, and air hoses lie on the tables that hold the aquariums. There are garbage-can sized barrels on wheels full of water blocking several rows; some are

marked “waste water” and the others “fresh water” prepared for water changes that are done daily by the 40 marine biology students.

Each student is assigned from one to three tanks, depending on the size of the tanks, the difficulty involved in maintaining them, and also the experience of the individual student. Each row of aquariums is crammed with high school juniors and seniors engaged in activities such as testing the water quality, cleaning and maintaining the tanks’ many parts, and feeding their creatures.

“The first thing we do when we come in is feed them,” remarks Stacie, a second-year student, as she peels the shell and pulls the tails off of pieces of raw shrimp. “That usually consists of shrimp, squid, silver-sides, and frozen cubes of food for the vegetarians.” She gestures to a 30-gallon tank, and the flat, bright yellow four-inch disc-shaped fish that’s in it. The yellow tang swims greedily back and forth, waiting for his share of a meal.

Stacie’s tank, a 55-gallon, holds a nine-inch long puffer fish who, unpuffed, measures five inches in diameter; it also contains an emperor angel fish with bright orange and red stripes, almost as large. As she drops the pieces of shrimp in, the angel fish lunges right away while the porcupine puffer waits for it to come to him. Just when I think he’s missed it, he jolts for it violently and with one gulp the shrimp is gone.

Another student in the back of the room is struggling with a stubborn sea apple—a brainless, spineless, red and purple vegetable-looking creature that resembles a squash.

“Sea apples like to cling to things, but if he keeps clinging to the heater, he’ll kill himself.” Kelle peels him



off as he shrivels to defend himself, and he reveals that his skin has already been burned. The wound does not seem to be serious, and in a few moments, the creature is back to his normal apple size.

In the front of the room there are rows of tables, sinks, and dissecting supplies. Groups of students huddle among the tables, some wearing gloves while some braver ones are not. The groups are leaning over wax dissecting trays containing purple squids with their innards exposed, and their rubbery skin is pinned down on the wax. The students' goals are to locate and identify the parts of the squid, as well as state their function. A different animal is dissected about once a week, ranging from perch to sharks to crabs to sea urchins.

This could account for the formaldehyde smell, since all of the species to be dissected are kept in the dissection room. A small closet-like room off of the main lab, it looks like something straight out of a science fiction movie. There are rows of shelves filled with jars of dead organisms floating in preserving liquid. They contain jellyfish, anemones, small octopi, hydroids, and one particularly creepy specimen marked "ratfish." Tightly lidded buckets stacked on the floor and labeled things like "turtle," "shark," "stingray," "perch," and "urchin"; all are awaiting to be dissected by some aspiring marine biologist.

Next to the dissection room in a corner by itself is the second largest tank in the room: a five hundred gallon acrylic, containing three sharks. One of these characters is an overweight wobbegon, also known as a carpet shark, appropriately named "Butterball." The wobby is normally stationary and doesn't even need to move to be fed. Tongs are used to lower the smelt—a small, silvery fish—and the wobbegon will usually eat ten if he is allowed to. Swimming around constantly is "Joon," a smaller torpedo-shaped, classic looking leopard shark. Not yet full grown, she is only two feet long but will someday reach four. The most intriguing and gentle of the three is the blind banded cat shark. "Benny" was born with no eyes, and in their places are empty sockets. The tank's owner gently caresses his side as he swims toward the top, occasionally bumping his snout on coral or other obstacles. Although he has no eyes, he is usually able to sense objects in front of him using the electricity-sensitive pores in his head to guide him, but sometimes he is not so accurate.

Benny has not been feeling so well and has ceased to eat on his own. The students have overcome this by providing daily tube-feedings of meat-flavored baby food. Requiring three people, one will lure Benny to the

top, his gills and mouth barely under water. He thrashes about, and it is taking all the strength the student has to keep him relatively still. Another student uses a quarter-inch clear, flexible tube (an air hose from a tank) and a needleless syringe to suck the baby food up the hose, being very careful not to let air bubbles in which could give the shark painful gas. When the tube is full, the end opposite the syringe is slowly and delicately worked into the shark's mouth, down his esophagus, and into his stomach. A push on the syringe gives Benny the nutrients he needs to live, although he may have objections; the whole process seems very traumatic to the blind shark.

In the opposite corner of the lab from the shark tank is the "morgue": an oversized deep freezer where all the dead animals go. The most recently dead is a black and white clown fish; it appears to still be wet. Once the dead animals are sufficiently frozen and preserved, they can be pulled out anytime to serve as models to the learning students. If the teacher wants to talk about the features of the filefish, she'll pull out old "Bob" from the freezer and display him to the class.

In stark contrast to the mess and chaos of the lab is the attached lecture room. It is a quiet place where students can study, and where everything is neat and organized and in its place. Books on marine biology fill the back wall of shelves, along with a National Geographic collection going all the way back to 1971.

The lecture room is where Dr. Karen Murphy, the marine biology program's teacher and coordinator, spends most of her time. Not only does she have the teaching duties of other educators, she spends countless hours preparing to take sixty or more people on the annual Florida Ecology Trip every spring. "When one trip is over, it's time to start planning for the next one. The work never ends."

When Dr. Murphy is asked how she does all this and still manages to keep the tanks and lab running smoothly, she attributes the room's success to the students.

"After the first two weeks, the room is run solely by them. They need very little help from me in there," she says, with a smile of admiration.

"The dedication of these students is remarkable." She tells of a time when there was a power failure, and the room was in an emergency state. She and the students worked the entire Saturday returning the tanks' temperatures to normal, saving the lives of hundreds of fish.

"When we receive shipments of fish, it is the students who come in at ten-thirty at night and stay

*The Ocean in Iowa*

until each creature is secure in his own home, which sometimes that until three in the morning. Many kids will often come in early before class and stay late in the evening when I go home. Graduated students will often return from time to time to help out and still be a part of it all.”

The Marine Biology room obliges many excited visitors, all of whom are curious about this ocean in the middle of Iowa. They are given tours by the students and leave in awe; the uniqueness of the room and the exotic life that flourishes in it leave them with a feeling of having just left the coast.



## *Exposure?*

*Frank Holmes*

In nineteen eighty-nine, I signed my name to an Army contract with the intention that I would never see war and its devastating results. I served seven months during the Persian Gulf War in the Army's cellular phone network system. At one point in the war, my communications unit was twenty miles from Baghdad and I missed two warning signs that suggested that my unit was in a biological area. I was trained to recognize a biological environment by its lack of wildlife, because even insects or animals can't breathe or live in an area that has been contaminated with disease-producing germs. As a result, I received a mysterious syndrome that causes colon complications, chronic fatigue and diarrhea.

When it came to the ground war, one node center (main telecommunications switch) had to be a primary node center for the frontline. This node had to be set up ahead of the front, that way the coalition could talk to each other as they advanced. My platoon fielded this new high-tech communications and the thirty people in my node were selected for the primary.

It was a dangerous situation, fighting an invisible enemy in the middle of the Syrian Desert. The sand was like a mirror reflecting the hundred and ten degree temperatures. The biological area was waiting for the primary node. The warning signs were there, but hard to identify.

### *THE WARNING SIGNS*

Twenty miles from Baghdad, the node center became exposed to biological germs. It only made sense that Saddam would set a biological trap behind his

troops and so close to Baghdad. The node was in the area only four hours.

The platoon sergeant ordered six of us lower ranking individuals to put the medium tent and set up all the cots. Once the tent was erected, the six of us went inside to eat our M.R.E.'s, or Meals Ready to Eat. It felt good to be in the shade, but we were eating without any flies bothering us. It was the only time we ate without the flies and that should have told us something.

I knew that the tent would take it out of me so I grabbed two M.R.E.'s for lunch. As I ate my first one, I realized that my second one was going to be consumed by a co-worker, two cots over. My Army buddy claimed it belonged to him.

The M.R.E. ended up in a heated discussion and grew into a fist fight. We were both standing our ground, like a warrior in the heat of a bloody battle. It wasn't like either one of us to act this way. What was happening?

The biological warfare was in the sand. As we threw up the tent, we kicked around the sand. We exposed our digestive system by eating in an enclosed area with microgerms infecting the air. Our bodies were trying to reject something that we couldn't see and our minds were turning to madness. The chaos should have been a clear warning sign.

### *MYSTERIOUS SYNDROME*

I was hospitalized with colon complications at the Des Moines VA and the doctors gave me an undiagnosed illness. Since the end of the Gulf War, over twenty-one thousand Gulf War vets have been hospitalized for various ailments. I have been recently diagnosed with a

bacterial skin infection. Many vets have reported symptoms such as headaches, fevers, chronic fatigue, diarrhea, joint pain, memory loss, rashes, muscle spasms and irritability. I have had all these symptoms, plus my colon problems and often wonder if the experimental vaccine did its job against the invisible enemy. (Dyhouse 26, 27)

### *AN EXPERIMENTAL VACCINE*

Two weeks before the node center entered Iraq and then twenty miles from Baghdad, we were sent to a medical tent for a shot in the arm. The medical tech told us that was an anthrax vaccine that veterinarians take all the time back in the states.

Most of us soldiers at my node had feared that this vaccine was experimental, but we all signed our contracts that had a two-sentence clause that allows the government to experiment during wartime. The Pentagon revealed in 1996 that eight thousand troops were injected during the war. (Dyhouse 26)

### *MEDICATIONS*

I think about being twenty miles from Baghdad and how I deal with my syndrome on a daily basis. Are they connected? All I know is that I take one folic acid and eight sulfasalazine for my digestive system each day. I take a shower with a special soap, along with two more pills and a cream for my bacterial infection. My best medicine is something the Army taught me. That is to fight to stay alive and let nothing stand in the way of my goals, especially when it comes to school which is why I joined the Army.

### *Works Cited*

---

Dyhouse, T. (1998, February). Newest Generation of War Vets Emerge from PERSIAN GULF. Veterans of Foreign Wars, 85 20–27.



## *A Legacy*

*Teresa Shaffer*

*Jeannine Shultz is a breast cancer survivor who came to one of my classes at DMACC in Ankeny, Iowa to tell her story. The Des Moines Register previously had done a story about her survival of a mastectomy (removal of the breast).*

When the Des Moines Register printed Jeannine Shultz's story on surviving breast cancer and a mastectomy I remember thinking how I wish it would have been printed sooner, when I had been going through my own experience. When the article came out, I used it as a tool to discuss with my daughter the issue of being a woman: what it meant for her to be born into our family a woman; the things she would have to make herself aware of as she developed into an adult. My daughter was eleven at the time. She may have been a little young to understand but I know she will remember our conversation, which is more than what I had with my own mother.

When Jeannine Shultz came to our class to talk of her survival and the coping with the deadly condition of breast cancer, I could feel emotions from when I dealt with a similar situation come back. I wanted to tell Jeannine how brave I think she is for being able to tell her story so that people are aware of what they should do and to be an inspiration to those who are faced with a similar situation, but it was difficult to talk through the tears and the tightness I felt in my throat. All I could say was "Thank you."

My daughters always ask me where the scars on my breasts came from. I can remember my youngest, age 9 now, used to think that they came when I had her. This was one misconception I had to deal with right away. I had to explain to them what happened to me. When I

was only 24 years old (my youngest was 2), I felt a lump on my breast that wasn't supposed to be there. The doctors had to cut the lumps out and test them to see if they had cancer in them, this is called a biopsy. This sparked many questions all of which I answered as truthfully as I could. The answers must have been enough of what they wanted to hear because they haven't said any more about the scars since, only to ask once in a while if they hurt me.

I remember being terrified when the doctor couldn't get anything out of the lump as he stuck a needle in it; he informed me that a biopsy needed to be done. The day that I was going to have surgery I noticed another lump on the other side, same place (a mirror of the other breast). They did a double biopsy on me that day and sent it to be analyzed. They sent me home to wait for the results.

Discovering the lump two weeks before my yearly exam, I watched them carefully as they changed and got bigger. They had reached about the size of a small bottle cap by time I had my biopsy. My doctor sent me to a surgeon and the next week I had an appointment to see him. During that week I also had been informed by my first doctor that my other tests had come back showing cancer and I needed to go in for an out-patient surgery to get rid of the precancerous cells that had formed in my cervix. We had discussed in his office my desire to not have anymore children, so he would do a tubaligation (a procedure to prevent ever having children), at the same time. Everything was happening so fast to me that all of the small details seem like a blur now. It hurt and I was terrified; I remember that detail for sure. I empathized with Jeannine when she talked about her

pain and fear. I am lucky, though, because my biopsy came back negative and my cancer cells haven't returned.

I tell both my girls how important it is for them to know what their own bodies feel like so that they can detect differences when they occur. Fibrocystic breasts (natural lumps) run in my mother's side of the family. My mother had a hysterectomy (a procedure to take out the uterus) due to cancer of the cervix. I didn't find out most of what I know now about my family history until after my own surgery. My mother's idea was that it was her own problem, she would deal with it herself and everything would just be fine, so she never told anyone about her conditions. In some ways I am very angry for that. I can make it different for my daughters by telling them everything they need to know about their family medical history, what genes have been passed down to them and what to watch out for.

There have been arguments that caffeine can lead to changes in the fibroids of the breast. I have experimented with this fact because I know that my caffeine intake had increased in the year just before my surgery. I

needed energy for the two busy babies I had to constantly chase at home. I had discovered the wonderful effects of coffee and Mountain Dew. Nobody (no doctor) told me this could possibly be why I had seen a change in my breasts because it hasn't been scientifically proven. But everyone I talk to now that has the same condition as me sees the same changes. Although I can't say that I wouldn't have had to get a biopsy, this makes me a little suspicious. My caffeine intake has decreased dramatically since then. I must tell my daughters to watch the things that they eat and the amount of caffeine that they consume as well.

Going through these experiences did not change the identity of who I am but only made my identity stronger. It has made me realize that the person whom I have become is developed into a much stronger individual to help educate my daughters in a way that I wish my mother had done with me. I hope that I have conveyed to my daughters, through explanation of what I had gone through, what it means to be a woman in our family.



# *In The Aftermath of Violence: Meeting The Challenge of Letting Go and Living In The Present*

*Patrice Galm-Harson*

- *You'll never make it without me.* (Ignorance)
- *I didn't hurt you that bad.* (Minimizing)
- *You must have liked it to stay in the situation so long.* (Stigmatization)
- *You are so worthless.* (Cruelty)
- *Get up, there's nothing wrong with you!* (Denial)
- *Allowing me to beat and control you proves to me how much you love me.* (Influence of culture)
- *That happened almost twenty years ago! If you really cared about me, you'd quit sulking and just get over it.* (Disbelief, Discounting)

Many suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder have heard these words, or words much like them, at some time in their lives. This ignorance and insensitivity, termed secondary wounding by mental health care professionals, is exactly what keeps victims, victims (Matsakis 80-91). Many believe this diagnosis is reserved for combat soldiers; however, civilians who have survived a traumatic event are often plagued by distressing memories, flashbacks, and nightmares, as well (Allen 1).

Post-traumatic stress disorder (or PTSD) is an anxiety disorder that was recognized by the American Psychiatric Association in 1980, but its history goes back to ancient Greece. In 490 B.C., Herodotus recorded that one warrior after viewing the death of a

soldier was permanently blinded through trauma alone (Matsakis 6).

According to the American Psychiatric Association, PTSD can develop in the aftermath of natural disasters such as earthquakes or tornadoes, rape, assault, airplane crashes, domestic abuse and vehicular accidents. Symptoms of PTSD can occur up to 10 years following a traumatic event and appears twice as often in women as in men (Bower 422).

According to the *DSM-IV*, a diagnostic handbook used by mental health professionals, several criteria must be met in order to be diagnosed with PTSD. These requirements include experiencing or witnessing at least one traumatic event, plus the following: cognitively reexperiencing the trauma (dreams and/or nightmares), sudden, emotional and vivid recollections of the trauma (flashbacks), subsequent attempts to bury the memories and the feelings associated with the trauma (numbing and avoidance), and symptoms of hyperalertness or hyperarousal (fight-or-flight reaction and/or freeze reaction) (Matsakis 8).

PTSD can be classified as either full-blown or partial, depending on the severity and number of legitimate symptoms experienced. PTSD then is classified into one of three categories: mild, moderate, or severe. A sufferer's religious beliefs, cultural background, and individual perception of the traumatic event can all determine into which category the sufferer is placed (Matsakis 22).

In severe PTSD, the traumatic experiences are prolonged and repeated, sometimes over several years. War veterans, survivors of the Holocaust, prisoners-of-war or those trapped in long-term abusive relationships fall into this category (Allen 2).

Many who suffer from PTSD also run a greater risk of developing anxiety and/or depression. Technically, this depressive state is called “dysphoria” or “feeling bad.” Sufferers are commonly thrown into high arousal (anxiety) and then plummeted into the depths of depression. Some of the symptoms of depression include a loss of concentration, a lack of energy and/or desire, a feeling of hopelessness, and a sense of failure (Allen 13–15). Margaret, who was abused as a child, commented on those feelings:

It's not fashionable to lack self-confidence these days. Our society likes winners, not losers, and if you aren't brimming with self-esteem you're seen as a loser who's not worth hiring or dating. Try feeling inferior on a job interview and see how far it gets you. (qtd. in Matsakis 29)

Jon G. Allen, Ph.D., states that the judgments we make about ourselves can either be objectively accurate or they may be overly positive or negative. But always, “self-esteem invariably takes a beating with trauma.” Allen also believes that it is possible to regain control through treatment and that the confident self can be successfully reclaimed (17–18).

Another side effect of surviving trauma is dissociation. Although dissociation is currently a controversial issue with mental health care professionals, many emergency room personnel have witnessed this altered mental state in frightened car accident victims who never lost consciousness. These people can remember, for example, driving down their lane but are unable to recall the events immediately leading up to or following the accident. In PTSD victims, this experience is often translated as lost time or “feeling far away” (Allen 31–32).

This “shut-off” mechanism proved quite useful for the victim in the midst of trauma. The pain and suffering once experienced first-hand by the trauma victim was too much to endure. Rather than going unconscious, the brain went on a protective, sometimes lifesaving, hiatus. The drawback to this occurrence is the possibility that certain triggers may cause an uninvited and most inconvenient return to oblivion.

When terror becomes so strong that it is no longer an effective survival tool, this “pathological form of anxiety” takes on a life of its own through seemingly

innocent triggers (panic attacks). In a *Discover* magazine article titled “Kernel of Fear,” Mark Caldwell reported, “As one (veteran) was leaving the church on his wedding day, a car backfired. The war was 25 years and a world away, but he still ran for cover” (qtd. in Caldwell 98). It is now believed that an almond-shaped structure in the brain, called the amygdala or, in simpler terms, the startle control center of the temporal lobe, can relate fear via primitive, nerve linkages beyond our conscious control. This theory offers an explanation of why flashbacks occur under otherwise harmless conditions.

Extensive research is yet to be done and no medication presently appears on pharmacy shelves to correct this unnecessary terror induced by the brain. However, scientists hope to someday unlock the mysteries of the amygdala and discover medications that will help those suffering from even the most severe symptoms of PTSD (Caldwell 98–100). Until that day arrives, those diagnosed with some severe forms of PTSD and many with less potent symptoms have found relief through therapy. Keeping in mind that the client's safety is of the utmost importance, therapists assist normalcy through self-soothing grounding techniques and integration.

Recalling traumatic memories under hypnosis is not routinely recommended by mental health care professionals. It is questioned whether or not the memories revealed under hypnosis are actually true memories. Also, many PTSD sufferers cannot be hypnotized because they are unable to let their guard down long enough to be influenced into this state of altered consciousness. In some cases, memories are better left buried. The human mind could collapse if forced to recall such tragedies. Victims of the Holocaust or extreme violence would fit into this category. More often practiced are relaxation techniques that help the survivor reach a soothing state while recounting past abuse.

One form of this technique sufferers find helpful in derailing flashbacks is to silently concentrate on the environment around them. Subjects concentrate on five things they can see, five things they can hear and five things they can feel. If successful, the subject remains in the present and the would-be panic attack is curtailed. Relaxation, exercise, meditation, and biofeedback also help to “re-establish a sense of self-control” and well-being. Also, antidepressants, anti-anxiety drugs and other medications are available to aid those requiring pharmaceutical treatment (Allen 52).

The healing process for PTSD sufferers and their loved ones often involves a great deal of patience and time. During the beginning of treatment, PTSD



symptoms may even increase or intensify, and it is crucial that the support of professionals and, preferably, compassionate family and/or friends is close by. The freedom to gradually uncover and then gently tuck away unpleasant memories must never be taken from those recuperating from past trauma. The goal is to transfer the energy once spent suppressing painful memories into appreciating a present filled with new possibilities (Matsakis xvii–xx).

This transformation also requires a tremendous amount of honesty and self-discipline. Empathy and helpful suggestions can be found while utilizing group therapy. Crying, jogging, bicycling, and walking are all helpful coping strategies. Once stable, many diagnosed with PTSD find purpose and solace through volunteering their time to organizations actively combating violence through crime control or domestic abuse shelters. Journaling is also an effective method of getting the hurt out of one's system (Levin).

