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Fall 2005

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The Skunk River Review

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Volume 17



The Skunk River Review

Volume 17

Fall 2005

A Celebration of Student Writing

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ANKENY CAMPUS**

Anthony Hamlin, a student and adjunct DMACC photography instructor, took this image. The image was captured in Jasper County. The creek is a run off from the Skunk River and is located below the Chautauqua bike trail in Franklin Township.

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Welcome to the 2005-2006 edition of
The Skunk River Review!

We again received many excellent examples of student writing, which made the selection process enjoyable, yet challenging. Students from various DMACC campuses submitted essays from the College Preparatory Writing I and II, Composition I, and Composition II classes.

We hope you gain greater insight and understanding from the writings in this publication. Analyze them...discuss them...react to them. But, most of all, enjoy reading and celebrating this year's student essays.

We would like to recognize the following people who contributed to this student publication:

- To all of the **DMACC students from College Preparatory Writing I and II, Composition I, and Composition II** for their outstanding essay submissions.
- To all of the **writing instructors at all DMACC campuses** for their support and use of *The Skunk River Review* throughout the year.
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- To **Curt Stahr** for providing an award winning cover photograph taken by one of the students in his photography class.
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- To the following instructors who contributed time and effort in submitting their students' essays:

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College Preparatory Writing I & II

Brutality of the Japanese

by Qi Zheng

A reflection on the lecture,
book, and presentation by Glenn
McDole

The Last Man Out takes place during World War II and is about American soldiers as POW's (prisoners of war) of the Japanese Military, and what they went through. When I was reading the book, my hands started to shake, and then I started to think about what happened in Nanjing, China. I was overcome with hate. Those same feelings came over me when I was listening to the speech given by Glenda McDole, Glenn McDole's daughter. Her speech in my class was about the horrible treatment in the prison camps. Tears were running down my face the whole time she spoke. Most people barely know what happened and what those soldiers went through. During World War II, the Japanese military showed great cruelty to those who opposed them.

Glenn McDole was one of the American soldiers at the Palawan Prison Camp in the Philippines; he was also one of the eleven young men who escaped from the camp and was "the last man out." Throughout his story, he informs us about the cruelty shown by the Japanese towards the American POWs. In the prison camps, the POWs were treated inhumanely. They were deprived of food and water. The little

amount of rice that they received was filled with flies, worms, and bugs. On the way to the prison camps, they saw the store houses filled with tons of rice, enough for the whole army to eat. It was for the Japanese soldiers, not the POWs. In the prison camps, the POWs had to sleep on the wet ground without any shelter from the mice, bugs, mosquitoes, dirt, rain, and other infectious invaders. They were given a little bit of food to keep them alive, so that they as slaves, could do the heavy labor. They worked from sunrise to midnight, six days a week with Japanese soldiers beating them under the Philippine's sun. Many of them died because of this inhumane treatment.

Another example of cruelty demonstrated by the Japanese soldiers was the killing of weak POWs, those who could not work anymore. A few of the POWs tried to escape. When they were caught, the Japanese tortured them and then killed them in horrible ways. The Japanese cut off one of the POW's ears and hung him on the front gate. They beat him until his blood was everywhere. Three days later, they took him down and ordered another POW to dig a hole and to bury him alive. (When the dirt started to cover him, he was still breathing.)

The cruelest thing that the Japanese did occurred when the war was about to end; they decided to kill all the POWs to cover up what they did. They put the prisoners into the bunkers and poured gasoline on them to burn the POWs. When the people tried to escape, they set them on fire or shot them. When some of the POWs ran to the beach, the Japanese shot them, tied them to a stake, and butchered them alive. Only a few of the POWs escaped. The survivors who dug into the refuse piles, hid in coral caves, and treaded through swamps and the jungle are the ones who made it out. According to [The Last Man Out](#), on December 14, 1944, Japanese soldiers massacred 139 of the 150 American POWs. Of eleven young men who escaped, McDole was "the last man out."

The Japanese not only committed inhumane acts on U.S. soldiers in the Philippines, but their brutal actions spread all over, Asia, especially into China. Before World War II, the Japanese had invaded China and other parts of Asia. It is believed that the Japanese war machine was motivated by aggression and the uncontrollable desire for expansion. In the Japanese military belief, they followed their Emperor, and they believed that the more people that they killed, the stronger they would become. On the December 9, 1937, after an all out assault on the city, Chinese troops surrendered in the city of Nanjing to Japanese forces.

The Japanese cruelty toward the U.S. soldiers in the Philippines brings back the memory of the cruel history of Nanjing. The Nanjing Massacre is known as the "forgotten holocaust." It has truly been forgotten by the Japanese. In this forgotten holocaust, roughly 300,000 Chinese were brutally murdered and 20,000 women were raped, and then killed, from 1937-1938 in the city

of Nanjing. When I was going to school in China, I learned about the Nanjing atrocity.