Relearning trust is often the biggest obstacle faced by those in recovery. The client must feel safe. This is no easy task for those who have been physically abused and/or abandoned. However, once this relationship is forged, it is more likely that the survivor will be able to form closer relationships while trusting those found outside the therapy door (Allen 47).

Even those inexperienced in trauma find it difficult to grieve. To move through the grieving process successfully, each individual needs to expose his or her anger created by the loss that's been set before that individual. However, if handled properly, accepting losses can instill an appreciation of life . . . not to mention the physical benefits experienced when letting go of anger, guilt and shame (Matsakis 195–201).

Just as detrimental is self-blame and survivor guilt. Being overpowered or having the misfortune of being a victim of circumstance are not good reasons to remain

stuck in the muck of helplessness. Victims do not become survivors by continuously looking back and overanalyzing the trauma. Nor does having an I-should-have-been-Wonder-Woman-or-Superman mentality change what has occurred or provide the healthy outlook required in meeting the daily challenge of letting go and living in the present (Matsakis 175–176).

Those who are diagnosed with PTSD are not crazy. Their symptoms are not imagined nor are they a desperate plea for attention. The symptoms that taunt them are, however, normal reactions “developed in perfectly normal people who have undergone life-threatening or otherwise overwhelming stressful experiences” (Matsakis xv).

### *Works Cited*

---

Allen, Jon G. *Coping with Trauma: A Guide to Self-Understanding*. Washington: American Psychiatric Press, 1995.

American Psychiatric Association. *Let's Talk Facts About Post-traumatic Stress Disorder*. Washington: Commission on Public Affairs and the Division of Public Affairs, 1988.

Bower, B. “Trauma Disorder High, New Survey Finds.” *Science News* 23 & 30 Dec. 1995: 422.

Caldwell, Mark. “Kernel of Fear.” *Discover* June 1995: 96–102.

Levin, Patti. “The Trauma Response.” Online. Internet. Available HTTP: <http://gladstone.uoregon.edu/~dvb/t-facts.htm> Accessed December 3, 1997.

Matsakis, Aphrodite., Ph.D. *I Can't Get Over It*. Oakland: New Harbinger, 1992.



## *Shades of Miami*

*Kim Garwick*

While repairing a lightning damaged splice above Biscayne Boulevard, the intense speed of Miami drivers thirty feet below filled my peripheral vision, reminding me this was not Des Moines. A well-dressed black youth carrying books under his arm passed by, craning his neck to shoot me a curious glance. As he approached the side street, an elderly gray-haired couple in a Cadillac was stopped at the corner waiting to get onto the boulevard. The youth stopped at the crosswalk, waiting patiently for a break in traffic so the Cadillac could pull onto the boulevard. The elderly male driver motioned to the youth to go ahead and cross the street. The youth courteously replied, letting the driver know he would wait. The smiling driver countered with a shake of his head and motioned insistently for the youth to cross the street. The youth acquiesced with a thankful wave and entered the crosswalk at a trot. The Cadillac lurched forward, squealing its tires as it sped onto Biscayne Boulevard. The youth stiff armed the hood to keep from being run down, as the Cadillac bowled him to the curb.

“ . . . This morning passersby reported seeing what appeared to be a body lying in the median of the Palmetto Expressway. Upon investigation police found a white male, approximately 25 to 30 years of age, with multiple bullet holes to the body. Police suspect no foul play. . . . ”

Andy met me at Burger King for lunch. Turning around with my food in hand, I almost ran into two men shouldering black rifles. Dressed in plain black from their baseball caps to their bloused pants tucked into combat boots, each had a German shepherd

expertly heeled at their sides. As we sat down, Andy remarked, “Don’t see that in Des Moines,” to which I agreed. The two men, one about six feet, the other a Coke can shorter, slid into the booth next to ours, standing their rifles on the seat and leaning the muzzles against the window. After placing their radios on the table, they both unwrapped a sandwich, placing them on the floor in front of their silently sitting shepherds who quietly wolfed them down.

Something about the smaller man’s tent-like shirt puzzled me. Before I could figure it out, they snatched their radios and rifles, leaving their food uneaten on the table as they bolted out the door, dogs trailing obediently. Opening the back doors first to let their dogs lunge in, they swiftly maneuvered themselves and their rifles into the front doors of an unmarked black Ford and sped off.

“ . . . Today, while fishing in the canal behind his house, Jimmy Twoshoes hooked onto something too big to land. With his dad’s help, they were able to haul his catch onto the bank. Upon investigation police report a white male wrapped in approximately 300 pounds of chain with multiple bullet holes in the base of the skull. Police suspect no foul play. . . . ”

Riding a rusty bicycle down the sidewalk, the blond haired kid stopped and innocently inquired what we were doing. After quietly listening to our explanation, his curiosity apparently satisfied, he yelled thanks and was back to peddling up and down the sidewalk. We were hustling to finish the splice before dark and hoping the stench would lesson as the sun dropped behind the trees.

*The Skunk River Review*

The garbage trucks in Miami have a clamshell bucket suspended from a boom to pick up the garbage and dump it into the open back of the truck. Sometimes people heap their bags and boxes of garbage around the telephone pedestal terminals along the curb, hiding them from view. Occasionally the garbagemen will unknowingly rip a terminal out when scooping up the garbage, leaving slime-soaked soil and cleaved cable. For this reason Andy and I were splicing in a new terminal on this peaceful residential street.

Andy was asking me what I wanted to eat after we got back to the hotel. With the flavor of ripe garbage thick in my throat, my stomach wasn't thinking about food. Suddenly we heard a loud crack echo down the street. Looking in that direction, we saw to our consternation, the kid lying motionless on the grass beside his

overturned bicycle. We looked at each other, not knowing what to think.

“ . . . Earlier tonight, police report, a Liberty City youth was shot and killed while riding a bicycle near his home. Police suspect no foul play. . . . ”

*[Working as a maintenance cable splicer on loan from Northwestern Bell in Des Moines to Southern Bell in Miami during the summer of 1980, the author experienced a shockingly different set of cultural values toward life. Memories of these experiences followed him home where he mournfully witnessed the gradual discoloration of Des Moines by shades of Miami.]*

**For Reference**

**Not to be taken**

**from this library**



### III.

## COMPOSITION II





## *Achievement of Desire*

*Pete Larson*

### *Assignment*

---

Look at the relationship between Rodriguez and Richard Hoggart as a case study of the relation of a reader to a writer or as a student to a teacher. Look closely at Rodriguez's references to Hoggart's book, *THE USES OF LITERACY*, and at the way Rodriguez made use of that book to name and describe his own experience as a student; in other words, to write about his past and make sense of that past in the context of his present. What did he find in the book to help him address the issue of his past? How did he *use* what he found? *How* did he *use* it in his own writing?

Write an essay in which you discuss Rodriguez's use of Hoggart's *THE USES OF LITERACY* to interpret the issues of his past.

Note: You might begin your research with what may seem to be a purely technical matter, examining how Rodriguez handles quotations and works Hoggart's words into his own text. On the basis of Rodriguez's use of quoted passages, how would you describe the relationship between Hoggart's words and Rodriguez's?

A writer's method is the tool one uses to interpret the structure and find meaning in a piece of text. In the essay "Achievement of Desire" by Richard Rodriguez, one finds his method of using another author's method, Richard Hoggart, to piece together a past that had been lost. Hoggart's book, "The Uses of Literacy," is used by Rodriguez to help him understand, and remember his past step by step, through the phases in his life, in order to realize how he got to his present.

It is through Hoggart's theory, in a third person account, of a "scholarship boy" that Rodriguez reflects on who he was growing up as a young boy, and how it has affected him as an adult scholar, or professional. Rodriguez's accurate, critical analysis enabled him to adapt his experiences to the language and theory of Hoggart. Thus, Rodriguez developed a method in his essay. He uses another author's theory and language to interpret his manifestation from a curious, eager private school student to the educated scholar in a British museum finishing his dissertation on English Renaissance literature. During this movement, the way of which Rodriguez uses Hoggart's theory changes as

Rodriguez changes, therefore necessitating four different sections of text(excluding the introduction). In each section one finds significant differences in the way his method is used, so an analysis of each section individually is how one is to make sense of Rodriguez's past, just as he had to.

In the opening paragraphs Rodriguez makes an early connection to who he was as a boy. "She keeps nodding and nodding at all that I say; she even takes notes. And each time I ask a question, she jerks up and down in her desk like a marionette, while her hand waves over the bowed heads of her classmates." He chose this experience to draw a picture in the readers' heads of that one student; the brain, nerd, or as he later refers, the "scholarship boy." It is through this image that one sees Rodriguez at surface level. It helps make a physical connection to the type of student he was, before he explains what was happening to him as a student internally.

He chose the word "marionette" to describe the girl, also himself, in that section of text. What he came to terms with was his ability to do, say, or think what his

teachers or professors wanted, much like a puppet. "All his ideas are clearly borrowed. He seems to have no thoughts of his own" (581). This was a vital understanding for him, and it helped determine what "education" meant to him.

The meaning of this essay is found, stated quite obviously, in the concluding paragraphs of the introduction. What Rodriguez is searching for is the reasons for his extraordinary need for education, and to the extremes of not desiring it at all. This is all part of his past. "With one sentence I can summarize my academic career. It will be harder to summarize what sort of life connects the boy to the man" (568). "At the end of my schooling, I needed to determine how far I had moved from my past" (569). Rodriguez has stated what it is he needs to do, but how he is to do it is what he is building in his structure.

Section one begins the analysis that Rodriguez makes of his past, and Hoggart is introduced. "Then one day, leafing through Richard Hoggart's, 'The Uses of Literacy' I found, in his description of the scholarship boy, myself" (569). Now Rodriguez has told us that he holds the key. In Hoggart's description of the scholarship boy, he will find the clues to solve the mystery of his past. In the second paragraph Rodriguez begins to theorize, and also changes his viewpoint to third person as if narrating his own past. His language sounds a lot like Hoggart's, but there is a hint of more experience than theory in Rodriguez's language. For instance, Hoggart says, "He has to be more and more alone. . . . He will, probably unconsciously, to oppose the ethos of the hearth, in the gregariousness of the working-class family group." He sounds as if he is assuming, though, it is different from the way Rodriguez says much of the same thing. "The scholarship boy must move between environments, his home and the classroom, which are at cultural extremes opposed" (559). In this quote he sounds as if he has learned this from his own experiences. He chooses words like must, home and classroom, cultural extremes, all sounding as if he had been through this before. Further, all that Rodriguez says about the scholarship boy must connect to his past because he admitted that he is the scholarship boy. So what he is doing is using Hoggart's theory and adding to it his personal accounts from his past. With these two elements together, Rodriguez will find "the sort of life that connects the boy to the man" (568).

At the end of the Hoggart quotation on page 570, he is describing the boy at home in hopes of accom-

plishing the idea that there is a separation in the life of a scholarship boy, a separation between home and school. "The boy has to cut himself off mentally, so as to do his homework, as well as he can." Rodriguez gives experience to this theory. "The boy is himself (until he reaches, say, the upper forms) very much of both the worlds of home and school. He is enormously obedient to the dictates of the world of school, but emotionally still strongly wants to continue as part of the family circle" (570). It is clear in his language that this is from a experienced point of view, and it seems that Hoggart's theory is enabling him to come to terms with his past, as long as he can connect the theory to his past. Rodriguez notices his first change in a series of changes toward academics. "He takes his first step toward academic success, away from his family" (570). and it is "the persons toward whom he feels deepest love that the change will be most powerfully measured" (570-71). Rodriguez has accepted what it is he gave up for his academics, what he has lost for the new intensely educated life that he has found.

He ends section one with an analysis of his parents' education, work, and the relationship that evolved with respect to their under-achievements, so to speak. His strong will toward education from an early age caused him to "permit himself embarrassment at their lack of education" (571). He stresses the importance of this embarrassment to show his switch to the apparent dependence on his instructors for educational guidance, and away from his parents for anything of the sort. A quote he uses from Hoggart is seemingly worded perfectly in terms of which Rodriguez experienced. "The scholarship boy tends to make a father-figure of his form master" (571). Rodriguez further states, in his own words, what his teachers represented as influences, much the same as influences assumed by parents. "I wanted to be like my teachers, to possess their knowledge, to assume their authority, their confidence, even to assume a teacher's persona" (574). He acknowledges this relationship to underline the fact that he truly had stepped away from home towards his world at school.

Rodriguez tells the two stories about his parents' careers to bring forth exactly why his education became so important to him. His parents had very minimal amounts of education (his father never graduated from high school). Through their example, Rodriguez recalls the motivation to become educated by the standards set by his teachers. "Get all the education you can; with education you can do anything. (With a good education she could have done anything)" (574). His father's



example created a fear inside Rodriguez. "After work he went to night school along with my mother. A year, two passed. Nothing much changed, except that fatigue worked its way into the bone, then everything changed" (575). These recollected experiences relate to Hoggart's theory, elaborating on why he felt the need to realize his teachers in a parental sense, his own offered no educational background. The effect of this realization was so dramatic Rodriguez found the truth in saying, "I remember too well that education had changed my family's life. I would not have become a scholarship boy had I not so often remembered" (572).

Therefore, in section one he has come to terms with Hoggart's theory of the "scholarship boys" need to separate the two worlds that surround him. He has done this by adapting his experiences to the language of Richard Hoggart. Thus, he understands how and why the relationship between teacher and student became a relationship of parent and child.

In section two Rodriguez focuses on his habit of reading, and how it played an intricate role at home and at school. Hoggart emphasizes the peculiarity of the scholarship boy's choices of reading material, definitely abnormal. "At school he hears about and reads books never mentioned at home . . . his books look, rather, like strange tools" (576-77). To reflect upon this, Rodriguez uses personal testimony to discover the role that books played in his life. He uncovers a certain bittersweet relationship with them, slightly insecure without them, but lonely and isolated while reading them. "What most bothered me, however, was the isolation reading required" (577). At the same time he would find comfort in his books, and seemingly found peace by recalling a part of this experience. "I would sit through the twilight on the front porch or in the backyards, reading to the cool, whirling sounds of the sprinklers" (579). These reflections on the past, also show that Rodriguez read constantly, which is just as odd as the type of literature that he read. He theorizes upon his own habit on page 578, concerning what actually motivated him to read. In a quote from that page he admits to himself why he became obsessed. "I simply concluded that what gave a book its value was some major idea or theme it contained. If that core essence could be mined and memorized, I would become learned like my teachers." He still, in section two, relates to the urge to become like his teachers, as Hoggart believed, but now he comes to terms with how he went about it. It was in the morals and lessons learned from the books that he would become "educated."

In section two Rodriguez needed to know how he separated from his family and culture. Hoggart's theory that relates to the strangeness of his books becomes the separating factor as they, quite literally, take control over Rodriguez's life. The books had a catalytic effect of breaking the bond between his parents and securing the one between him and his teachers.

Section three is written by combining the two languages of Hoggart and Rodriguez. The effect is Hoggart's theory rewritten through Rodriguez's past.

The key factor in this section is that he is older, mainly in his college years. By this age Rodriguez had created quite a noticeable distance between himself and his family. As time went on he realized this distance had widened at an accelerated rate. "There is no trace of his parents in his speech. Instead he approximates the accents of his teachers and his classmates. . . . There may be some things about him that recall his beginnings—but they only make clear how far he has moved from his past" (580). The more educated he becomes the further he steps away from his family and culture. He notices a loss of personality and private passion for life; he only senses ambition. He sees this in a section from Hoggart's book. "He learns how to receive a purely literate education, one using only a small part of the personality and challenging only a limited area of his being" (581). Rodriguez makes connections as to why Hoggart says the above. His experiences as a boy and early frustrations as a student has forced him to "rely on his teachers and depend on all that he hears in the classroom and reads in books" (582). The conclusion that is drawn from the dependence is one that again reflects what little education his parents have. Because they could not help him with simple elementary assignments, he must get answers from his teachers or his books. He made the connection between what Hoggart had said about literate education to his own experience that had cut the ties from the education that he could get from his parents. As a result, he further realizes the fact he never, or had lost at one point in time, developed a personality that exemplified where or of whom he came from. He writes in Hoggart's language often to show how he is deprived of this, and is evident of the classroom education upon which he thrived. "The classroom is responsible for remaking him" (582). In a sense, he had become his books, and consequently, overlooked the importance of lessons found in life outside of the classroom. This is what he comes to terms with in section four.

In the final section of this text he addresses more of the emotional, self-searching issue of his present. He must deal with his situation by asking himself, What now? How has all that I worked for become significant in my life? How far have I truly moved from my past? These questions that Rodriguez asks himself are best answered by the theory from Hoggart that relates to this issue of "nostalgia." "He longs for the membership he lost, 'he pines for some Nameless Eden where he never was.' The nostalgia is the stronger and the more ambiguous he is really 'in quest of his own absconded self yet scared to find it'" (583). This quote directly relates to the life before education mattered to Rodriguez. The life when the family was close, before he had turned toward his teachers. The nostalgia comes forth only after he is done with his education, and then he realizes how lonely he has become. "It became clear that I had joined a lonely community" (583). The community he refers to is the scholars who live in the same isolated world of books and notes.

"I yearned for that time when I had not been so alone. . . . I told my self I wanted a more passionate life" (584). This passion that he says he wants has nothing to do with his books, though to realize this passion he had to consult Hoggart. His search for a life less alone, he feels, is before the separation in his past that created the cultural differences between him and his parents. Thus, with the passion of his culture that he had forgotten, and the company of his parents instead of his books, Rodriguez completes his education by understanding the balance between school and the family.

In conclusion, what Rodriguez had learned from a single chapter in Richard Hoggart's book The Uses of Literacy is that the scholarship boy has a past that he must come to terms with in order to gain the knowledge that life has to offer. He learned this by adapting his language to that of Hoggart's theory, therefore connecting his past to the life of the "scholarship boy."



## *My Favorite Place to Play?*

*Danni Walker*

Prairie Meadows, Central Iowa's casino and race track, has a slogan calling itself "my favorite place to play." They also run television commercials with upbeat music and shots of rolling green hills with grazing horses. While these images do not promote negative feelings in people, when put into perspective of real life the gambling industry isn't as pretty as they would have the public believe. Gambling is a hot political topic in Iowa because everyone feels strongly about it. Gambling is a topic that sparks debate over selling our "good Mid-Western values" for lower taxes and promised increase of money for education.

Activists in favor of legalized gambling point out that casinos bring money into the community. Their claim is supported by the fact that gambling taxes in Las Vegas raise so much state income that there is no need for state income, inheritance or corporation taxes (Fifty 31). According to Tom Price, casinos are a large contributor to the nation's income, citing that "casinos in 27 states bring in \$40 billion in annual revenues (98). The Gross Domestic Product in 1996 (the year of Price's statistic), found in Economic Indicators, was 7.6 trillion, which makes \$40 billion only half of one percent of the GDP (1). Price's figure sounds good, until compared to the Gross Domestic Product.

In Iowa the statewide economic impact of horse racing is close to \$50 million per year (Can 1). In fact, during the Thoroughbred meet at Prairie Meadows this summer (1997), the average amount of wagering per night was at \$718,000, with seven of the fifty-seven nights' wagering exceeding \$1 million (Can 1). That proves that there is a market for gambling in Iowa and it's a fairly large market. A study by two Iowa State University faculty members estimated that live horse

racing at Prairie Meadows accounts for nearly \$2 million per year in tourism spending in the Des Moines area (Can 1). Horse racing in the state generated \$48 million in gross sales in 1996, also cited from the study by Iowa State University faculty. (Can 1).

The purpose of legalizing gambling in any state is to attract tourists, getting them to spend their money in that state, therefore increasing sales of local businesses and helping the state's economy to flourish. But according to LuAnn Gaskill, associate professor at Iowa State University who studied the impact of gambling on Iowa's small businesses, "the promised benefit to the business community and retailers never did materialize" (Klein 3 & 78). When Iowa legalized riverboat casinos in 1989, the state ended up attracting local gamblers and depleting it's own economies (Klein 3). "Local gamblers don't bring outside dollars; they wager what they would have spent on movies at the local theater, baseball games, or dues for the Elks Lodge" (Klein 78). Due to attracting more Iowan gamblers than out-of-state gamblers the actual monetary benefits to Iowa's communities with gambling facilities have been minimal.

Another promoted argument for gambling is that it is a popular form of entertainment. In fact gambling is so popular that according to Roper Starch Worldwide Inc. of New York City, "56 percent of Americans gambled at least once in 1996" (Heubusch 35). In 1994 casinos were visited more than all attended major-league baseball and National Football League games (Price 98). One reason for gambling's popularity is that "57 percent of adults who'd been to a casino in 1992 said that 'relatively cheap' entertainment was a important reason for going," also from Roper (Heubusch 38). Gambling is a

fun activity; the rush of adrenalin as you roll the dice or pull the lever is almost without parallel. Gamblers get excitement from thinking that they could legally and easily acquire more money than what they have.

It is this rush that makes gambling addictive and therefore a negative form of entertainment. A Gallup Organization poll found that 61 percent of the people polled believed that legalized gambling can make a compulsive gambler out of a person who would never gamble illegally (Heubusch 36). Experts believe that problem gamblers make up 4.5 percent of the U.S. population (Klein 3). With a national population of 265 million, gamblers would account for around 11 million people (1997 *State Profile* 70). Sue Cox, executive director of the Texas Council on Problem Gambling and former activist against gambling, states, "Because casinos offer the opportunity to lose money quickly on a 24-hour basis . . . the degree of the problem will grow" (Zipperer 62). Steve, a Gambling Anonymous hotline worker, stated that the number of gambling addicts has steadily increased since Iowa introduced the state lottery; the number of phone calls to 1-800-BETS-OFF has now reached 300 per month (interview). Gambling is addictive and as long as it continues to be legal the amount of the addicted will only increase.

Casino activists also claim that casinos create jobs. The casinos in 27 states provide 1 million jobs (Price 98). In Las Vegas the gambling industry employs two-thirds of the workers (Fifty 31). Through much of 1994, as many as two casinos were opening each month in Mississippi (Zipperer 58). So legalized gambling does offer employment, since most casinos are open 24 hours per day they employ a large amount of workers.

Unfortunately, as time will tell, casinos are not stable forms of employment. The closing of the Mhoon Landing casino in Mississippi, only one year after it opened, will throw almost 1,000 people out of work (Zipperer 58). Only nine months after opening its doors the Stratosphere in Las Vegas filed for bankruptcy protection (Heubusch 40). While casinos may offer employment, it seems only to be temporary employment.

Gambling has long been associated with increases in crime, drunken driving, prostitution, child abuse, and broken families. But the American public, particularly the Iowa voters, has either forgotten about these problems or has been cleverly lead around them.

Legalized gambling lowers values. When surveyed by Roper in 1996, 42 percent of Americans agree that allowing more casinos to open "threatens our values"

(Heubusch 36). Gambling addicts waste away all of their money and must find new ways to attain money to gamble. Problem gamblers are responsible for \$1.3 billion worth of insurance-related fraud annually. In Maryland, a 1990 report showed that the state's 50,000 compulsive gamblers were responsible for \$1.5 billion in declining work productivity, embezzlements, and other losses (Klein 3). According to Texas Council on Problem and Compulsive Gambling, based on a survey of its callers, "59 percent of compulsive gamblers have financial problems, 29 percent are addicted to alcohol, and 25 percent are unemployed" (Zipperer 58).

Casinos are not doing their part to disprove the claim that they lower values. It was discovered that the Lady Luck riverboat casino, based in Iowa, allowed an underage person to gamble and obtain alcoholic beverages on at least two separate occasions. The person acted as an agent for his uncle in completing a currency transaction report, in which he was required to produce identification showing that he was under 21. He was not caught until a security guard asked him for identification, after being at the casino for 10 hours (Dateline 1). If the casinos can not follow the law or pay close attention to it, then they are only adding to the decline in values.

Casinos received negative publicity because gamblers would leave their children locked in the car for hours while they were inside gambling. Casinos are currently attempting to stop this form of child abuse by installing licensed daycares in the casinos. But as the Grand Casino, which has a fully licensed, supervised, free childcare center called Kids Quest, has found out, gamblers' children are still being neglected. Kids Quest shuts down at 11 P.M. but employees are still paging for parents to pick up their children at 3, 4, 6 A.M. (Price 99). Gambling has broken one of the strongest bonds in our society, the bond between parent and child.

Legalized gambling increases crime rates. Two of the nation's highest crime rates are in Las Vegas and Atlantic City (Zipperer 58). Armed robberies doubled from 1992 to 1993 in Biloxi, Mississippi (the year that gambling became legal there) (Zipperer 58). "Sixty percent of pathological gamblers engage in crime to promote their habit, while 40 percent of all white-collar crime has its roots in gambling" (Price 99). Again gambling addicts have to find other sources of money, so they steal.

The debate over legalized gambling has interfered with government. Gambling interferes with Iowa's state government by creating more unnecessary meetings and debates for the government. Racing association

Chairman Jim Rasmussen was quoted as saying, "It's my understanding that both parties (the Racing Association of Central Iowa and Polk County Board of Supervisors) are committed to spend whatever time it takes . . . to arrive at some kind of a conclusion," referring to the dispute over Prairie Meadows profits (Johnson 2). The Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission threatened to cut off gambling at Prairie Meadows because the track and the county boards were disagreeing so much (Johnson 2).

Gambling also interferes with government at the national level because the gambling industry has become just like the tobacco industry. The gambling industry has given more than \$100 million in political contributions in the last five years in its attempt to expand its business one state at a time (Klein 78). Minnesota state legislators are only now daring to speak openly about the emerging crisis of addiction to gambling. Minnesota has the highest per capita expenditures for gambling of any state (Brushaber 17). If lawmakers would not have legalized gambling, there would not be these social problems to deal with.

While legalized gambling does offer benefits to the community like employment, entertainment, and promised economic growth, these are all benefits that can be derived from other sources. While offering these benefits, gambling is also endangering our safety, proven by the increase in crime rates, and corrupting our Iowan youth, clearly demonstrated by the Lady Luck incident. If we allow legalized gambling to continue knowing the drawbacks, we have made no progress for ourselves as a community. This is why gambling should be made illegal in Iowa.

## *Works Cited*

- Brushaber, George K. "You Bet We Lose." *Christianity Today* Feb. 7, 1994: 17.
- "Can Horse Racing Pay It's Own Way?" *Des Moines Register* July 27, 1997, 4 star ed.: Opinion 1.
- "Dateline Iowa." *Des Moines Register* July 28, 1997, 4 star ed.: Metro 1.
- "Fifty Ways To Lose Your Wallet." *The Economist* March 26, 1994: 31.
- Heubusch, Kevin. "Taking Chances on Casinos." *American Demographics* May 1997: 34-40.
- Johnson, Dan and Bowers, Frank. "Closed Talks Begin Today on a Prairie Meadows Pact." *Des Moines Register* July 31, 1997, 4 star ed.: Metro 2.
- Klein, Jeffrey. "Bad Odds." *Mother Jones* July/Aug. 1997: 3+.
- Price, Tom. "The Mounting Stakes of Our Casino Economy." *Christianity Today* Apr. 8, 1996: 98-99.
- Steve. Gambling Anonymous Hotline telephone interview. 8 Dec. 1997.
- "Taking Chances." *The Wilson Quarterly* Autumn 1995: 21.
- United States. Council of Economic Advisers. *Economic Indicators September 1997*. U. S. Government Printing Office. Washington 1997.
- Zipperer, John. "Against All Odds: Christian Antigambling Efforts." *Christianity Today* Nov. 14, 1994: 58-60+.



# *Separate Is Not Equal, Separate Is Better*

## *Scholarship Essay*

*Carri Eckhart*

Imagine for a moment that you are the parent of a bright, middle school age daughter, Katie. Katie has always done well in school, and is interested in becoming a chemist or perhaps an engineer. But recently, Katie is having a problem in school. Her new science teacher never seems to call on her. She cannot concentrate on her lessons over the constant talking of the boys in the class, who seem to be getting all the attention. Her teacher is using a competitive game to teach the class science concepts that Katie does not enjoy. As a result, Katie's grades and interest in science seem to be faltering. A private girls school you have been investigating has told you of the advantages of single-sex education. Single-gender classes, they say, will solve the problems Katie seems to be experiencing in science class. Preferring to keep Katie in public school, rather than enroll her in a private school you can't afford, you call the principal of Katie's public middle school. "Does the middle school offer a single-gender class that would be more in line with Katie's learning style?" you ask. Sorry, the principal tells you, but single-gender classes are illegal in public schools.

This scenario happens every day to young girls all around the country. As more parents and teachers become aware of the current gender bias in our schools, two broad solutions have been proposed to correct the problem. The first solution involves educating teachers regarding gender bias in education, and thus trying to equalize learning opportunities for boys and girls. Clearly, this is a good beginning, but it is not enough. The second solution is separating boys and girls for classes and eliminating gender bias through single-sex education. Many public schools have tried experiments with single-gender classes despite federal law prohibiting

it, and it has been proven to be an effective solution (Durost 30, Perry 35). The current federal law prohibiting single-gender classes should be changed to allow these classes in public schools on a voluntary enrollment basis.

Opponents of gender-based education believe that separating boys and girls undermines the fight for equality of women. They contend that supporting the legality of separate classrooms in public schools for boys and girls, supports discrimination on the basis of sex. This argument continues that all-male institutions will use legal gender separation to continue to discriminate against women. The president of the National Organization for Women, Stacy Karp, has a similar concern. Karp states that NOW's position is to oppose single-sex classrooms because studies show that when boys and girls are separated, more resources are devoted to the boys (Harrison 86).

This argument fails to consider that it is the very nature of a co-educational system that is currently feeding discrimination against girls in school, and as a result of this inferior education, perpetuating the system of discrimination against adult women. Several studies done by the American Association of University Women give startling statistics regarding the traditional mixed gender classroom (AAUW 1-4). These reports' findings include that girls receive less attention from teachers than their male classmates, and that teachers give boys more encouraging comments than they do girls (AAUW 4). The findings of the American Association of University Women are supported by extensive research done by Myra Sadker, PhD, an educator who has studied sexism in education for thirty years. Sadker furthers the reports from

the AAUW, pointing out that textbooks and standardized tests contain gender bias, which affects girls' performance in negative ways (127). However, when boys and girls are placed in separate classrooms, with teachers and materials sensitive to gender bias, both boys' and girls' performances improve (Durost 27). Separating by gender doesn't promote discrimination. Instead, a separate classroom gives girls an equal chance to grow and learn without the sexism that is common in mixed classrooms.

Taxpayers who oppose separate classes in public schools argue that gender-based education would be expensive. They contend that implementing a gender-based curriculum for boys and girls would force our already over-stretched public schools to deal with "gender equity issues" instead of teaching boys and girls how to read, write, add and subtract (Houston 111). Adversaries of gender-based education in public schools point out that all public schools are running on limited funds, and those funds are better used improving the curriculum already in place, thus benefiting all students, not just girls.

The problem of funding for gender-based education has already been addressed by Congress. Congress has agreed with this viewpoint that public schools are limited in their funding, and has passed special legislation providing money for public schools to use for eliminating gender bias in their schools. The Women's Equity in Education Act provides money for public schools to retrain teachers regarding gender equity. This legislation also makes financial provisions for the Department of Education, so that they can develop model curricula, textbooks and software that are not gender biased (Houston 108, 109). This same legislation could be used to provide public schools with the funds needed to establish a gender-based education program. Any expenses incurred by public schools providing gender-based education could be funded by the legislation already in place. No money would need to be taken from other areas of the school's budget to provide separate classrooms for boys and girls. Rather than cost public schools money, the costs of gender-based education could be largely funded by the government.

Failing to undermine the benefits of gender-based education, opponents often argue that the option of separate gender education is already available through private schooling. Parents who see the benefit of separate gender classes or schools should pay for a private educational program for their child. Private schooling, however, is not within the financial means of

all parents. Children from all economic walks of life deserve a quality education. Any advance in education should be equally available to students in private and public schools.

The West Des Moines School district has tried an experiment in gender-based education in its new Westridge Elementary School. Eight gender-separated classrooms were formed during the 1995-1996 school year to test the theories regarding the benefits of separate-gender classes. At the beginning of the experiment, Mrs. Zobel, a fourth grade teacher at Westridge, was skeptical of the idea of gender separation in the classroom (Paler 42). After spending two years teaching a separate-gender math class, she has changed her opinion. Mrs. Zobel is now convinced that there are differences in styles of learning between boys and girls, and that students benefited from being educated separately in areas of science and math (Paler 38). The West Des Moines School district is not the only school district that has had success with gender-based education. Numerous experiments point to the benefits of separate-gender classes (Durost; Perry; Streitmatter). These benefits of gender-based education become clearer when we examine the arguments in its favor.

One of the strongest arguments supporting gender segregation is made by educators who believe that there is a fundamental difference in the learning styles of boys and girls. These educators point out that separating boys and girls would benefit both sexes because teachers could focus on the learning style most shared by the group, instead of catering to one learning style over another. Meg Moulton, co-director of the National Coalition of Girls' Schools, describes girls' learning style as more receptive to interactive, collaborative learning situations. Boys seem to learn better with a more aggressive learning style, preferring competitive learning situations (Durost 29). Richard Durost, principal of a Maine high school that has been experimenting with gender-based education, points out several other differences between boys and girls learning styles. Boys tend to answer questions immediately while girls are more likely to reflect. Boys tend to talk, while girls are more likely to listen (27). Obviously, it would be easier for a teacher to gear the curricula more toward one learning style or the other, rather than try to incorporate both equally. Gender-based education makes the job easier for teachers and improves the learning of both sexes.

Separate classes for boys and girls minimizes the problem of sexual harassment between the sexes. Studies show that both boys and girls experience sexual harassment at school. By separating the sexes, we allow

young people to focus more on their schooling and less on each other. Researchers have discovered that 85 percent of all girls surveyed and 76 percent of all boys surveyed report being sexually harassed at school (Houston 111). Separating boys and girls during class time would help solve the problems of sexual harassment at school and also help eliminate the distractions from learning that occur in all mixed gender classes. William Perry, an educational consultant, agrees with this point of view. Perry states that boys and girls are often more concerned with how they look and appear to each other than with whatever it is they are supposed to be learning (35). He further states that this situation can be mitigated by gender segregation.

Separate classes would allow girls more of a chance to succeed at math and science. Girls and boys are fairly equal in their math and science skills leading up to the middle school years, then boys begin to push ahead (Harrison 86). Beginning in these middle school years, girls as a group begin to score lower on math and science tests due to a number of factors including test bias, teacher bias, and personality differences with boys that affect their learning. Separate classes for girls would help us develop more women in the fields of science and math. Rather than view this as simply helping girls, Jane Daniels, head of a National Science Foundation effort to bring more girls into these fields, states that bringing more women into these fields is good for America (Schrof 43). Daniels feels we will be unable to compete in an ever-complicated world with only half of our nation's available brainpower at work. According to projections made by the National Science Foundation, sixty percent of the low paying jobs women currently hold will be eliminated in the future, while the need for women scientists will be three times the current number.

The evidence supporting the option of the single-gender classroom is overwhelming, while the drawbacks are largely unproven. The federal law that prohibits gender segregation was put in place to protect both genders from discrimination on the basis of sex. Clearly, this discrimination is not being prevented by mixed gender classes in public schools, but would be better addressed in some cases by separate-gender classes. Allowing public schools to offer this educational choice is important not only to the students, but to everyone

worried about America's ability to compete in a global marketplace with an inadequate number of scientists and mathematicians.

For Katie, your middle school age daughter, gender-based education means an equal chance to become the chemist or engineer she dreams of becoming. Permitting public schools to offer gender-based education, permits public schools to offer all the Katies of our country their equal chance.

### *Works Cited*

---

- "American Association of University Women" Online. Internet. Available: <http://www.aauw.org/>
- Donohue, John W. "Of Many Things." *America* 16-23 July 1994: 1.
- Durost, Richard A. "Single Sex Math Classes: What and For Whom? One School's Experiences." *National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin*. 80 (1996): 27-31.
- Harrison, Laird. "Starting From Scratch: What Makes A Good School." *Time* 27 Oct 1997: 86.
- Palar, Barbara Hall. "A Study in Contrasts: Should Boys and Girls Be Separated For School?" *Better Homes and Gardens* Oct 1996: 38-43.
- Perry, William C. "Gender-Based Education: Why It Works at the Middle School Level." *National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin*. 1 February 1996: 32-35.
- Ravitch, Diane. "Blackboard Bungle." *Men's Health* October 1994: 110.
- Sadker, Myra. *Failing at Fairness: How America's School's Cheat Girls*. Charles Scribners Sons, New York, NY: 1994.
- Schrof, Joanne. "The Gender Machine." *U.S. News & World Report*. 2 August 1993: 42-44.
- Streitmatter, Janice. "An Exploratory Study of Risk-Taking and Attitudes in a Girls-Only Middle School Math Class." *The Elementary School Journal*. 98-1 (1997): 19-25.





## *Does Gangsta Rap Deserve Its Bad Rap?*

*Mike Roberts*

*"Fuckin' suck me . . . Fuckin' suck me . . . Fuckin' suck me . . . Me so horny . . . Me so horny."*

Would you knowingly invite the ejaculator of this language into your home? More importantly, would you allow your children to have this person spend the night, alone and unsupervised? Incredibly, more than two million American households have him as a permanent houseguest. The phrase is from 2 Live Crews' song "Me So Horny." It is from their popular album *As Nasty As I Wanna Be*, which has sold over two million copies.

Rap began in the boroughs of the South Bronx as a form of communication that brought a sense of companionship to an oppressed people. It helped pull neighbors and neighborhoods together and created some degree of comfort within the miserable environment they shared. The original rap, along with its evolution of positive forms, delivered constructive messages—some with antidrug and spiritual content. These styles are good rap; they started dialogue and established positive feelings between human beings. They *are not* the types of rap music at issue.

The rap being called into question here is 'gangsta rap,' a version that has proven to be a backward evolution of the original. Gangsta rap has been studied on various fronts and remains a conglomeration of different issues depending on the level from which it is analyzed. Three authors in particular exemplify the diversity of thoughts on this subject. Arthur Lawrence Cribbs, Jr., describes it as "one of the most ironic and pathetic trends to hit the black community" (171). bell hooks asserts it is "that wildly successful music in which all women are 'bitches' and 'whores' and young men kill each other for sport" (184). Venise Berry offers it as "a unique and cohesive component of urban black culture

and is a positive struggle for black signification within popular culture" (202).

Cribbs takes gangsta rap at face value and laments that gangsta rappers "demean African daughters by promoting vulgarity and violence against them without restraint" (171). bell hooks approaches gangsta rap from a Marxist vantage. She thinks that "the sexist, misogynist, patriarchal ways of thinking and behaving that are glorified in gangsta rap are a reflection of the prevailing values in our society, values created and sustained by white supremacist capitalist patriarchy" (183). Venise Berry, who defends gangsta rap, believes that "through rap music, low-income black youth are able to develop empowering values and ideologies, strengthen cultural interaction, and establish positive identities" (201).

In looking superficially at gangsta rap, I agree with Cribbs; it is nonsensical and vulgar. He maintains it does not accurately describe the black female, nor does it depict the reality of life in the ghetto (171). His contention that gangsta rap is often performed by criminals is clearly reinforced simply by considering its name. But, these observations are obvious. The questions that need to be answered lie more submerged.

Berry delves deeper to look at gangsta rap's causes and effects, but she uses manipulative writing techniques to sway her readers. Her source-drenched writing explores the issues of sex, violence, and racism that are embedded in gangsta rap's lyrics. However, her one-sided romp of quotations and paraphrases neglects to answer the questions that she has raised. She implies that gangsta rappers are concerned about violence with the assertion that three examples of public service efforts made by some rappers establishes a commitment on their part. Then she evasively

counters the sexual degradation issue with the unsupported statement that “out of a list of the top fifty rap groups, only about ten percent can actually be identified as using truly obscene and violent lyrics in relation to women” (193). Berry fails to reveal how gangsta rap is achieving her purported positive effect on youth. Her essay even sabotages itself when she reports that Luther Campbell, the leader of 2 Live Crew, “admits he won’t let his seven-year-old daughter listen to such music” (193), and when she quotes U.S. District Judge Jose Gonzales, Jr., who found that *As Nasty As I Wanna Be* is “utterly without any redeeming social value” (192).

hooks’ analysis is by far the most persuasive and thought provoking when compared to that of Cribbs and Berry. hooks dredges up unnerving questions symbolized by gangsta rap’s popularity. To her reasoning, gangsta rap is simply a fragment of a major cultural illness. She examines the values of those who produce gangsta rap, and says to understand those values “would mean considering the seduction of young black males who find that they can make more money producing lyrics that promote violence, sexism, and misogyny than any other content” (185). Obviously, questioning the very core mechanics of our society, those who shape it, and the methods they use to manipulate the underclasses are much farther-reaching issues than merely the perversity of gangsta rap.

hooks’ angle is intriguing, but difficult to totally embrace because of its scope and rigidity. But the questions her logic elicits, besides those of sexism and misogyny, are ones that also need to be asked. For example, is gangsta rap undoing the progress that the black community has made in educating whites about racism? Does the racial content of gangsta rap spur racist feelings in the white middle class?

Many Americans fear what gangsta rap stands for. If they believe it accurately represents black morals, will whites be inclined to open their arms and embrace blacks? Will middle-class Americans invite the “immoral” and “uncivilized” blacks to live and work in their communities? More than likely, whites will push the blacks away in an attempt to ignore and isolate that which they fear. Gangsta rappers fail to see that the

image they portray of the “teal black culture” can unravel the few positive advances the black community has made in educating the white middle class. They do not seem to care that they are alienating their black urban culture from mainstream America through the shameless depiction of their lack of values. For gangsta rappers, the harmful side of their “art” seems to be of little consequence compared to the money they make.

The issue of gangsta rap is difficult for whites to look at because it does stimulate racism. The music is not about whites and does not belong to us. If we question what kind of mind creates something as vulgar, disgusting, and degrading as the gangsta genre, then we must also question the morals of those who are purchasing it and what it says about them. Will this revolting music somehow transform tomorrow’s leaders into primitives that will have forgotten the virtues of civility? Should we attempt to censor gangsta rap as a few narrow-minded officials in Florida tried to do? Not a chance!

Youth has always found its own rebellious causes. The Baby Boomers had long hair, the Millenials have artistic hair. The Boomers had bell-bottom jeans, the Millenials have ‘Jncos.’ The Boomers had demonstrations, the Summer of Love, and rock and roll. Millenials have body piercing and visible boxer shorts, and, thanks to a few government officials in Florida, gangsta rock. The Baby Boomers turned out all right—maybe even a bit more open-minded than their Silent Generation parents. The Millenials have their own rebellious movements, but they will have learned from their parents’ mistakes and will grow into slightly more evolved adults. In comparison, the Millenials are not as radical as the Boomers were, so maybe we are lucky that they have gangsta rap. It could be worse.

Gangsta, without question, deserves its bad rap, but it also deserves to be protected from those who would try to ban it. Censorship on any level provides a just motive for revolt. Gangsta rap may be an inappropriate form of communication, but it has the right to be.

Personally, I think gangsta rap is a boring and monotonous form of music, and that, if ignored, will just fade off into oblivion. But then, come to think about it, my father said the same thing about rock and roll.

*Works Cited*

---

- Berry, Venise. "Redeeming the Rap Music Experience." Schuster and Van Pelt 189–204.
- Cribbs, Arthur Lawrence, Jr. "Gangsta Rappers Sing White Racists' Tune." Schuster and Van Pelt 170–172.
- hooks, bell. "Gangsta Culture—Sexism, Misogyny: Who Will Take the Rap?" Schuster and Van Pelt 182–188.
- Schuster, Charles I. and William V. Van Pelt, ed. Speculations: Readings in Culture, Identity, and Values. New York: Prentice Hall, 1996.
- 2 Live Crew. "Me So Horny." Nasty As I Wanna Be. Lil' Joe Records, 1989.

*Acknowledgments*

---

I would like to thank Jerry Joy and Bonnie Thomas for their critiques and suggestions during our workshops.



## *Bilingual Education: Is It a Problem?*

*Zach Evans*

In the United States today, the average citizen does not give much thought to the subject of language. In Iowa, especially, where over 95% of the population speaks English as their first language, most Iowans do not have to worry about communicating with people who speak a language other than English. As a nation, however, we citizens need to be concerned about communicating with people of diverse backgrounds. Our country promotes freedom, and one freedom that is often ignored is the freedom to speak in the language of an individual's own choice. Instead of insisting that immigrants learn English, why shouldn't we learn their language in addition to our own? One way to start is to teach children a second language early in life. Our children will benefit from learning a foreign language at an early age, both from the valuable skill they have learned, as well as the acceptance they will learn to have for people with cultures different from their own.

Despite criticism from the national media, California recently made a stand for bilingual education in their schools. Millionaire Ron Unz recently bankrolled a new anti-bilingual initiative that would have forced children who do not speak English into a classroom where they would not understand a word spoken. The Unz initiative targets children who are younger than 10 and not already fluent in English. Unz would require that these children be put into classrooms where all the materials and instruction would be exclusively in English (Shultz). During a recent poll, though, a staggering 69% of voters statewide said they would vote against the bill if it ever came to a vote. With more than half of the Mexican-Americans between the ages of 18–24 having failed to complete the 8th grade in California, California voters agree that Mexican-American students

do not need another handicap. The problem extends beyond California, however. Approximately 1.4 million limited English proficient students will have to go into classrooms where they are hardly able to comprehend the materials or the teacher's instruction. Why should Mexican-Americans, as well as other minorities, suffer through this disregard of their right to learn in a language they understand?

The situation in California is a good start for the fight for better bilingual education nation-wide. The benefits of bilingual education are numerous. Not only does learning a second language give students a valuable skill that can be used later in life, but it also trains the mind to accept those whose language and culture may be different from the culture and language they are accustomed to. With all of the talk about "racial barriers" and "culture lines," bilingual education may be a step in the right direction towards reducing and possibly eliminating these problems for the 21st century.

The solution for this problem is a simple one. First, we must implement an optional summer school class that would last from 1–2 hours a day, three to five days a week. This would allow for what educators call "a pilot class." A pilot class is a small number of students that a school puts in a new class to see whether or not the class would be beneficial for the school to offer full-time. I estimate that approximately 5–10% of the total number of students in the particular grade we are targeting would sign up for this class, giving us a perfect sized pilot class. If the "pilot class" shows progress in learning a foreign language, within a couple of years the school board can require this summer class to pass the grade the student is currently in. Children in elementary

grades will embrace any curriculum as long as the students think that it is "fun." To make the class more fun, the class could be taught in a "summer camp" atmosphere. The "summer camp" could have a theme with the language that is being taught. For example, if Spanish is being taught, the class could be a "Spanish Fiesta," complete with *sombreros*, *piñatas*, and the whole nine yards. This approach would improve cultural diversity as well as make the class more fun.

Critics of my solution might say that my solution will not solve the problem. Simple logic proves that my solution will work. Five hours a week of focused training on learning a foreign language will almost certainly allow even a 10-year-old child to learn a foreign language. Another reason that it will work is student enthusiasm. Freshmen in high school, by the time they have reached the age at which they would start learning a second language, have already been conditioned into the state where they just want to survive school and move on. Fourth grade children usually has not yet been taught to think like that, thus they will be enthusiastic about learning a new language and actually want to do the work that accompanies it.

A second question that might be raised is the question of cost. How much will this grand endeavor of mine cost the taxpayer? If an instructor teaches one class during the summer, three days a week for an hour and a half a day, the number of hours that the teacher puts in will come to about fifty-four. That means that the total cost of paying the teacher for the entire summer would be less than \$2000. A school tax, levied on all citizens within the school district, is the way to raise the money to fund the project. In a town like Boone, Iowa, population 12,000, the extra cost on a tax bill would be approximately 50 cents. Is the price of a cup of joe worth giving your children the ability to speak a foreign language fluently? I would certainly hope so.

My plan also allows for some benefits that are not so obvious. Summer school allows children to be taught for longer periods of time. Most of us remember the

days of doing nothing but having fun during the summer. As fondly as we may remember those days now, the truth remains that for one-fourth of the year, we are learning almost nothing. In fact, some experts have said that we lose knowledge during that period of time when we learn nothing. Instead of allowing those valuable months to waste away, why not put them to good use and learn a foreign language? Instead of taking Spanish I as a freshman, the next generation of freshmen could be taking Spanish IV or Spanish V. The seniors of tomorrow could be fluent in a foreign language, instead of just surviving to graduate from high school.

Another not so obvious benefit of my solution would be that underpaid teachers would have a way of making extra money during the summer. Teachers complain that their wages are not high enough, that they are not allowed to get enough hours to pay the bills. An extra \$1,500 at the end of the summer should silence some of their complaints.

Obviously, my plan is far from perfect, but my plan would eliminate the problem of a lack of bilingual education in the U.S. with several helpful side effects, like reducing racial tension. A couple of cents more come April 15 and a little less time spent swimming for your kids is a small price to pay when you consider the huge benefits your children will reap later in life. For my plan to work, however, it will take a focused effort from the president down to the children taking the classes. If we all work together, though, my plan can and will succeed in providing bilingual education to the children of the 21st century.

### *Works Cited*

- 
- Shultz, Jim. "Under the Anti-Bilingual Initiative, Kids Will Flounder Each Autumn" Online. Internet. Available HTTP: <http://www.onenation.org/110297b.html>. Date Accessed: February 12, 1998.



## *Unfair Treatment*

*Shawna Van Rheenen*

I am a nineteen-year-old white female who will soon be entering the work force. Because I am a woman, I wonder if I will be able to get the job I want at the pay I deserve. After all the years of fighting with the issue, women are still being treated unfairly in the workplace. It seems that just because women wear dresses and men don't, men are superior. The fact that women get paid less is just part of the problem. Executive positions are also hard for women to achieve, and women are still being sexually harassed and discriminated against.

Women still get paid less than men even if they have the same experience and education. In 1979 women earned 62.5 cents for every dollar a man earned. In 1993 women were up to 77.1 cents, but in 1996 women only earned 75 cents for every dollar a man earned. It is obvious that since 1993 the figures are dropping, and unfortunately, they are expected to keep dropping (Epstein 35).

Women in executive positions earn even less. They only earn 69.2 cents for every dollar. Women managers are usually only paid 70 percent of what men are paid. The top ten executives in the U.S. make two to ten times the amount females earn (Evatt 137). Women managers need more education than other employees; therefore, they should get equal pay. When it comes to professions such as doctors and lawyers, the statistics go up. Women in these fields earn 75.4 cents for every dollar a man earns (Epstein 36). It doesn't seem to matter if a woman has more experience or more education than a man. Men still make \$10,487 more a year than women who have the same experience and education ("Women Get Lower Pay" 10).

Over the years women have made some progress. During the 1980s men's self-employment only rose 51

percent while women's rose 81 percent. When it comes to being self-employed, one out of every four people is a woman, and more than 790,000 women run their own business. Women who own businesses have sales that total over \$1 billion in the United States alone (Wilkinson 32).

Even though women have made progress, they can't get into executive positions as easily as men. In fortune 500 companies there are only two CEO's who are women (Epstein 35). Also in fortune 500 companies only 5.6 percent of corporate directors are women. The worst part about all this is that the numbers are not increasing very fast. At the rate we are going, it will be 125 years until women are equal to men when it comes to corporate boards. Only one woman is the head of a fortune 500 company. This also goes for situations other than executives. Only 4 percent of academic deans are women ("Empowering Women"). These facts go on and on. Unfairness for women is going on in the work world, and it needs to be changed.

Not only is it hard for women to rise up to higher positions, often times they are discriminated against from the beginning. Women are often hired, or not hired, according to attractiveness. Fortunately, studies are showing that as managers gain experience, they hire more on experience and less on looks ("Banishing The Hiring Bias" 24). It can be even worse if the woman is elderly or overweight. Another example of discrimination is that sixty-one percent of female executives say they have been mistaken for secretaries ("Empowering Women"). People often assume the secretary is female.

One of the reasons women are discriminated against is because men want to hire people like themselves. Men want to work with other men because that is

who they feel comfortable with (Epstein 35). Men tend to hire ex co-workers or people they went to school with. Therefore, it is no surprise that women don't get hired as easily as men ("Empowering Women"). The old saying "it's not what you know; it's who you know" often proves to be true.

Besides being discriminated against, sexual harassment is also a persistent problem. Sexual harassment has been illegal under federal law since 1977. The Equal Opportunity Commission in Washington has reported that between 1990 and 1996 sexual harassment complaints went up 150 percent (Fisher 156). When an employer makes a sexual advance on a female and then gives her a promotion it is considered sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is also denying a female a promotion because she turned down a sexual request ("What Women Can Do About" 16). The sad part is that only 20 percent of sexual offenders lose their jobs ("Empowering Women").

Some people believe that a problem with women in the workplace doesn't exist. According to some people, women are getting a better education and with time women will rise to executive positions. If this were true, women would be farther ahead than they are now. In 1968 women made up 15 percent of managers. Therefore, today women should make up at least 15 percent of managers, but the fact is that women only make up 3.1 percent of senior executives at fortune 500 companies ("Empowering Women"). Women just aren't making it to the top as they should be because of the so called glass ceiling.

Another argument is that women cost companies too much because of maternity leaves, and they have to take care of their family. Actually males may cost companies more than females. Alcoholism is related to men more than women. In 1985 11.9 million men were considered alcoholics while there were only 5.7 million women. When medical cost and performance are considered, it would be cheaper for companies to deal with maternity leaves ("Empowering Women").

Personally, I have not had a problem getting a job because I am a female, but that doesn't mean that it is not happening. Women have problems getting jobs or rising to manager positions in their current jobs. Many women are scared to fight for a higher position because they are afraid they will lose their current jobs. Women should not be afraid to apply for a higher position because if we don't try, we will never get ahead.

The general public can do things to help this situation. If there is a woman running for an election and is as qualified as the next person, vote for her. She will probably do as good as a man, if not better. The second thing to do is search for women-friendly employers. Search for companies that won't discriminate against women, and who believe in equal opportunity.

Young women need to realize that they are going to have to prepare themselves a little more when it comes to getting a job. We have to make sure we dot our i's and cross out t's. We need to have excellent communication skills, and be able to handle ourselves in an interview. If women use more of the communication skills than men use, we may be able to get a lot further in the business world. For example, the tone of voice that is used can make a big difference. If women have a high pitched voice they may sound like a child, and they won't be taken seriously. The pitch of a voice can also determine credibility. Paul Eckman, a professor at the University of California, found that a person's voice tends to be higher when lying (Glass 199).

It is important for women to appear confident. We need to keep our heads up and our shoulders back. Another way to appear powerful and confident is to take up more space. Men tend to take up more space than women, and it shows that they are confident. This does not mean sprawling out in a chair. An easy way to achieve this is to spread out papers at a business meeting, or have your arms widespread while sitting in a chair. It also helps to walk around the room instead of staying in one place. This gives the impression of being powerful (Glass 191).

One last thing that women can do to help get ahead in the work place is try not to cry in front of anyone. This makes a woman lose credibility and confidence (Glass 222). A lot of little things are useful to help women get ahead. There is hope, we just have to reach for it.

Women are still being treated unfairly. Women get paid less, and it is hard to get into executive positions. They are also being discriminated against and sexually harassed. These things are illegal and unfair, but it is still happening. Fortunately, there are things we can do to help ourselves if we try. Hopefully, in years to come attitudes will change and everyone will have an equal opportunity.

*Works Cited*

---

- "Banishing the Hiring Bias." Psychology Today July/Aug. 1996 : 24.
- "Empowering Women in Business." Online. Internet. Available [http://www.feminist.org/research/ewb\\_intro.html](http://www.feminist.org/research/ewb_intro.html) Accessed April 9, 1998.
- Epstien, Gene. "Low Ceiling." Barron's 1 Dec. 1997: 35-40.
- Evatt, Cris. Opposite Sides of the Bed. California: Conari, 1993.
- Fisher, Anne. "After All This Time, Why Don't People Know What Sexual Harassment Means?" Fortune 12 Jan. 1998: 156.
- Glass, Lillian. He Says, She Says: Closing the Communication Gap Between the Sexes. New York: Putnam, 1992.
- Wilkinson, Helen. "Cracks in the Glass Ceiling." World Press Review September 1996: 32.
- "What Women Can Do About Workplace Violations." USA Today Aug. 1996: 16.
- "Women Get Lower Pay and Less Power." USA Today Dec. 1995: 10.





## *What If I Were a Show Dog?*

*Melinda Doner*

Hi, my name is Ebony. Do you see that 8 1/2 inch by 14 inch picture? That's me after my first competition win in Dubuque, Iowa when I was three years old. I was 24 inches tall and weighed 95 pounds, the perfect size for a female Rottweiler (Fogle 253). Can you see that trophy beside me and my collar full of blue ribbons? I was the top dog of the weekend. Best of all, I won "Best of Show." Even though that was the best feeling ever to me, I was not always the top dog.

There were many things for me to accomplish before "winning" that competition, so when I was just a pup, my mom and dad (human) were always taking me to puppy classes to train me how to behave around humans, especially strangers. Both Mom and Dad came to every training session, so no one would miss any important tips or leaning techniques. A practice competition was always held once a month at the training facility. For the practice competitions to be fair, a judge who had never seen us in our training sessions came. We, other puppies in my session and I, were separated into our competition American Kennel Club (AKC) groups or classes. These classes or groups are as follows:

Herding Group

Hound Group

Miscellaneous Class

Non-Sporting Group

Terrier Group

Toy Group

Working Group—this is my group. (Zeder, "What Happens" 5-7)

These practice competitions were to get us ready for the real thing, like a scrimmage in basketball practice for humans. In these practice competitions, no dog received a ribbon or any prizes. Each of us received a

written critique after the judge was done placing each puppy. These critiques contained the information that each of us individually needed to work on or learn. These critiques are only given to the top three dogs in the real competition.

After training for about eight months, I went to my first "real" competition in Dubuque. In my "Working Group" competition, I placed in the lower ten percent. When competitors place in the lower ten percent of his or her first competition of the day/ weekend, they do not participate in any more competitions the rest of the weekend. The rest of the weekend Mom, Dad, and I stayed to watch who won the "Best of Show" (the best dog of all). "Best of Show" this weekend went to a fluffy, black and tan Pekingese.

Mom and Dad continued to tell me, throughout my competing life, that it takes practice and time to reach being the best. Over the course of the next few years, we traveled several hundreds, if not thousands, of miles for competitions. We may not have participated in all of them, but I learned a lot from watching the competitors and the judges and professionals talking to Mom and Dad.

I am now three years old (21 in dog years), and we are going back to Dubuque two days early. This was one thing we learned from professionals over the years (Zeder, "I Want" 4). We found our hotel and made ourselves comfortable; this was going to be one of our last chances to relax before the big competition. We all took naps, then we went for a walk before eating supper. After supper, Mom and Dad allowed me to lie on their bed with them to calm some of my nerves.

The next morning when I woke, I had to go potty, so I made Mom and Dad get out of bed to take me for a

walk. After our walk and our breakfast, I got a bath; I love baths because they relax me and give me a chance to play. Bathing is not only a chance for me to play, it is also a preparation for show. Bathing is not the only preparation for show. We also had to change my street collar and lead to a show collar and lead (Zeder, "I Want" 4). The next two days were the big, long days, so we enjoyed the nice warm and sunny day while we could. We went to the park and met with some of the other competitors and I wished them good luck. Mom and Dad went swimming in the hotel pool while I sat at the edge watching them relax. Then to wind down before the big day, we watched two dog movies: All Dogs Go to Heaven and Lady and the Tramp on video.

The show started at 10:00 A.M. the next day so we needed to get up at 6:30 A.M. Mom and Dad said good night to me and each other, but all I could do was give them a sweet bark.

After getting up and ready for the full day ahead of us, we went to the show arena. We found our spot next to some of the other dogs in the working class. Mom and Dad went to the superintendent table to check me in, pick up a program for the order of the show, and buy a catalog. The catalog was to see if there were any sales on Rottweilers to find me a play mate (Zeder, "What Happens" 1).

When the show was about to begin, the superintendent welcomed everyone, dog and human, to the show and he also introduced the two judges for the weekend. My class had to wait about two hours before beginning. Each class took about an hour to pick the top five, especially when there were twenty or more participants. First place of each class or group received 5 points; second place, 4 points; third place, 3 points; fourth place, 2 points; fifth place 1 point. Each and every point is calculated throughout a dog's competition years. If a dog has at least two major wins (points 3, 4, or 5), and a total of 15 points, he or she is a champion (Zeder, "What Happens" 4).

When it was my turn to be in the ring, Mom and Dad were watching as the hired professional took me in. We entered in the top left corner, I showed the judge what I knew, and I remembered that I was only three points away from being a champion. When the judge walked up to me to look me over, he asked to see my teeth so I smiled as the professional lifted my gums (Wilkes 48). While the judge was there, he made note that I did not have any flaws. Show Rottweilers are not

to have a white spot on the chest and/or light colored eyes (Eisen, February 21/22). He also noted that my coat is flat but course and its color is black and tan, the perfect coat for a Rottweiler (Fogle 253). "She looks like a Rottweiler, she walks like a Rottweiler, and she acts like a Rottweiler," the judge said as I was announced the winner of the working group.

My two days continued to get better, I won every class that I competed in including the "Best of Show." That is how I won all those ribbons and the trophy in the 8 1/2 inch by 14 inch picture. This competition made me a champion leaving with 25 points.

After that weekend, Mom and Dad were looking for another Rottweiler to be my companion. We found one that Mom, Dad, and I all liked out of the catalog from the competition. We named him Buck. I went to two more competitions to compete. Then I retired in order to raise my pups. In one of these last competitions, I held my title of "Best of Show."

Also in my retired years, I became a guard and herding dog for Mom and Dad. My life has changed tremendously from a simple pup, to a show dog, to a retired mother who takes care of her children. I have enjoyed every single minute of my life, even though it was very tough making it to the top. Mom and Dad are very proud to have Buck, myself, and our pups. All of us keep them busy.

### *Works Cited*

- 
- Eisen, Armand. Rottweilers 1998 Calendar. Missouri: Andrews McMeel, 1998.
- Fogle, Bruce D.V.M.. The Encyclopedia of the Dog. New York: DK, 1995.
- Wilkes, Gary. "Your Dog Can Act Like a Winner." *Dog Fancy* March 1998: 48-49.
- Zeder, S. "I Want to go to a Dog Show! The User's Guide to Dog Shows." The Actual Dog Show: On-line. Netscape. 6 March 1998.  
Available <http://users.neca.com/szeder/dogsho2.html>
- . "What Happens At a Dog Show?" The Actual Dog Show. On-line. Netscape. 6 March 1998.  
Available <http://users.neca.com/szeder/dogsho1.html>



## *Women: We Are Not What We Once Were, But We Are Not What We Could Be*

*Patricia A. Avon*

Are you aware that women were once beaten and thrown in jail for demanding the right to vote? Or that they were not given a choice about their reproductive rights? Women were forced to endure dangerous and often unwanted pregnancies regardless of the risk to the children or themselves. Have you heard that once upon a time, women were not allowed to work outside their home or own property? It's true (Beck).

Unfortunately, many women have forgotten the sacrifices and hardships those before us endured so that we can enjoy the freedoms now taken for granted. Women have never before enjoyed such a wealth of freedom and opportunity. Voting, jobs, and control of our reproductive health are now accessible to all women. Yet, we are not as successful as we could be. Where are the Gloria Steinhams, the Margaret Sangers, the Susan B. Anthony's, and the Bella Abzugs of today?

Somewhere along our journey, we women have strayed off the path to independence and success. Some of us tiptoed into the dark woods to listen to the big, bad wolf whisper in our ear "Complacency is acceptable and even admirable. Let the men handle everything; they always have." Well ladies, the wolf was a man and he was wrong! We have lost accountability for our actions, "settling" for less than we deserve. What is the obstacle in our path to success? We are.

It disappoints me that as women we have become our own worst enemy. Too many of us have fallen into the abyss of irresponsible pregnancy, or have taken advantage of the sexual harassment laws intended to protect us. And too many women have ignored their right to vote, thus ensuring our voice in the political future. If we are defined by our actions, we have sent a

miserable message to future generations of women. We *must* correct these flaws because only then might we be truly successful.

First, I will address the issue of pregnancy. Four out of ten women will become pregnant at least once before the age of twenty. Eighty-five percent of these pregnancies are unintentional (National Campaign 1). This is inexcusable.

I have heard the explanations as well as the rebuttals: "it just happened," "the condom broke," "it's none of your business," and even "it's my body and I'll do what I want."

My response is this: not good enough, ladies. It is irresponsible and selfish to bear children without means of support unless one counts reliance on the kindness of strangers, *i.e.* taxpayers as means of support. I am disappointed in women who make this decision. Margaret Sanger, the first president of The Planned Parenthood Federation of America, was arrested in 1916 for creating a public nuisance when she opened a Brooklyn birth control clinic, and the rights she fought for are mocked every time an underage or economically challenged woman becomes pregnant (1).

To the women claiming accidental pregnancies, I challenge their responsibility in all areas. Each of us is responsible for our body. To women claiming the birth control pill did not work, I would ask if they read the literature found inside each pill package. Most women do not bother with this action, feeling that swallowing the pill is enough. Wrong! We must take the time to educate ourselves about our bodies and what goes into them. Many women claim ignorance about drug interaction with birth control pills, yet it is stated in the literature

that prescription drugs can counter pill effects. Would these same women sign a legal document without reading the information? I hope not.

To the women who claim birth control was neither available nor affordable, I say "Shame on you!" Birth control is as available as cold medicine, antacid, or aspirin. Where you find one, you will find all. If price is your vice, I ask you this, "If you feel you can not afford birth control, what makes you think you can afford a child?"

Pregnancy may be viewed in two ways: as a miraculous gift or the consequence of a foolish action. The issue boils down to responsibility as a woman. When we fail to show responsibility, it reflects on us all, seriously slowing our progress as women. In a patriarchal society, we are viewed as slaves to our sexuality. Irresponsible pregnancies enforce this ideal by presenting women as incapable of self-control. We *must* show the world that we are capable of self-control. By reducing our irresponsible pregnancy levels, we can reverse the careless stereotypes that many people have of women.

Secondly, I would like to address the issue of sexual harassment. I believe many women have abused the laws intended to protect our rights. False or inaccurate claims are destroying the credibility of women in the workforce who *are* being sexually harassed. Over sensitivity has blurred the lines as to what constitutes a sexual harassment issue. For instance, a Maine Law Court rejected one woman's claim that she was sexually harassed by her female supervisor's crude language. The judge ruled that these remarks were not specifically directed to the plaintiff based on her gender (Payne 2). In another case, a pregnant woman claimed sexual harassment by fellow employees who laughed at her denim maternity clothes, referring to her as a "giant blueberry." This case was dismissed (Payne 2).

Real sexual harassment, as defined by Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act includes:

- Direct sexual advances or propositions, including higher-ranked employees asking for sexual favors.
- Intimidating or excluding women employees to jeopardize their employment status.
- Creating a hostile workplace for women by using sexist jokes, remarks, or pinning up sexually explicit or pornographic photos (Sexual Harassment 2).

Real sexual harassment is intolerable, but many women are using the term too loosely, clogging the

court system with litigious nonsense while the real victims of harassment pay the price by not being taken seriously.

Perhaps I am too harsh, but I feel women should toughen up. Toughen up does not mean ignore the problems; it means think clearly about your situation and options, then proceed with caution because your action will reflect on us all. We must determine whether we are actually being harassed and if so, document our experiences and confront the person/s responsible before filing a claim. Because this is primarily a female issue, it is our obligation to demand higher standards of ourselves when faced with an unsettling situation; we all know what happened to the boy who cried "Wolf!"

Finally, I would like to discuss voting, or the lack of it. Many women fail to participate in anything remotely political. There is an overwhelming consensus among women that in this patriarchal society our vote does not count. That is a ridiculous myth. Every vote counts! In the last presidential election, only 55.5% of women voted (U.S. Census 1). Where were the rest of you, ladies?

Family friendly leave, childcare, maternity options, etc. will not fall out of the sky and land at our feet. We must vote, supporting politicians who take a firm and fair hand with women's issues. Not only do our votes benefit us, but future women as well. By not voting, we are sending a dangerous message to young women that voting is not important.

As a child, I learned about Susan B. Anthony and other suffragettes in history class. I was not told of how they were beaten and often jailed because of their demand to vote (Beck). It was not until I took a government class at the age of thirty that I became truly informed. What these women endured to ensure my right to vote holds me in awe of their conviction. Voting is beneficial to us all. If only one gender is represented, we are all being seriously misrepresented.

For every step forward we have taken two steps back. With so many opportunities now available to women, there should be nothing standing in the way of our success. We can not blame a patriarchal society or a lack of positive role models for our own careless mistakes. We must commit ourselves to eliminating the flaws that hold us to a mediocre standard.

Margaret Sanger, Susan B. Anthony, Bella Abzug, Gloria Steinam, Betty Friedan, and others paved a road for the women of today. This road led to freedom of choice, job opportunities, and voting rights. What legacy will we leave future women? I think it is time we decided, don't you?

*Works Cited*

---

Beck, Thomas. Class Lecture. Oct. 1997.

Census Bureau. On-line Posting.  
[www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov). 16 Apr. 1998.

National Campaign. "Facts and Statistics." On-line Posting.  
[www.teenpregnancy.org/factstats.htm](http://www.teenpregnancy.org/factstats.htm)  
16 Apr. 1998.

Payne, Claire Hudson. "When Is Harrassment Not Sexual Harrassment?" On-line Posting.  
[www.eatonpeadbody.com/art-harass.htm](http://www.eatonpeadbody.com/art-harass.htm)  
16 Apr. 1998.

Sanger, Margaret. "Margaret Sanger 1879–1966." On-line Posting.  
<http://marian.creighton.edu/~mpoly/wirc/sanger.html>. 16 Apr. 1998.

Sexual Harassment. "What To Do If You Or Someone You Know Is Sexually Harassed." On-line Posting.  
[www.feminist.org/911/haras-whatdo.html#workplace](http://www.feminist.org/911/haras-whatdo.html#workplace). 16 Apr. 1998.



## TV

*Scott Apland*

When watching television, “one will never see people watching television” (Ehrenreich 160). This is because that would not be as exciting as a sporting event or showing people doing something funny. We watch enough TV that the characters on these shows do not need to do that. Watching TV for hours and hours everyday is not healthy, mentally or physically. Doing such can cause many problems in anyone’s life.

Almost all people watch a little television—the news, an occasional movie, or situation comedy. That is not a problem. The problem is when someone uses all the free time available to watch television and avoid other activities. Excessive viewing of television is an issue that will cause several problems including obesity, obsessive behavior, and decreased social interaction affecting mental health.

There are three main problems with watching television for hours on end. One, growing children have less time for physical activities, and in turn have a higher average body fat percentage than kids who watch very little TV. Second, a viewer can become obsessed with watching television and demonstrate abnormal tendencies. Last, mental health may be compromised because the time spent interacting with others is lowered due to the amount of time spent watching television. These three problems are specific indicators of a person watching too much television.

An objection to these ideas could be that these problems already existed, and that watching too much television merely allows these problems to be obvious to others. This may be true. However, watching television does not help these problems go away. In the same regard, limiting the amount of time spent watching TV could actually be a way of treating or helping with these

problems. Intervening and limiting the amount of television these people watch may help them participate in other activities, and at the same time deal with these issues.

First, children who watch too much television are more likely to have problems with obesity. Kids are at the highest risk of any age group to develop a problem with body fat. These children who watch television “at least four hours daily had about 20 percent more body fat than kids who watched fewer than two hours” (*Des Moines Register* 8A). Therefore, if a child does not get the opportunity to be physically active, fat percentages may increase to a measurable level above normal. That can be the beginning of a problem that may last a life time. “American kids now devote 22–30 hours to television each week.” (Kottak 162). This shows that more children of today are going to become obese than kids in the past, when television was not as prevalent. Parents will hopefully realize this and change it before it becomes a severe problem.

Second, watching hours per day of television may cause a viewer to become obsessed with watching television. This is a very serious problem. Any obsession can cause hostile attitudes, unreliability, and poor hygiene. Also, similar to chemical dependency, removal of television can cause withdraw. As a cable installer, I see all these things. When I disconnect someone’s cable, I often see the hostility, poor hygiene, and withdrawal. Usually, this is demonstrated with vulgarities and soiled appearances. As far as unreliability, it is seen in the same people I just mentioned. They do not pick up around their homes, do not pay their bills, and are rarely interacting with others when I confront these people.

Finally, watching many hours of television allows less time for social interaction. There are only 168 hours in a week; if a person sleeps 52.5 hours, works 40 hours, then there is only 75.5 hours a week to do as they wish. Commonly, people who watch too much television will spend more than four hours a day in front of the television. After that, less than 50 hours per week are left for recreation, eating, hygiene, and social interaction. A person can easily use 30 of those hours eating and grooming themselves. That amount of time only leaves two and a half hours a day to interact socially with family and friends. This is not a lot of time. Most people need more than that to have a substantial social life.

With only two and a half hours per day to spend with others, many relationships can falter. Very few social events, dates, or activities will last less than two and a half hours. To develop strong social skills, we must spend many hours every day interacting with others. These skills are essential for being able to socially interact healthily. I believe that without social interaction a person may withdraw from others and become depressed and/or mentally ill. This is starting to happen to my grandma. She now lives alone in a large house with very few visitors. It seems that she becomes healthier in periods of time when she has a lot of company providing social interaction. This is the same thing that could happen from watching a lot of tele-

vision. Therefore, watching excessive amounts of television is a problem that can lead to limited social interaction to the point it can become a health issue.

To reiterate, watching too much television is a serious problem. It may lead to problems with obesity in children. Another issue is developing an obsession that can cause anti-social behavior. Last, interaction with others in a social situation is reduced to a level low enough to cause mental health problems. Watching an excessive amount of television can be a part of many serious problems.

### *Works Cited*

---

Common Culture. Spare Time: "Hours per Week Adults Aged 18 to 64 in Leisure Activities." New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc. 602.

Ehrenreich, Barbara. "Spudding Out." Common Culture. New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc. 158-160.

Kottak, Conrad. "Television and Cultural Behavior." Common Culture. New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc. 161-169.

"New Comprehensive study links hours of TV viewing to obesity among children." Des Moines Register. 25 March 1998: 8a



## *From School To Work*

*Shelley Stark*

As I near completion of my education at DMACC, I think about careers, and I am concerned about my future. Many of the articles that I've been reading paint a bleak employment picture. I've come back to school as a non-traditional student to try to change careers because of a physical injury that left me unable to perform the demanding physical labor of painting and wallpapering. I thought that if I gained enough education and social skills, I could obtain employment in a less physically demanding field in which I could support myself. After reading about low paying clerical jobs, discrimination and exclusion because of gender, women being paid less than men for equal work, disproportionate pay among the ranks, and sexual harassment, I am concerned about returning to a traditional work setting. The statistics for these issues are not in my favor. Not only am I concerned about the obstacles that will limit my ability to function competitively, but I am also concerned about what employers are looking for in an employee. What skills should I take to the job market in order to be considered for employment? What are employers looking for in an applicant? What skills and qualifications do I need to get my foot in the door?

I am disillusioned with corporate America. Are the people who run the companies so self-serving that they are willing to collect sometimes 150 times what the average employee makes? Do they realize the disproportionate difference in salaries, and how hard it is for an entry-level employee to make ends meet? I believe that they realize the difference and are not empathetic to it. "While parents of middle-class families are working two jobs just to make ends meet, we have people like Michael Eisner of Walt Disney, Inc. taking home hundreds of millions of dollars a year—more money

than anybody could spend even if you spent money 24 hours a day" (qtd. in *Speculations* 476). In a telephone interview with John McNeer, retired Vice-President of Marketing, Newton Manufacturing Company, we discussed the salary of Leonard Hadley, CEO for Maytag Corporation. McNeer responded, "Yes. The salary ratio is disproportionate, but so are the responsibilities" (McNeer). I understand that a CEO of a corporation has either worked his way through the ranks and has spent long years earning his position, and/or has been academically educated to qualify for such a position. Most positions of this type require not only years of experience, but they also require numerous community and civil affiliations and responsibilities. All of this takes time and commitment; however, I think that the ratio of CEO/employee pay is way out of proportion, even when considering responsibility. Why does any one person need to earn the kind of money that Michael Eisner or Leonard Hadley does?

I will be one who will be on the low end of the disproportionate pay scale. I will start at the bottom of the ladder. In "Greetings from the Electronic Plantation," Roger Swardson says, "where you work all week but can't make a living, lots of us are fastened like barnacles to the bottom of the computer revolution" (494). That will probably be me. I will work in a factory, but in the technological sense. I will probably sit in a "data factory" entering information on a computer, earning between \$6.00 and \$8.00 an hour—if I get a "good job" of this type. I realize that this is the bottom rung of the ladder, and I am willing to accept the lowest position. However, I also believe that a full-time entry-level job needs to include a salary substantial enough for me to pay rent, utilities, food, clothing, transportation



and medical coverage—the essentials to be able to work. At \$6.00 to \$8.00 an hour, my gross income before taxes and deductions would range from \$240 to \$320 a week. After expenses to be able to work, I should be lucky if I break even. I will be one of 14 million Americans the government classifies as poor, earning less than \$14,000 annually, although I will have worked a full week, with two years of college education.

When I first started my college education, I assumed that I would need a four-year degree in order to succeed, considering my age and past experience. At this point in my education, I am questioning that thought. President and CEO of General Motors, John F. Smith made the comment, “What. . . people need more than a four-year degree are transferable skills [portable skills], practical answers to the question ‘Why do I need to learn this?’ and opportunities to learn at actual workplaces” (“What Do Employers Want?” 25). There are still jobs that require a four-year degree, such as teaching, but there are increasing numbers of employers who agree that a two-year degree with good “soft” skills is sufficient. Janet Wall, ASVAB Career Exploration Program Manager, Defense Manpower Data Center, Seaside, California, is in agreement. She is quoted as saying, “We’ve put a value judgment on that four-year degree: You’re worthy if you have one and not worthy if you don’t. That’s just wrong” (25).

Another depressing thought is that because I am a woman, and a woman with physical and emotional handicaps, I will probably be paid much less than my male counterparts, even though my expenses will be more because I am a woman, but my qualifications will be equal. Women earn, on the average, 70% of the income of a man in a similar position. In “The Wages of Backlash: The Toll on Working Women,” Susan Faludi asks the question, “If American women are so equal, why do they represent two-thirds of all poor adults? Why are nearly 75% of full-time working women making less than \$20,000 a year?” (509). Women have been stereotyped as working mothers or supplemental income earners. This stereotyping has kept women’s wages at a lower level than that of their male counterparts. Their earnings are not considered to be the primary income of the family. They are considered as a supplement to the family earnings. I realize that there are supplemental income workers in the workforce; however, there are ever increasing numbers of single-parent employees in the workplace, especially with welfare-to-work programs now in effect. In a span of 40 years, a woman will lose \$1 million on gender alone. Faludi also says that “in a few cases where women did

make substantial inroads into male enclaves, they were only admitted by default. . . . Women succeeded only because the pay and status of these jobs had fallen dramatically, men were bailing out” (513).

At one end of the spectrum, some believe that women are victims of sexism. On the other end, some believe that necessary skills in assertiveness are lacking. In “Why Women aren’t Getting to the Top,” Susan Fraker answers the question by saying, “The biggest hurdle is a matter of comfort, not competence. . . . What [the employer is] looking for is someone who fits, someone who gets along, someone you trust. Now that’s subtle stuff. How does a group of men feel that a woman is going to fit? I think it’s very hard” (528).

I believe that men’s comfort level is a basis for discrimination. In the 1980s “complaints of exclusion, demotions, and discharges on the basis of sex rose 30%. General harassment of women, excluding sexual harassment, more than doubled” (Faludi 515). We have to learn to trust each other, before we can get along and fit in. The issue of gender has to be put aside, and a neutral attitude must be accepted for this to occur. I realize there are differences between men and women, both physically and emotionally, but these differences have to be put to rest in the workplace in order for gender equality to occur.

In choosing my career path, I need to know what is expected of me on the job. I need to know what an employer considers important skills. Training Manager for Rockwell Automotive Special Axles, Heath, Ohio, and the Licking County Pre-employment Training Consortium, Fred Paul answers the question of what skills he thinks are in short supply. “We are looking for the quality of the person, their work ethic, their ability to read for information and to communicate—to interface with customers and be able to talk with them. The key is finding people who come to you with communication skills and the ability and willingness to learn” (22). President of International Training and Development Associates, Spring Valley, California, David Cowan says that “what we are looking for is people who have portable skills, the transcendent skills, the skills they can take from one place to another” (23). Technical skills can be learned on the job. At the rate that technology is changing, job skills shift every six to nine months. Employers expect employees to have basic skills, but are willing to fine-tune them to fit the particular job, and to keep up with technology.

I believe there is hope, even though the prospects of being a woman with handicaps in the competitive labor market are not ideal. It is a fact that women are

discriminated against, equal pay really isn't equal among genders or within ranks of some companies, and that there is harassment in the workplace. These are issues that have yet to be resolved, and issues that should cause concern. I may not be able to resolve these issues, but with good communication skills, and assertive behavior, I might be able to make a difference. If I have the right attitude and can communicate effectively, I should be able to start on that bottom rung. I believe the key is as Swardson put it in "Greetings from the Electronic Plantation," "don't specialize. Learn what used to be called the Liberal Arts. Learn how the world works and how to think" (494). Now there's a portable skill!

### *Works Cited*

- Faludi, Susan. "The Wages of Backlash: The Toll on Working Women." Speculations—Readings in Culture, Identity, and Values. Ed. Charles I. Schuster & William V. Van Pelt. New Jersey: Blair, 1996. 509–526.
- Fraker, Susan. "Why Women Aren't Getting to the Top." Speculations—Readings in Culture, Identity, and Values. Ed. Charles I. Schuster & William V. Van Pelt. New Jersey: Blair, 1996. 527–535.
- McNeer, John. Telephone interview with author. April, 1998.
- Schuster, Charles I. & Van Pelt, William V. , eds. Speculations—Readings in Culture, Identity, and Values. New Jersey: Blair, 1996.
- Swanson, Roger. "Greetings from the Electronic Plantation." Speculations—Readings in Culture, Identity, and Values. Ed. Charles I. Schuster & William Van Pelt. New Jersey: Blair, 1996. 493–500.
- "What Do Employers Want?" Techniques—Making Education and Career Connections May, 1997. 22–25.



## *Syntax Error in Computer Education*

*Jeremy Allman*

Education and business are two of the major backbones of this great nation. Without proper education, business would decline and without business, there wouldn't be as great a need for education. Lately, the Clinton administration and Congress has been debating on new and better ways we can improve our current education system, and better prepare our children for the 21st century business world. One area they should cover is the area involving computer training. Many schools are currently teaching students on Apple Macintosh computers. The fact is, however, that the majority of businesses do not use Apple Macintosh computers, but rather IBM compatible PC's (PC is a common abbreviation for Personal Computer). Randy Allman, executive vice president at a company that uses both PC's and Macs, and also a member of the Waukegan School Board, says that "it is a disservice to students, when the first time they see a PC is at college or at their new employer" (Allman). In order to better prepare children for the future, IBM compatible PC's should be used by public schools and universities instead of Apple Macintosh computers.

Macintosh activists often claim that Macintosh Computers are more cost effective for schools than IBM compatibles. Apple actually has much of its mass market in the education system. This has been true since the emergence of the Apple II in the early 1980's, which were widely used in schools around the country. Even recently, Apple has come up with new market strategies to implement sales in schools. In the article "Apple Directs 10% of Some Sales to Schools 10/29/97," author Patrick McKenna describes Apple's new "Power of 10" program. Apple is allowing businesses and private citizens to apply 10% of the purchase price of their new

computer as a credit to a specific school of their choice, who can in turn use these credits to purchase educational Apple computers and software.(1) Schools are also receiving many computer donations which are Macintosh computers. As businesses turn away from the Macintosh computer, schools are the recipients of computer donations. In McKenna's article, McKenna quotes Apple spokesperson John Santoro as saying, "53 percent of all computers in schools still have an Apple logo on them and only 29 percent of computers in schools are capable of running Windows."(1) This high percentage is undoubtedly a result of donations and large educational discounts.

While schools are saving on Macintosh computers over IBM compatibles, Apple's influence on the business and home users is declining, making the future of the company questionable. While it may be true that Apple computers make up over 50% of all educational computers, "only 2.9 percent of computers sold at retail during the first quarter of 1997 were Macs, compared with 10.2 percent a year earlier," as quoted by the *Nation's Business Magazine* article "Should You Consider A Mac For Your Next Office Computer?" (41). These declining numbers show a lack of sales of Macs to businesses and homeowners. Apple also is having trouble selling the product it already has, even with educational sales. In an article entitled "Apple's Latest Bruise," author John Simons explains that when Apple tried to increase sales in Japan, which is responsible for 17% of Apple's sales, Apple actually began to sell computers at a loss, dropping the companies gross profit margin. Simons quotes Forrester Research's Jon Oltisk as saying, "Trying to match Windows/Intel PC pricing at this point is suicide for Apple." Simons also points out that

Apple's inventory of unsold computers jumped up almost 3.5 million dollars in 1995 (1). In an article titled "Cutting Into Apple's Core," author Barbara Rudolph brings up the fact that many parents feel that children should be trained on IBM PC's to train them for the business world. She quotes Michael Lorion, Apple's vice president for education as saying in Apple's defense, "There is a significant difference between how technology is used in schools and how it is used in business." Well, I'd like to know what we're training our children for? If we're not training them for the future business world, why are we sending them to school, and spending millions in government money every year? With Apple's sales and popularity decreasing, why should we still be teaching Macintosh computers in schools? Maybe we should go back to using slide rules instead of calculators also. After all, they are more cost effective.

Those who oppose IBM compatible computers in schools also claim that Macintosh computers can run Windows 95, IBM's major operating system, that they can communicate with PC's very easily, and that many software programs are dual platform, meaning that they are made for IBM compatibles and Macintoshes. Macintosh computers are able to run Windows, and any IBM compatible programs two different ways. One is by use of a software program entitled Soft Windows. Computer users simply launch soft windows in the Macintosh finder, and then from Windows, users can launch any Windows compatible program. The second option for Macintosh Power PC users is to purchase a DOS card, a card installed in a Macintosh with a PC processor and memory slots allotted specifically for the DOS card. With a DOS card, computer users can switch between two processors in their machine at the simple touch of a button, allowing them to utilize the power of an IBM processor and software along with the power of a Macintosh processor and software. Many popular software titles, such as Microsoft Office and Word Perfect, are also dual platform, allowing easy crossovers between IBM compatible and Macintosh PC's running the same programs. An article entitled "Office for Macintosh Leapfrogs PC Version with New Features" found in Computer Reseller News describes Microsoft Office 98 Macintosh Edition: "All the best and even some of the worst features of Office 97 for Windows are present" (1).

Contrary to the critics' claims, there are many setbacks to these qualities of the Macintosh computer. First of all, computer users must add in the extra cost of having Soft Windows, or a DOS Card. The price of a Apple Pentium DOS card, as found on CompUSA ®,

online price list, is \$1,129.94 (2). This cost, in addition to the cost of a DOS card compatible Macintosh Power PC would easily total over \$2,500. This money could almost purchase two brand new Pentium 200 IBM compatibles on the retail market. We also must analyze problems transferring files between dual platforms. The unique disk formats between the Macintosh and the IBM compatible often results in problems transferring files. Many times, such things as margins and fonts aren't available on both platforms, altering the documents. In high school, I personally turned in an English paper with a repeated paragraph, which was due to transferring my paper from my home IBM compatible to the school's Macintosh for printing. Randy Allman explained that he encounters many problems transferring documents between their IBM word processor and their Mac word processor. Allman says he encounters even more problems when trying to access files on a Mac using his IBM notebook remotely, or from a location away from the office. Allman couldn't have summed it up any better than when he said, "Data just gets screwed up" (Allman). Problems such as these can be very embarrassing in both the business and educational world.

Critics of IBM compatibles also claim that Macintosh computers are more user friendly than PC's, and that they are a better machine for handling graphics and designs. The graphical interface and drag and drop features of the Macintosh operating system make it incredibly easy to use. "Plug and Play" also allows easy connection of external hardware to the computer. The results of a survey between Windows 95 and Mac OS were published in *MacEvangelist Magazine*, and can also be found online. The results of the survey showed the greatest time differences in installing a modem and installing an Iomega Zip Drive. The results clearly showed that the Mac was better ("Mac vs. Win95 FaceOff" 2). Macintosh is also known for its handling of graphics. Businessman Randy Allman explains that the reason his company uses both IBM compatibles and Macs rather than just IBM compatibles is because Macs can design their advertising material so much better.

However, with the revolution of Windows 95, these qualities of the Macintosh operating system have been matched. Similar drag and drop file management features are present, along with plug and play. What is not told about the survey previously mentioned is the facts. When the modem test was performed, an internal modem was installed in the Windows machine, while an external modem was installed on the Macintosh. Well, of course it takes longer to open the case, plug in the modem, and close the case than to just plug the modem

in! As far as the zip drive, a Macintosh is pre-set to accept a zip drive, so no software had to be installed. The Windows machine simply had to have a driver installed on it. Other tests performed, such as connecting a printer and connecting to the Internet, showed minimal time differences of less than 15 seconds, and they were actually in favor of the Windows machine ("Mac vs. Win95 FaceOff" 2). As for the graphical benefits of the Macintosh, they cannot be denied. However, most major businesses aren't primarily concerned with high tech design work, but rather database management and word processing. They leave the design work to the pros, who for the most part do use Macintosh computers.

It is true that there are many reasons offered by critics praising the use of Macintosh computers in schools. The fact is, however, that there are many more reasons why we should not use Macintosh computers in schools, but rather use IBM compatible computers. These reasons include the fact that IBM compatibles are more widely used in the business world, and that IBM compatible have more software and hardware options available.

First of all, IBM compatibles are simply more widely used in a more diverse line of businesses. Many corporations who have previously used Macintosh computers are switching to IBM compatibles. In an article entitled "Smooth Operators," author Issie Rabinovitch says, "Today, the desktop is very much a Windows-dominated environment. The market share for Macintosh operating systems has dropped down to a single digit" (1). We must also not forget the home market. Macintosh computers only make up 2.9 percent of retail computer sales, according to the Nations Business article "Should You Consider a Mac for Your Next Office Computer" (41).

Not only are IBM compatibles more widely used, but they have vast hardware options. Multiple vendors of IBM compatibles, including companies such as Gateway 2000, Packard Bell, Compaq, Digital, NEC, CTX, and many more, allow for a more diverse line of hardware options, as well as creating a lower price market.

Finally, IBM compatibles have better software availability. Many software programs are specifically designed for the IBM PC's. Randy Allman explains that several programs used at his office can't be used on Macs. Some of these included Expo-Cad, which Allman uses to set up layouts, shows, and exhibitions, and Expo-Registration, which Allman uses for making name badges and maintaining databases for his shows and exhibitions.

Considerations of the delay between the development of a single program for both platforms must also be considered. Many times software produced for the IBM PC doesn't show up on the Macintosh until some time later. This is evident in the development of Microsoft Office 98 for Macintosh, which is the mirror of Microsoft Office 97 on the PC (Office 2). The Microsoft corporation has only agreed to make software for Macintosh computers for three more years. What's to come after that?

The declining use of Macintosh computers is making them obsolete in most business environments. In order to properly prepare our children for the 21<sup>st</sup> century business world, we must either train them on the more popular business computer, or train them on both computers. Due to the declining use of Macintosh computers in the business world, we should train our children to use IBM compatibles to prepare them for the 21<sup>st</sup> century business world.

### *Works Cited*

---

- Allman, Randy. Interview. 1 May 1998.
- Apple Price List. Advertisement. *Comp-USA* Online. <http://www.compusa.com>
- Levin, Sam. "Mac V. Win95 FaceOff" Online. <http://www.halcyon.com/kegill/mac/win95/faceoff.html>
- McKenna, Patrick. "Apple Directs 10% Of Some Sales To Schools 10/29/97." *Newsbytes News Network* 10/29/97. *Business and Industry*. Online. 27 Mar 1998.
- "Office For Macintosh Leapfrogs PC Version With New Features." *Computer Reseller News* 02/16/98. *Business and Industry*. Online. 27 Mar 1998.
- Rabinovitch, Issie. "Smooth Operators." *CA Magazine* V130 Aug. 1997: 16-19 *Wilson Select*. Online. 18 Mar 1998.
- Rudolph, Barbara. "Cutting Into Apple's Core." *Fortune* V137 16 Mar 1998: 150 *Wilson Select*. Online. 27 Mar 1998.
- Simons, John. "Apples Latest Bruise." *U.S. News & World Report* V120 29 Jan 1996: 57 *Wilson Select*. Online. 18 Mar 1998.
- "Should You Consider a Mac For Your Next Office Computer?" *Nation's Business* V85 Dec 1997: 41.



## *Hang Your Hat Here*

*Deana Williams*

News headlines report that young adolescents are murdering their parents, their siblings, and they are invading schools with firearms and in a crazed moment slaughtering their classmates. But the most shocking dilemma are teenage parents who are killing their innocent, newborn babies. What is happening to the youth in our country today? What is causing this erratic and violent behavior in America's children? Children's advocates are alarmed with this juvenile behavior and fervently search for answers to solve the problem.

One such advocate, Jackie Sparks, a social worker for The Iowa Department of Human Services, recently portrayed a chilling incident in which two young teenagers kidnapped a four-year-old boy, raped him repeatedly, beat him with a coat hanger, and then hid him in a suitcase to die. Frustrated with the trend of teen violence, she addresses the issue to increase punishment for violent juvenile crimes. Yet, more importantly, Sparks asks the question, "Who's at fault?" (Sparks 3)?

Indeed, what fuels American youths to act out in such ruthless and senseless crimes and who is willing to accept responsibility for youth violence in our country? It appears that educators, researchers, government agencies, and special interest groups grasp for a reason to hang their hats on regarding the ever-increasing violence across the United States. One hook these groups focus their attention on is increased violence in today's music culture.

Critiques of Rap music strongly suggest that Rap lyrics promotes hatred, racism, and violence. As one author states, "Rap music is about attitude, and I don't mean a good attitude, it's always bad" (Adler 165). Aha! Here is something to hang our hat on. Why not censor the music that teenagers are exposed to? In 1987, Tipper

Gore, wife of then Vice President Al Gore, attempted to do just that by banning explicit music to young adolescents. This polarized the music industry and basically forced them to adopt a "voluntary" music rating system. Then low and behold, freedom-of-speech advocates furiously responded with charges that this ban is a violation of our Constitutional rights. For ten, long years the lines have been drawn and the battle rages on regarding censorship of music. What was resolved? Absolutely nothing! Violence in music and violence in our youth continues to rage out of control in America. Did it answer the question of "What is happening to the youth in our country today?" **NO!** Did it appropriately address the issue of "Who's at fault?" **NO!** The critical problem remains at hand. We must keep in mind that there are possible solutions to this problem.

Society desperately needs to search for solutions that will end the increasing violence of our youth. Part of the solution is not appropriating millions of dollars on senate-committee hearings and continuing the debate of the music our youth are exposed to. More importantly, we need to understand why musicians are expressing themselves by producing hate messages which ultimately draw our youth towards this growing hate movement. Society also needs to examine **why** adolescents expose themselves to violent movies such as *Natural Born Killers* and **why** they incessantly watch mindless, violent television like *Beavis and Butthead*. But it is not enough to simply ask the question **why?** We must find the solution to end this trend toward violence.

First, let's look at our past and present cultural environment. Unfortunately, throughout history, racism and hatred has continued to dominate American culture. As a youth growing up in the fifties and sixties, my beliefs were molded through great leaders of that bygone era.

John and Robert Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Malcom X, Bella Abzug, Jane Fonda, and Gloria Steinham. These heroes blazed promising trails with renewed messages of hope and peace during the turbulent Civil Rights Movement, the Vietnam War, the Women's Movement, and eventually a desire for unconditional human rights. Their visions of freedom, equality, and justice provided hope for a brighter future during miserable conditions in our country, but where are today's leaders who will blaze new trails for America's youth and provide hope of a brighter America? These leaders seem to show themselves in white supremacy hate groups, anti-Christ rock/rap stars, and ruthless gang leaders, often sending a message of gloom and doom which further erodes religious beliefs, family values, quality of life, and above all respect for life.

Second, let's examine how poverty may impact violence within America's children. Does constant exposure to poverty necessarily mean that a child will grow up violent? Probably not, but poverty makes life extremely difficult.

How does poverty contribute to a child's security in a country as rich as America? For many children, poverty determines if a child receives a quality education. Poverty determines if a child goes to bed hungry. Poverty determines if a child has a safe home to live in and sometimes poverty determines if a family remains together.

Impoverished American children learn anger at an early age as they attempt to comprehend the concepts of the rich versus the poor (Sidel). Many times these children are left with a feeling of frustration, despair and hopelessness and these feelings eventually simmer into rage where violence then erupts. These children are left floundering in a sea of uncertainty, desperately seeking a way out, yet unequipped to overcome the discrimination they endure at the hands of a contemptuous America towards the poor. Yes, there are some children who escape these situations unscathed, but sadly, these success stories are few.

I am one of these success stories! My family's story is typical of a single-parent with two children enduring life in the 50s and 60s. Mother diligently worked two jobs to sustain herself and her children. During that time, my brother and I, encountered the harshness of poverty but we also learned survival with minimal parental supervision. At age fourteen, I found myself facing detention at an Iowa correctional facility. Mother was my salvation as she pleaded with the judge to understand our family's circumstances and modify his traditional sentencing practices. It worked; that summer

I was introduced to a Peace Corps volunteer who I believe ultimately changed my life. These loving and caring efforts from complete strangers guided me toward the right path and today I am proud of my many accomplishments in life: as a parent and as a woman's political activist. Today, I am living the "American Dream" simply because society embraced and protected me at a time when it might just as easily have rejected and sealed my juvenile fate and because of that embrace, I am forever grateful.

When society examines other success stories they will most likely discover a guiding hand behind the scenes, supporting the individual. Their influence provides hope of a world without prejudice, fear or vulnerability. I am not talking about the limited support over-worked, under-staffed government agencies provide. I am talking about the amazing and resourceful efforts of grassroots support: neighborhood groups, Big Brother/Big Sisters, the YMCA/YWCA, religious groups, and our education system. Why not hang our hat here? **Volunteerism! Activism!** The poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote, "In this world a man must either be an anvil or a hammer."

A person's ability to become a hammer is through volunteerism. Volunteerism must begin with each one of us. If we, the citizens of the greatest country in the world, wait for the powers that be to decide our children's future, we will be waiting a long time. Oh sure, you can say, I don't have the time, but truly do you not have the time. Which is more important and rewarding? Spending valuable time watching television or spending two hours a week sharing the English language with a young, Hispanic mother so that she may effectively communicate with her American children and her American community. The next time you read about another senseless drive-by gang shooting or watch television, horrified, as two emotionally, disturbed young boys from Jonesboro, Arkansas are charged with committing cold-blooded, premeditated murders against their classmates and teacher, ask yourself: what can I accomplish by reaching out to another human being?

Let's face it, there are ties that bind us together. It is called brother and sisterhood; after all, aren't we experiencing life together? Now is the time to open our hearts and embrace the hopelessness that is so apparent in many youth today. American's need to ensure that our children grow up to be healthy, free, and can feel love and hope for themselves so that they may light the way and build a brighter world for future generations.

Please, America, "Hang your hat here!"

*Works Cited*

---

- Adler, Jerry. "The Rap Attitude." Speculations. Ed. Charles I. Schuster. Milwaukee: Readings In Culture, Identity, And Values, 1996. 164–169.
- Sidel, Ruth. Women And Children Last: The Plight Of Poor Women In Affluent America. New York: Penguin, 1992. (Summary of text)
- Sparks, Jackie. "Juvenile Or Adult?" The Skunk River Review. Ed. Randy Jedele and Kris Bigalk. Des Moines, Iowa. Volume 9. 1997. 74–76.





## *Letter to Martin Luther King, Jr.*

*Lynn Walters*

April 24, 1963

My Dear Martin Luther King, Jr.,

I am writing this letter to you with a troubled heart. When I received your letter, addressed and sent to all the “white” clergymen in Birmingham, admonishing us for our lack of support for your protest, my first reaction was one of astonishment. My astonishment turned into irritation as you scolded us and made unfair assumptions concerning the “inaction” of the good people in Birmingham.

The “white moderates” of the south, whom you condemn for their disappointing lack of action, are the same people who fill my church on Sundays. And they are “good” people. They live honest and decent lives, striving to earn a respectable living and raise their children properly. The people in my congregation aren’t radical or mean-spirited. As a small rural parish, I must admit they can be stubborn at times, but they are not indifferent or unfair. They struggle daily to make ends meet. Change tends to make them nervous, especially when it is rapid, tumultuous change. They have been brought up to respect and obey the law. So you need to realize—when the “action” you urge upon them involves breaking the law—they are afraid.

In your letter, you express concern about unjust laws. You state: “. . . an individual who breaks a law that conscience tells him is unjust, and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for law.” Your words are similar to those of Clarence Darrow: “When somebody commits a crime it does not follow that he has done something that is morally wrong.” You possess the same ability to weave powerful arguments.

Yes, there are many wise figures in history to support your rhetoric on civil disobedience. You mention Socrates, the Apostle Paul, Gandhi, Abraham Lincoln, and even Jesus Christ.

And yes, your argument is strong when you present some of the atrocities that have taken place in the past. Who could defend Hitler and his deplorable actions? As you point out—what he did was perfectly “legal.” And you highlight your argument well by noting—that to aid a Jew was “illegal.”

While I embrace the truth in your words, I must remind you that it is easy to look back into history from our current vantage point and identify all the injustices. Unfortunately, when we are in the midst of an era, situations never seem quite so clear. We must muddle through the best we can, without the clarity of hindsight.

It is easy to focus on the evil that was Hitler, through the binoculars of time. It is easy to applaud the wisdom of Socrates without the glare of public sentiment to blind you. It is easy to sing the praises of Jesus Christ when you have his words clearly printed and placed in front of your face. It is easy to embark upon the proper course of action when the path has been cleared and marked by the power of time.

You also state in your letter: “Any law that degrades human personality is unjust. All segregation statutes are unjust because segregation distorts the soul and damages the personality.”

I must concede that segregation surely goes against God’s law. It is slowly being extinguished. But you are so impatient; and I am trying to come to terms with your impatience. Perhaps we, the “white” religious leaders, were too hasty and rigid when we called your protest

“unwise and untimely.” Perhaps we erred in calling your actions “extreme.” I am trying to understand the sense of urgency that you and your people possess.

When you take us to task for our lack of urgency, you list many reasons for your impatience. And I must admit to a sense of shame regarding your litany of injustices. You speak of your people’s poverty, the humiliation in being called “nigger,” of having to sleep in your car when you travel, because no motel will accept you. I’m not in a position to fully appreciate the depth of your people’s frustration, but it does seem to be increasing at an alarming rate.

Why can’t we slow down and work together to change the law through negotiations? I see the injustices. I acknowledge them. But extensive change takes a considerable amount of time.

I am concerned about the havoc, the unrest and violence that might result from change that takes place too rapidly. I am not comfortable with demonstrations—I do not trust the fervor and excitement that possesses the crowds you address. The potential for violence exists; all it would take is a subtle shift of perspective for bloodshed to occur.

When large groups of people congregate for your protests, with the intent to break the law—however unjust—and however non-violent the protest strives to be, it makes me uneasy. As a Roman Catholic priest, a man of God, I find it hard to condone breaking the law. The church is based on laws. Everything basic in life is based upon some type of law and order. And when you muddy the waters, so to speak, by pushing us to define and distinguish between “just” and “unjust” laws—this makes me uneasy.

When I finished reading your letter—I must tell you—I felt very defensive. The next morning at Mass, I found myself searching the faces of my parishioners, seeking reassurance of their goodness. I found myself seized by a fiercely protective rush of affection for my congregation. I take my responsibilities seriously—to nurture and protect them—for they are dear to me. And then I realized—this how you feel for your people and your cause.

I cannot ignore your eloquent and powerful letter. I am greatly troubled by the violence that is happening to your people. The intolerance you speak of must take precedence over any reservations I might have. I must agree with your assertions. These are unjust laws. Please realize that I haven’t been completely idle—I have preached against segregation from my own pulpit. Perhaps age has softened my convictions and my voice.

Perhaps I speak too infrequently on the subject. Perhaps the message needs to be delivered in another manner.

So with this in mind, my fellow clergyman, I have a proposition for you. After much reflection and prayer, I find myself drawn to a particular course of action. I will attend your next demonstration. I will stand beside you and support your cause and your people. I will speak out against “unjust laws.” In return, I ask that you come to my parish and preach to my people. I am convinced you will not be able to look into their honest faces and again speak harshly of their intentions. Perhaps you will be able to help them immobilize their fears.

I am still troubled. I am still uneasy. I pray to God that I am making the right decision. Be sure you understand; I do not advocate my parishioners joining me at your demonstration. Most of them could not afford the loss of income that would result from time spent in jail.

As you so graciously apologized for the length of your letter, I find I must do the same. I trust you will forgive me. I look forward to meeting you in the near future. God bless you and your family.

Yours in Christ,



The Reverend Joseph McCabe  
Pastor of St. Joseph’s Church  
Birmingham, Alabama

*\*\* This notice appeared in a June, 1963 church bulletin from St. Joseph’s parish: “The offertory collection this Sunday will be used to help pay for Father Joe’s bail. He sends his love. The invitation to our annual summer picnic in July has been graciously accepted by Martin Luther King, Jr. and his family. Hope to see you there!”*

### *Works Cited*

- 
- Bennett Jr., Lerone. *What Manner of Man*. Chicago: Johnson Publishing Co. Inc., 1986:243-245.
- Darrow, Clarence. “Crime and Criminals: Address to the Prisoners in the Cook County Jail.” Schuster and Van Pelt 235-245.

*Letter to Martin Luther King, Jr.*

King, Jr., Martin Luther. "Letter From Birmingham Jail." Schuster and Van Pelt 220–235.

Schuster, Charles I. and William Van Pelt, ed. *Speculations: Readings in Culture, Identity, and Values*. New York: Prentice Hall, 1996.

*Acknowledgments*

---

I wish to thank a number of people for their assistance as I completed my essay. Their suggestions were most helpful.

Thanks to my workshop partner, Heather, who courteously read my paper and shared her thoughts. Her input was appreciated.

My husband, Pat, receives a special thanks for supporting me through the writing process and proof-reading my paper.

Thanks to Professor Sharran, who answered my questions concerning format and documentation.



## *The “Banking” Concept*

*Erin Koester*

Every student knows what it’s like to sit in a class and frantically take notes while listening to a boring lecture. We’ve all wondered at times, “What am I doing here? Why should I care about this useless babble—it doesn’t apply to my life.” The reason students feel this way may be because they are being taught through the “banking concept of education.” The “banking” concept of education, defined by Paulo Friere, is the process of learning through which students become “receptacles” and teachers “deposit” information into them (Friere 213). Paulo Friere, a former professor of educational philosophy at the Catholic University of Sao Paulo, does not believe in this method of educating students (Bartholomae and Petrosky 211). He feels that “knowledge emerges only through invention and reinvention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry men pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other” (213). What Friere means by this is that knowledge needs not only to be taught, but also to be applied. “The teacher talks about reality as if it were motionless, static, compartmentalized, and predictable” (212). Students need to be able to understand what they are being taught and apply the concepts to their lives. If a student cannot do this, the knowledge is useless to them.

I remember one class in particular in which the “banking” concept of education was applied. This class was United States Government, taught at Ankeny High School by Dennis Adamson. On the second day of class, after listening to a seemingly endless lecture, our assignment was given: read chapter one, outline it, take detailed notes to be handed in and graded, and be ready for a quiz over the material the next day. As I was doing the assignment at home that night, I remember

thinking, “This assignment is stupid. What is the point of re-copying the chapter, just to have something to hand in for a grade?” Once again I had been cast into the role of a student, learning how to follow instructions.

My United States Government class was just one example of Friere’s “banking” concept of education. Friere proposes an alternative to the banking method. This alternative is known as the “problem-posing” method. In “problem-posing education” the teacher and the students communicate and learn from each other. “The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow” (218).

If one applied the “problem-posing” method of teaching to teach U.S. Government, they would probably find a classroom full of students who were interested in learning. The teacher, instead of lecturing, might lead students into a group discussion or even ask students to act out a mock-trial of a Supreme Court case. This would give the teacher and the students a chance to interact with each other.

Friere also believes that one must be “conscious of consciousness” in order to learn effectively (218). Being “conscious of consciousness” means being aware that you are conscious, or being aware that you are gaining knowledge. This is also part of the “problem-posing” method of education. If one “abandons the educational goal of deposit making” and replaces it with the problem-posing method in which communication flows freely, education will become a learning process that will be fun for everyone (218).

In conclusion, I believe that Friere's theory of education and his idea of how teachers must relate to students is a concept that everyone can learn from. Teachers and students will learn how to respect each other's thoughts, opinions, and ideas. They will also learn how to rely on each other, rather than the students relying on the teacher to "teach" them what they need to know. The education process will become a more effective learning process for both students and teachers.

*Works Cited*

---

- Bartholomae, David and Anthony Petrosky. "Paulo Friere." Ways of Reading. 4th Edition. Ed. David Bartholomae and Anthony Petrosky. Boston: St. Martin's Press, 1996. 211-212.
- Friere, Paulo. "The 'Banking' Concept of Education." Ways of Reading. 4th Edition. Ed. David Bartholomae and Anthony Petrosky. Boston: St. Martin's Press, 1996. 212-223.



## *Last Wish of Peace and Serenity*

*Melissa Waalk*

On January 11, 1983, 26-year-old Nancy Cruzan was thrown out of a car and landed face down in a ditch. Paramedics came and resuscitated her, but she had not been breathing for 12–14 minutes. When she arrived at the hospital, she was unconscious and had a lacerated liver and a contusion of the brain. In addition, the lack of oxygen she had suffered further complicated her condition. On February 7, her husband consented to have a feeding tube placed in her stomach. Rehabilitation efforts continued, but without success. Nancy remained unconscious, and unable to respond to anyone around her. After four years, Nancy's parents were legally appointed coguardians. After considerable thought, they requested that the tube-feeding be stopped. The facility refused, and the Cruzans sought a court order to approve their request. What had been a medical problem for Nancy became a legal problem for her and her parents. Through many appeals by the facility, and more orders sought by the family, at last, Judge Teel of Jasper County made the final decision. He decided on December 14, 1990, based on testimony by family and friends, that Nancy would not have wanted to carry on in the condition she was in. The feeding tube was removed two hours later. As much expected, Nancy died on December 26, 1990, almost eight years after her accident (Burnell 2–5).

When euthanasia is used in adult cases of brain death, terminal or incurable illnesses that cause suffering, or persistent vegetative states, it can be justified. If a person is living and breathing only due to machines and tubes that feed directly to the stomach, tubes that clean out the waste organs, and clean the used air provided by a respirator, the patient, or a trusted friend of the patient should step in. Making the body

function by means of a machine is a prolonged death that is not natural, used only because we have the technology to do so. In our world today, modern medical technology now allows even the incurable or terminally ill to remain alive almost indefinitely. Cardiac resuscitation and mechanical life-support systems can perform vital bodily functions even in a person who is no longer conscious (Burnell 2).

Opponents of euthanasia may say that allowing someone to die is not right because it is murder. Opponents may tend to feel this way because they feel that if the means are there to allow someone to live, we should use them, and give the person every chance of survival. They feel that if we let someone die, it is the same as murder, whether it has any of the characteristics of murder or not. The intentional termination of the life of one human being by another—mercy killing—is contrary to that for which the medical profession stands and is contrary to the policy of the American Medical Association (Rachels 427).

On the other hand, in some eyes, euthanasia is not murder. It is a more natural way to die, and not have to become an invalid, or someone one doesn't want to be. Murder is an act that must have pre-thought, malice, and is a willful, unlawful killing of another (Thompson 154). When a person is dying of cancer of the throat and is in significant pain, coughing him/herself to death 10 times a day, and being resuscitated each of the 10 times, then repeating the same suffering the next day, that is not the willful, unlawful killing of another. Euthanasia in this case would be a gracious act of kindness to the sufferer, so there would be no more pain. Some try and say that letting someone die is the same as murder, but in the case of sick and/or terminal

patients, letting one die may be the only human thing to do. If letting someone die relieves the pain and suffering an illness such as AIDS, cancer, or ends vegetative states, that have no end, that person should be able to decide, or have discussed prior, about euthanasia.

The opposing side of this argument says that people who believe in euthanasia are playing the part of nature. These opposers say that we should not take the place of nature by choosing one's death, when they were living. These people believe that no one has the right to pick the death of another, and life should be sustained as long as nature provides. Wennberg made two statements about nature in his book. We presume that life extension is nature's will unless we have good reason to believe otherwise, and we presume that life termination is not nature's will unless we have good reason to believe otherwise (96). They tend to feel that machines are aiding nature in its duty, and by taking someone off of machines, or their means of support, we are conflicting with life.

However, pro-euthanasia supporters don't view living on machines with tubes doing all of the work living. Pro euthanasia people are not choosing nature's course by allowing a suffering patient to die naturally. When a patient is kept on machines for the duration of the illness, that is playing against the will of nature. Fifty years ago, 20 percent of Americans died in hospitals, and today 80 percent of Americans die in hospitals (Burnell 5 ). History shows that it is not natural to live in a hopeless state, just to say one is living. When a person is dying, or has an illness that will eventually lead to death by incurable illness, that is a sign that the life of the person is going to end. When one knows of his/her illness, and the possible outcome, that is when he/she should make a decision about how long and to what extent will that person live. It makes dying easier on family and doctors to know of the feeling of the patient if the time comes when the patient is unable to express or be aware of his/her feelings.

Anti-euthanasia supporters tend to believe that allowing someone to die causes more suffering to die naturally, than with the help of machines. Opponents of the issue say that people will suffer more by dying naturally because they do not have the help of the machines to aid in the functions of the body. Mechanical life-support system scan perform vital bodily functions of the body (Burnell 2). They tend to feel that dying naturally makes the body suffer more due to the shutdown of the systems.

On the contrary, the people who are ill may take pain medication that will ease the pain, if any, of dying

naturally, and they can die as nature intended, not have their death prolonged due to technology. Pain is more likely to be the result of aggressive medical treatment (Burnell 20). A person may become more depressed and suffer more being hooked up to machines, earing through tubes, and knowing they are only living due to machines. The person may or may not know that he/she is living off of machines, but it is not a healthy way to live. Some cannot be immersed in activities that are daily, but simple ways of living; one cannot be able to have dinner with the family, or play ball with his/her children. Eventually one will become tired of having vitals checked each hour, needles pricked for IV's, tests run with no good news to hear, and lying in the same room day after day, waiting for something to happen. These are reasons that machines are not always better, and they may cause more emotional stress. If a person has the right to decide if he/she is not going to go through the suffering of prolonging the death, he/she may be at home. This provides time to do the things that were important in life and that gave it meaning and feeling of happiness.

People suffering of an illness may choose when they want to die in order to be aware at the time to say good-byes and talk with family. People who have an illness that may lead to suffering due to the degree of the disease may want to choose their time in order to omit the suffering and stages of the illness that they choose not to face. If a person chooses when they want to die, they and their family can be happy with the end by making it less painful, and the duration of the suffering less. If a person is dying of leukemia, and he/she has a 25 percent chance of surviving after treatment, painful and toxic treatment, which has immensely difficult stages, they may opt not to have the treatment (Quill 434). In this case, the patient can be with his/her family, and be at home until the illness gets to the point that they don't want to face anymore. If this occurs, the patient and the family go through intense counseling and conferences with a doctor in order to achieve a decision. It is not a spur of the moment type of thing. People who choose active or passive euthanasia may be more content with the time and manner of their leaving, than people who use technology to try and live longer, but end up prolonging the inevitable.

People who suffer from a terminal or suffering disease that leads to death, may opt for euthanasia instead of prolonging the death and experiencing suffering, horrible stages of the illness. When a person is dying, or going to die, many emotions begin to stir crazily about the whole body. When Diane was diag-

nosed with acute myelomonocytic leukemia, she opted not to undergo treatment, due to the low percentage of 25 percent for survival after treatment (Quill 434). Diane was devastated by the news that she had leukemia, when she only went to the doctor for a rash and fatigue. She had a husband and son at home; she wasn't prepared for that information. She knew of the suffering leukemia may bring, and the chemotherapy that goes along with it. She did not want to put her family through the suffering of watching her experience the disease or the treatment (Quill 435). In this case, she planned the way she wanted to go to alleviate the circumstances she might have had to face. There are many horrible diseases such as AIDS, cancer, leukemia, and emphysema that have very horrible complications, which certain people may choose not to face.

People who are suffering may want to choose euthanasia in order to lessen the amount of hospital time in order to cut back on costs. When people are in the hospital an extended amount of time, the family may feel the burden of the enormous costs that come after the death of the person. Mary Rauch, 75, rushed her husband George Rauch to the hospital after a ruptured aneurysm. For about seven hours, a team of surgeons tried to save him, but couldn't. Three weeks later she received a bill that looked like this: \$4,500 surgeon charges, \$ 990 assistant charges, \$1,500 anesthesiologist charges, and \$15,536,23 hospital charges. This is an outrageous burden for someone who has just lost their husband (Humphrey Wickett 204). Mrs. Opal Burge received a 208 page hospital bill for her 73-year-old husband from five and a half months he was in intensive care fighting emphysema. Medicare and insurance covered the majority of the \$250,000 bill, but the remaining \$15,000 will have to be paid by Mrs. Burge, which means she will be making payments for the rest of her life (Humphrey, Wickett 205). These outrageous costs can play the role of destruction in some families, especially if they are on the lower end of the earning tower. It is bad enough to have to grieve for a lost loved one, and then on top of

that to worry about how one is going to pay the bills. This may delay the grieving process due to worry over the bills, which later in time will cause deeper emotional problems. Grief is experienced in all aspects of our being. We can feel it emotionally and physically within our bodies, and it also affects the way we think and how we behave (Jamison 210).

In viewing euthanasia, one must take in the seriousness of the disease and the suffering that it may cause. Euthanasia may be a measure that is helpful to those with incurable or terminal diseases. If one doesn't want to face pain such as Diane, or doesn't want the family burdened by hospital bills like Mrs. Burge or Mrs. Rauch, euthanasia may be the best option. We must also remember Nancy, she was in a vegetative state for almost eight years after her accident. If people would understand euthanasia better and talk about it amongst family members, maybe this situation would not happen.

### *Works Cited*

- 
- Burnell, George M. Final Choices. New York: Plenum, 1993. 2-20.
- Humphrey, Derek, and Ann Wickett. The Right To Die. Eugene, OR: Hemlock Society, 1986. 204.
- Jamison, Stephen. Final Acts of Love. New York: Putnam, 1995. 210.
- Quill, Timothy M. "Death and Dignity." Ed. Barnet and Bedau. Current Issues and Enduring Questions. Boston: Bedford, 1996. 434-435.
- Rachels, James. "Active and Passive Euthanasia." Ed. Barnet and Bedau. Current Issues and Enduring Questions. Boston: Bedford, 1996. 427.
- Thompson, Robert. What Makes a Crime a Crime? New York: n.p., 1994. 154-87.
- Wennberg, Robert N. Terminal Choices. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989. 96.





## *Women in the Military: Equal or Not*

*Ray Gwinn*

There has been a lot of discussion lately in the media about women's place in the military. From the Tailhook incident to the court martial of Sergeant Major of the Army McKinney, scandal and innuendo have clouded the issue of gender in the military. Now a panel appointed by Defense Secretary William S. Cohen and headed by Senator Nancy Kassebaum Baker (R-KS) has recommended that the services separate the sexes during training and toughen basic training requirements (Myers, *Pentagon* A1). Though the survey results are based upon the real needs of the military, it is being attacked as anti-feminist. Politics and the media are now becoming major influences in military decisions regarding gender. The time has come to put politics and political correctness aside and allow military leaders to make decisions based solely upon the best way to defend their country.

The concept of segregating military women and men has not been warmly received. The 18 women and 2 men of the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services, reports that male only military schools will promote the negative image and prejudicial actions against women (Shenon 12). This may or may not be true. While sexual harassment and rape cannot be tolerated, it is not the purpose of the military to achieve any social goal. The military is not and never has been a social representation of America. The job of the military is to kill people and break things in the defense of the United States (Limbaugh). "There is no comparison between civilian and military society" (Larson 8A).

The Committee refers to service members' beliefs that more integration, not segregation, is needed (Shenon 12). Judith A. Youngman, an associate

professor of political science at the Coast Guard Academy gives her opinion of the panel's report:

I wouldn't want to say that the Kassebaum Baker report was mistaken. . . . But its findings were not consistent with what we heard from service members in the field or fleet. What we heard was that service members were overwhelmingly in favor of gender-integrated training. (qtd in Shenon12)

Since when did the military start asking the trainees what and how they should be trained? Sergeant First Class Robert Swindells, a trainer at Fort Leonard Wood Missouri provides an example of the coed training environment, "Males are going down to females' rooms and they're linking up. . . . Then they're going down into empty rooms and doing whatever they want, and there's nothing we can do about it"(qtd. in Thompson 104). Who wouldn't favor this? There's plenty of sex and no supervision.

Congress and even the White House have come down against separating the sexes during training. Senator Olympia J. Snowe (R-ME) asks, "Why create this separateness, this barrier almost from the outset"(qtd. in Myers, "Panel's Advice" A26). President Bill Clinton has indicated that he would be "very reluctant" to do anything that reduces women's opportunities in the military (Myers, "Panel's Advice" A26). Men and women do not start their military careers on a level playing field. First, there are physical differences between the sexes. Kathleen Parker, writing for the *Orlando Sentinel*, points out, quoting an unidentified Army drill instructor:

Each soldier has to carry 45 pounds of common gear (communications and optical gear, mines and explosives) and 40 pounds of personal gear (weapons, ammo, uniform). If one member of the unit is not physically strong enough to carry the load, a portion of that soldier's load must go to a stronger individual. . . . (13A)

Another drill instructor is quoted as saying "maybe 5 percent of the females I worked with were able to hang with a properly trained and conditioned male soldier"(13A). Fifteen to twenty percent is probably more accurate. Then there are the social differences. Entering military service for men is typically a conservative act of a conservative individual. Liberal men tend to be anti-military. The opposite is true of most military woman. It is a liberal act of a liberated woman to join the armed forces. Conservative women tend to believe that the military should remain a man's world. There is nothing wrong with taking these two diverse groups of people and training them along individually specialized lines to achieve a common level of training. Fortunately for the future of American freedom, President Clinton and Secretary Cohen have decided, at least for now, to leave that decision to the military leaders instead of politicians (Myers, "Panel's Advice" A26).

Iowa's Senator Charles Grassley compares the armed services' efforts to integrate women to the military's successes in achieving racial integration (Grassley 11). The honorable Mr. Grassley fails to note that while there are no differences in the capabilities between races, there is a difference between sexes. My realization of this difference came in 1981 when, rather late in my career, I was assigned as a trainer in my first coed Army unit. I learned, among other things, that if you need four 5-gallon cans of gas moved 100 yards, you can send two men to do it in one trip. Or, you can send two women to do it in four trips. And, with the latter, you also get written up on charges of sexual discrimination for your effort, a charge which will stick with you and follow your career whether you're guilty or not. Kathleen Parker, a writer for the Orlando Sentinel, asks the right question:

Do you suppose tiny Tabatha (a 4'9" Marine boot) could have carried my wounded brother across a rice field? Don't expect an honest answer from anyone in the military. They're all scared to death to say anything that might suggest sexism—even if it means people may die unnecessarily someday because of their silence.(13A)

Mark Thompson, writing for Time, gives another accurate description of the problem: "The service is so afraid of drill sergeants engaging in sexual improprieties with recruits that the sergeants essentially are under orders to stay away from mixed-gender barracks at night"(104). That is a good way to keep sergeants out of trouble since the only true defense against a harassment charge is to prove that you were never there. It is not a good way to train civilians to be soldiers.

Comparing efforts to cure the current gender harassment problems to the Army's successful effort to rid itself of drugs after Viet Nam, Sarah Engram contends that if the entire chain of command issues a clear message with consistent consequences, the predominately male military culture can and will adjust (9). Engram fails to note that the post-Viet Nam Army solved its drug problems through extensive drug testing. Drug tests were conducted under the rules of evidence, complete with a documented chain of custody. Those found guilty would be punished in criminal court and/or thrown out of the military. If Engram could come up with a fool-proof test for sexual misconduct, harassment, fraternization, molestation and/or rape that would compare with the accuracy of drug testing, she'd have the solution at hand. The problem is that gender problems are seldom that cut and dry.

On an isolated mountain top in Sinop, Turkey, I ran a small communications outfit of about 45 men and women. Every day, shortly after lunch, my commander, a major, came into my facility, strolled past my desk and the desks of my senior sergeants and out onto my commo floor and conversed with the young women. If any of the women were dissatisfied with the way I was running things, the major would be so informed. The result was seldom pleasant for me. Engram tells us that "sexual harassment . . . has less to do with sex and gender than with rank and power," and that "such abuse of power is not just a problem for women, it is potentially an obstacle to accomplishing the mission"(9). This is absolutely correct. But again, Engram fails to note the other side, the women's abuse of power. It is not uncommon for a woman to be on speaking terms with the entire chain of command. She can easily corner the Captain or the Colonel and present her case in a casual oh-by-the-way manner that is not afforded to the male soldier (sailor, airman or marine), even if the Captain or Colonel happens to be a woman. And yes, this is a detriment to the mission.

There is no question that sexual harassment, abuse, and rape do exist and must be stopped, not only in the military, but everywhere. The issue of harassment still has nothing to do with equality in the military. Civilians

*Women in the Military: Equal or Not*

and politicians need to quit using the military as a test tube for fixing the social ills of America and let them get back to what they've done so well for over 200 years, protecting American freedom, even if the methods are not politically correct.

*Works Cited*

Engram, Sara. "Scandal and a Sign of Weakness." Des Moines Register 25 Feb. 1997: 9.

Grassley, Charles. "Shape up Military on Gender Issue." Des Moines Register 23 Jan 1997: 11.

Larson, Richard. Letter. Des Moines Register 7 Jan. 1998: 8A.

Myers, Steven Lee. "Pentagon is Urged to Separate Sexes." New York Times 16 Dec. 1997: A1.

—. "Panel's Advice on Troops is Attacked." New York Times 17 Dec. 1997: A26.

Parker, Kathleen. "We're Fooling Ourselves on Women in Combat." Des Moines Register 28 Oct. 1997: 13A.

The Rush Limbaugh Show. Mod. Rush Limbaugh. EIB Network, New York, 1 Jan. 1998

Shenon, Philip. "New Finding on Mixing Sexes in Military." New York Times 21 Jan. 1998: A12

Thompson, Mark. "Boys and Girls Apart." Time 29 Dec. 1997–5 Jan. 1998: 104–105.



## *Walk Like an Egyptian*

*Paul Whipple*

Egyptologists have recently found themselves in the middle of a controversy concerning their field. The study of ancient Egypt has, within the last ten years, been plagued by a minority group of “scholars” known as Afrocentrists who believe, among other things, that the ancient people of Egypt were black. Egyptologists, in an effort to accommodate the Afrocentrist view, allow the notion that Egyptians were darker than European whites, but are quick to point out, however, that Egyptians are neither white nor black, but are distinctly, in and of themselves, Egyptian (Roth 3).

Afrocentrists have made other claims which Egyptologists simply cannot accept; claims that go well beyond the relatively innocent argument of Egyptian skin color. For instance, Afrocentrists declare that the Greek culture was stolen from Egyptian Negroes (Furr 1), Egyptian Negroes built magnificent structures unequalled in ancient civilization (D’Souza 1), and they were the inventors of written language and philosophy, of which credit for the latter was stolen from them by the Greeks (D’Souza 4). Afrocentrists go so far as to claim that Egyptian Negroes flew the first airplanes and invented a multitude of modern amenities such as electric batteries (Jaroff 75). Afrocentrists even suggest that the melanin in a black person’s skin, which gives it color, is the source of magical powers and makes them more humane and intelligent (Jaroff 74).

If it were only a “closet philosophy,” Afrocentrism would have little negative effect on the world. However, some school systems are beginning to include these irrational ideas in their curriculums in the name of multiculturalism. Truth be known, all the claims made by Afrocentrists are supported, not with academic accuracy, logic, relevancy, and probability, but with myths,

folklore, and legends (Carroll 1). This ridiculous school of thought, based on fictitious ideas, represents a significant violation of the ethical teaching of history, and is intended, not to further the understanding of history, but to promote the self-esteem of black people. Afrocentrism is a danger to the understanding of history and should not be promoted in any way.

Afrocentrism should not be accepted for the simple fact that there is no foundation for its claims. Many Afrocentrists assert that the history of the world as we know it has been altered to fit the needs of the white historians who wrote it. Some feel that even encyclopedias should be rewritten to include an Afrocentric view of history. “We should hold no [*sic*] sacred any book which is based on historical falsification and racial prejudice, however hallowed, praised and expensive—Encyclopedia Britannica is certainly is [*sic*]” (Akomolafe 2). This idea, however honorable it may be, is quite impossible to implement. Imagine for a moment the simple act of disregarding the current versions of today’s oldest, most trustworthy sources on history and rewriting them to state, for instance, that Egyptian Negroes were the inventors of written language. The idea is rather preposterous. In some instances, the references Afrocentrists claim were written falsely serve as our only source on the subject. How could we ensure, based on our limited amount of knowledge of ancient history, that whatever degree of falsification a book is charged with, our alterations could do better to make the rendition any more correct? Akomolafe must certainly know this. Therefore, his remark comes across, not as a helpful suggestion for ridding the world’s history books of flagrant and unjust discredits to the black race, but as

an angry bitterness towards the established conclusions that don't allow his ideas room to exist. Dinesh D'Souza, author of The End of Racism: Principles for a Multiracial Society, agrees, stating that "contemporary Afrocentrism is often based less on celebration of black achievements than on anger and resentment toward other peoples" (1). Akomolafe's ambitions, I would argue, do not include the teaching of history as much as the attacking of history.

Based on study techniques alone, educational institutions should reject Afrocentrism and instead focus on the findings of Egyptologists. Unlike the crude support used to argue Afrocentrism, Egyptology is a study based on solid facts, or, at the very least, logical hypothesis. Afrocentrists can claim no such support for their understandings of Egyptian history. In "Building Bridges to Afrocentrism: A Letter to My Egyptological Colleagues," Ann Macy Roth, an Egyptologist and assistant professor of Egyptology at Howard University remarks, "In one sense, we are more Afrocentric than the Afrocentrists, since we try, where possible, to study Egyptian civilization on its own terms, rather than comparing it to our own culture" (9). I take comfort in knowing that Roth's tried and true methods of study still dominate, and that her ambitions are with the further understanding of the ancient Egyptian culture and not the furthering of a political agenda.

In the intellectual vacuum of Afrocentrism, those who profess its grandeur, "repudiate European institutions, including Western scholarly norms, and embrace instead an alternative 'black reality'" (D'Souza 1). This is no more evident than in George G. M. James' book Stolen Legacy, where he declares that "the term Greek philosophy, to begin with is a misnomer, for there is no such philosophy in existence" (Akomolafe 2). This is an obvious example of D'Souza's "black reality" in action, which, powered by extensive paranoia and supported with myths, perambulates through Afrocentric frame of thought. D'Souza examines the mythical component of "black reality":

Afrocentrists openly reject scholarly and scientific techniques as a form of Western "trickology," and use "legends" and "religious cults" as evidence instead. Accuse Molefi Asante of promulgating myths and he responds, "We act mythically. . . . All people have a mythology," and black Americans need to "reconstruct our mythology." A myth "can be considered a form of reasoning and record-keeping by providing an implicit guide for bringing about the fulfillment of the truth it

proclaims," argues Wade Nobles. Myths state truth rather than fact. (3)

Is it wise to teach superstitious beliefs as facts? The reliance on myth and legend puts Afrocentrism into the category of pseudoscience, according to Robert Todd Carroll, author of "The Skeptic's Dictionary." Carroll points out that pseudoscience "often maintains that history is nothing but mythmaking and that different histories are not to be compared on such traditional academic standards as accuracy, empirical probability, logical consistency, relevancy, completeness, fairness, honesty, etc., but on moral or political grounds" (1).

Although outlandish and irresponsible teaching practices aren't new to the world, Afrocentrism represents a serious danger to our intellectual standards. Most capricious teaching philosophies keep a relatively low profile rendering their dangerous practice relatively harmless to the general public. Afrocentrists, as pointed out by Barry Mehler, a professor at Ferris State University specializing in the investigation of white racism, do not "represent a majority . . . opinion, but they represent a significant minority" (Jaroff 75). That is, Afrocentrists constitute a large enough number to concern Mehler and other scholars. The weight of that minority can be seen in public schools in Detroit, Atlanta, Portland, Milwaukee, Fort Lauderdale, and Washington D.C., as well as at a number of colleges and universities around the country, all of which have developed Afrocentric curriculums to promote multiculturalism.

The cruel irony in the teaching of Afrocentrism is that it hurts students the most. In large urban areas and predominantly black colleges and universities, the sheer number of black students would logically mandate the teaching of African studies. There is nothing wrong with teaching these students subjects deemed important to their understanding of themselves. Instead, the problem lies in teaching the ludicrous content of Afrocentrism. D'Souza points out that

as a consequence of this relativized view of truth, Afrocentrists seem unabashed about teaching young black students information that is judged dubious, even preposterous, by mainstream scholars. Nor are Afrocentrists noticeably chagrined by an absence of professional training in the specialized fields from which their confident claims are drawn. (2)

Take, for instance, Hunter Adams, listed as "Dr. Hunter Adams" in the African-American Baseline

## *Walk Like an Egyptian*

Essays, an Afrocentric text written in 1987, intended to strike up a movement for the revitalization of black history. Adams, author of the scientific section of the essays, and whose writings have been the basis for many multicultural curriculums, has only a high school diploma (D'Souza 2, 3). Truth be known, most Afrocentrists hold scholarly positions no higher than the high school level. And even though, "a few leading Afrocentrists are recognized scholars, many are political activists, ministers in the Nation of Islam, laboratory technicians, musicians, social workers, and self-taught former convicts" (D'Souza 2). In matters of ancient history, would it be wise to trust someone with only a high school education or those highly-educated specialists who all agree that Afrocentrism is fiction? The answer is clearly the latter.

Not only are many of the advocates of Afrocentrism less than trustworthy as educators, but by its very nature, Afrocentrism "victimizes black students almost exclusively" by having "this nonsense foisted off upon them as truth" (Furr 2). Grover Furr, professor of English at Montclair University, points out that "Afrocentrism is another form of authoritarianism. It tells black students: Believe 'your leaders' because they are black! Since there's no evidence worthy of the name for these theses, 'believe your black leaders' is all that's left" (2). Blind faith of this nature should not be the basis for a system of teaching in any public education facility anywhere in this country.

The motivation of Afrocentrism stems from the belief that black people throughout the world have a low esteem regarding their history. But at what cost should we be concerned with providing them with falsely gratuitous knowledge of their racial history? It seems dangerously irresponsible to allow such fallacies to be taught in the elevated standard of the college classroom, much less in the influential environment of our nation's public schools. The threat imposed by Afrocentrism to our understanding and recording of history is very real. Not

only because of what Afrocentrists teach, but also because of the underlying reasons for why they teach it. In the short-run, we should be concerned with the mark we leave on those young black students whose ideas could be tainted by the very lies that meant to raise their self-image. In the long run, we have a responsibility to future generations to keep fabrications and falsifications out of our historical records. In both instances, Afrocentrism is a threat.

### *Works Cited*

- 
- Akomolafe, Femi. "Review of George G. M. James, Stolen Legacy." [http://library.ccsu.ctstateu.edu/~history/world\\_history/archivesafrica012.html](http://library.ccsu.ctstateu.edu/~history/world_history/archivesafrica012.html) June 17, 1997. 9 pages.
- Carroll, Robert Todd. "The Skeptic's Dictionary." <http://wheel.ucdavis.edu/~btcarrol/skeptic/pseudohs.html> June 17, 1997. 2 pages.
- D'Souza, Dinesh. "Pride and Prejudice." <http://www.cycad.com/cgi-bin/Upstream/People/DSouza/dsouza-pride.html> June 17, 1997. 7 pages.
- Furr, Grover. "Fallacies of Afrocentrism." <http://www.shss.montclair.edu/english.furr.afrocent.html> June 17, 1997. 3 pages.
- Jaroff, Leon. "Teaching Reverse Racism." Time April 4, 1994. vol. 143, No.14 74-75.
- Roth, Ann Macy. "Building Bridges to Afrocentrism: A Letter to My Egyptological Colleagues." [ftp://oi.uchicago.edu/pub/papers/AMRoth\\_Afrocentrism.ascii.txt](ftp://oi.uchicago.edu/pub/papers/AMRoth_Afrocentrism.ascii.txt) June 17, 1997. 11 pages.

# APPENDIX

## *MLA Works Cited & Parenthetical Documentation for DMACC Writers*

---

*Although there is no universally agreed-upon system for acknowledging sources, there is agreement on both the need for documentation and the items that should be included. Writers should acknowledge sources for two reasons: to give credit to those sources and to enable readers to consult the sources for further information. The new MLA style adopted a simpler parenthetical citation method rather than using footnotes or endnotes.*

### GENERAL BOOKS

1. A book with one author

**Works Cited Form:**

Norris, William. *The Unsafe Sky: The Unvarnished Truth about Air Safety*. New York: Norton, 1901.

Parenthetical Documentation: (Norris 54).

2. Two books with the same author

**Works Cited Form:**

Lanham, Richard A. *Literacy and the Survival of Humanities*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1983.

—. *Style: An Anti-Textbook*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1974.

Parenthetical Documentation: (Lanham, *Literacy* 24).

(Lanham, *Style* 70).

3. A book with two or three authors

**Works Cited Form:**

Boeck, Wilhelm, William Cran and Robert McNeil. *The Story of English*. New York: Viking, 1986.

Parenthetical Documentation: (McCrum, Cran and McNeil 61).

4. A book with more than three authors

**Works Cited Form:**

Young, Ralph A., et al. *Personal Finance Companies*. New York: Viking, 1941.

Parenthetical Documentation: (Young et al. 12).

5. A book with an editor

**Works Cited Form:**

Newhall, Beaumont, ed. *Photography*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1989.

Parenthetical Documentation: (Newhall 114).

6. A book with an author and editor

**Works Cited Form:**

Whitman, Walt. *Leaves of Grass*. Ed. Emory Holloway. New York: Doubleday, 1926.

Parenthetical Documentation: (Whitman 22).

7. An anonymous book

**Works Cited Form:**

*A Times Atlas of the World*. 7th ed. New York: New York Times, 1985.

Parenthetical Documentation: (*A Times Atlas* 25).

PERIODICALS

8. An unsigned article in a magazine

**Works Cited Form:**

"Dubious Venture." *Time* 3 Jan. 1994: 64-5.

Parenthetical Documentation: ("Dubious" 65).

9. A signed article in a magazine

**Works Cited Form:**

Cunningham, Kim. "US Davis Cuppers Set to Conquer." *World Tennis* Oct.1988: 68-9.

Parenthetical Documentation: (Cunningham 68).

10. An unsigned newspaper article

**Works Cited Form:**

"Air Travel Less Safe Now." *The Orange County Register* 11 Aug. 1988: A10.

Parenthetical Documentation: ("Air Travel" 10).

11. A signed newspaper article

**Works Cited Form:**

Malnic, Eric. "Jet Engine Wing Flaps Under Study." *Los Angeles Times* 2 Sept. 1988, B1+.

(The plus sign is used here to indicate that the article continues on other, not necessarily continuous, pages.)

Parenthetical Documentation: (Malnic 18).

12. A letter to the editor

**Works Cited Form:**

Masters, Mark. Letter. *The Futurist* Sept. 1988: 2.

Parenthetical Documentation: (Masters 2).

13. An unsigned editorial

**Works Cited Form:**

"Magic Words for College." Editorial. *Los Angeles Times* 3 May 1985, sec. 2: 6.

Parenthetical Documentation: ("Magic Words" 6).

14. A signed editorial

**Works Cited Form:**

Birnbaum, Norman. "The Center Holds." Editorial. *Nation* 1 June 1985: 660-61.

Parenthetical Documentation: (Birnbaum 661).

ENCYCLOPEDIAS

15. An unsigned article from an encyclopedia

**Works Cited Form:**

"Cancer." *Encyclopedia Britannica: Micropaedia*. 1988 ed.

Parenthetical Documentation: ("Cancer").

(Volume and page numbers are not required for an article appearing alphabetically in an encyclopedia.)

16. A signed article from an encyclopedia

**Works Cited Form:**

Pepper, Eleanor. "Interior Design." *Encyclopedia Americana*. 1987 ed.

Parenthetical Documentation: (Pepper 218).



## Appendix

### OTHER SOURCES

17. An unsigned pamphlet

**Works Cited Form:**

*Herbert Hoover: The Uncommon Man*. Washington: Hoover Presidential Library Assn., 1974.

Parenthetical Documentation: (Herbert Hoover 16).

18. A signed pamphlet

**Works Cited Form:**

Lobsenz, Norman M. *Grandparents Today*. New York: Public Affairs Committee, 1987.

Parenthetical Documentation: (Lobsenz 10).

19. Television or Radio program

**Works Cited Form:**

*Good Morning America*. ABC. KABC, Los Angeles. 4 Oct. 1985.

Parenthetical Documentation: (*Good Morning America*).

20. An interview

**Works Cited Form:**

Seymour, Carolyn. Personal Interview. 7 Aug. 1988.

Parenthetical Documentation: (Seymour).

### ELECTRONIC SOURCES

21. SIRS

**Works Cited Form:**

Clark, Matt. "Medicine: A Brave New World." *Newsweek* 5 Mar. 1992: 64–70. *SIRS CD-ROM*. SIRS Inc., Winter 1996.

Parenthetical Documentation: (Clark).

22. InfoTrac (Full text of article)

**Works Cited Form:**

Russo, Michelle Cash. "Recovering from Bibliographic Instruction Blahs." *RQ: Reference Quarterly* 32 (1992): 178–83. *Infotrac: Magazine Index Select ASAP II*. CD-ROM. Information Access. Dec. 1995.

Parenthetical Documentation: (Russo).

23. InfoTrac (Abstract of article)

**Works Cited Form:**

"Santa's Little Helper (Diary of an Elf at Macy's Department Store)" by David Sedaris. *Harper's Magazine* Dec. 1993: 13. Abstract. *Infotrac: Magazine Index Select ASAP II*. CD-ROM. Information Access. Dec 1995.

Parenthetical Documentation: ("Santa's").

24. Des Moines Register

**Works Cited Form:**

Binnie, Ian. "Criticizing Vision 2005 Isn't Condemnation." *Des Moines Register* Oct. 31, 1995: 9. *CD News Des Moines Register*. CD-ROM. NewsBank, Inc. 1995.

Parenthetical Documentation: (Binnie).

25. CINAHL (Abstract of article)

**Works Cited Form:**

"Corneal Vascularization" by B. E. Caffery and J. E. Josephson. *Optometry-Clinics* 4.3 (1995): 19–29. Abstract. *Nursing & Allied Health (CINAHL)-CD*. CD-ROM. Silver Platter International N.V. Oct. 1995.

Parenthetical Documentation: ("Corneal").

*Appendix*

26. Encyclopedia

**Works Cited Form:**

Klots, Alexander B. "Butterflies and Moths." *Grolier Multimedia*. Vers. 7.01. CD-ROM. Grolier. 1995.

Paranthetical Documentation: (Klots). 27. Internet

27. Internet

a. WWW (Original)

**Works Cited Form:**

Smith, James. "What Fun This Is." Online. Internet. Available HTTP: <http://www.fun.com> Accessed January 31, 1996.

Paranthetical Documentation: (Smith).

b. WWW (Electronic source with printed analogue)

**Works Cited Form:**

Loeb, Paul Rogat. "Greeks and Granolas and Steeps and Slackers." *Mother Jones*. Sept/Oct 1994. Online. Internet. Available HTTP:

[http://www.mojones.com/mother\\_jones/SO94/loeb.html](http://www.mojones.com/mother_jones/SO94/loeb.html) Accessed February 1, 1996.

Paranthetical Documentation: (Loeb).

c. Gopher

**Works Cited Form:**

Howe, Neil and William Strauss. "The New Generation Gap." *The Atlantic*. Dec. 1992. Online. Internet. Available Gopher: <gopher.ews.com/Atlantic>. Dec92 Accessed February 1, 1996.

Paranthetical Documentation: (Howe and Strauss).

# Release Form



(With this form, submit a hard copy of your essay and a copy on an IBM compatible disk)

We need your permission to publish your compositions and research papers in our 1999 publication of writing models to be used by future composition students at DMACC. Please provide the information requested below and retain an original copy of your paper for your files. We require all submissions to be accompanied by a disk.

Submit this completed form to either Kris Bigalk, Building 2, Room 5s or Randy Jedele, Building 2, Room 5p, Ankeny Campus.

We reserve the right to edit for clarity or accuracy. You may be contacted if there are any questions about your manuscript.

NAME:

ADDRESS (include zip code):

PHONE:

PAPER TITLE:

CLASS:

TERM ENROLLED:

INSTRUCTOR:

*Please read and complete the statement below:*

I, \_\_\_\_\_, give my permission to DMACC to print my original paper titled \_\_\_\_\_ in the anthology of student work to be distributed during the 1998–99 school year. I understand the copyright protects my writing from being printed or claimed by some other person or agencies. Authors retain full rights to all work published.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\* Contact Kris Keeney at 964-6577, [kmbigalk@dmacc.cc.ia.us](mailto:kmbigalk@dmacc.cc.ia.us), or Randy Jedele at 964-6417, [rejedele@dmacc.cc.ia.us](mailto:rejedele@dmacc.cc.ia.us) with questions about submitting material to *The Skunk River Review*.



# WAGAMAN MILL

Lauri Mullen made this picture during a photography field trip to Lynnville on the North Skunk River. The photo was taken looking south across the dam to the Wagaman Mill. The "Old Mill" is listed on the National Registry of Historic Places. Tours of the 150-year-old mill can be scheduled through the Jasper County Conservation Board. This image is of particular interest because it shows the river at a high level because of the heavy spring and summer rains during 1998.

ISBN 0-8281-1260-6



9 780828 112604

**Forbes**  
CUSTOM PUBLISHING