For the six weeks following the Chinese surrender, this capital city was filled with violence and slaughter now known as the Nanjing Massacre. The Japanese killed civilians, Chinese soldiers, refugees, and many others. The Japanese crimes ranged from mass execution to burning, raping, and looting. According to the [Remember](#) website, on December 13, many of the refugees tried to escape by crossing the Yangtze River, however, the Japanese arrived when many Chinese tried to swim across the river. The Japanese soldiers started to fire at the people in the river and along the banks of the shore. When it was all over, the river was covered with corpses of men, women, and children, totaling more than 50,000 people. Within days, the streets of Nanjing were called the "streets of blood" because dead human corpses were everywhere. The Japanese brutality against the Chinese was horrific. They invented many new ways to brutally murder the Chinese. They tied people together as a group, poured gasoline on them, shot at them and watched as the bullets struck their bodies, and ignited the bodies. The Japanese soldiers even cut people's hearts out or stabbed objects into the female's vaginas.

There were also many places called grave pits. Many times the Japanese had Chinese people dig deep ditches and ordered them to jump in or they would shoot them with machine guns. Thousands of people were placed in one pit and then covered with dirt and buried alive. The Japanese drove a truck over the dirt to make sure that there was no way any person could have climbed out. Even now the sites of these mass graves are not covered with grass because there are too many human bone buried there.

Another name for this holocaust is “the Rape of Nanjing.” In just six weeks, over 20,000 women and girls were raped and killed. They raped women at their homes or took them out to rape them in the street. They killed them afterwards by any number horrible means: cutting their stomachs open, chopping off their breasts, or stabbing them with bayonets in the vagina. The raped pregnant women and then cut out the fetus and used it as a ball to kick around. They made sons rape their mothers; fathers rape their daughters. If they refused, they would torture them until death. According to the [Nanjing Massacre](#) website, “In one case, a mother, two teenage daughters, and a one-year-old boy were raped and killed in their home.” After six weeks of horror, Nanjing was left in ruins. The storehouses were empty, and the people had lost everything. The Japanese had taken everything of value. Only bodies were left, and blood was everywhere.

When I began writing this paper, I had to think through all these brutal, inhuman, and terribly violent acts that the Japanese committed. This only caused my hatred towards the Japanese to grow stronger and stronger.

During World War II, there were so many horrible acts committed against the innocent. When the War was all over, the bodies were countless as the tears. The Japanese stole the lives of many. The horrible memory of the Japanese POW Camps and the Nanjing massacre still lives with many of those who survived it. It is a shame that the Nanjing massacre is denied by the Japanese executioners. However, there are some individuals from all around the world, just like Glenn McDole and his daughters who are concerned about the awareness of future generations. These people are attempting to pass the truth to them.

It is a great victory that [The Last Man Out](#) could finally be published; Glenn McDole and his family have brought the truth to the public. It is hoped that many more people can read this book so they could know the truth and understand what happened. We should all cherish the peaceful lives that we have today and respect those soldiers, and heroes who fought for peace and remember what the innocent have been through. People all over the world should be united in a struggle against the cruel and oppressive acts of those who are now like the Japanese of WW II. The goal is to avoid these horrible atrocities so that they will never happen again.

Easter Sunday

By Ann Hammen

A descriptive essay

It was early Easter morning about 6:30 a.m., and the sun was bright, and the sky was clear. We had just woken up and hurried downstairs to see what the Easter bunny had brought us. In my Easter basket I got a kite, jacks, coloring book and markers; I really enjoyed doing these things. After we were all finished looking in to our Easter baskets, we had to get ready because we were going to our grandparent's house for Easter.

We started off on the one hour trip and went through several small towns along the way. When we finally arrived at Grandpa and Grandma's house, we would run swiftly to see who could get to the door first. Some of my cousins would already be there because they lived a lot closer than we did.

Grandma, busy in the kitchen, would be making her homemade bread. The smell of baking bread filled the house letting us know how delicious it was before we had even tasted it. After the homemade bread was finished, Grandma always asked if we would like a piece of the warm bread, fresh out of the oven, covered with melting butter, and of course, we always did.

After a while, the rest of my relatives would arrive at grandma's house. All of the older children went downstairs and started drawing on the chalkboard; we really

enjoyed doing this. We also played with the old phonograph that you have to wind up to play albums.

One of the adults would come down stairs and tell us that it was time to eat, and we would hurry quickly upstairs. After some of us had finished eating, we decided to go outside and hike around until the rest had finished eating.

We decided to go back into the house to see what the adults were doing. The ladies of course were washing and drying the dishes. The guys would be watching football or taking a nap. I thought that was a good idea after a big supper.

Each family had brought two dozen eggs for the Easter egg hunt. It was time for all of the ladies to hide them. All of the kids had to stay inside until they finished hiding all of the eggs. The ladies finally came back inside to let the children know that the time had finally arrived to go and find the Easter eggs.

The younger children had to find the eggs in the barn yard, and the older children had to find their eggs in the timber. When it was finally our turn to search for the eggs, and the ladies would give us some clues on where the eggs might be hidden. We searched under many sticks, under leaves and did get our hands muddy. It was exciting; we laughed and had a good time com-

peting to see who could find the eggs first. Some of the eggs were hard to find, but we usually found most of them.

After the egg hunt was over, we told our parents that we wanted to walk back to Grandma's house. We took our time coming back to the house because we wanted some adventure. We went walking through the muddy coal mines and got our shoes extremely dirty.

While walking along, there was some water that we had to go across. There was a log that we had to climb on to get across, and I was scared to go. One of my cousins helped me get across, and I was relieved when I finally did get across.

We decided it was time to head back for the house because it was getting late. When we came back to the house, the ladies gave out the prize for the Easter egg hunt.

When we walked quickly inside, some of the grown ups were playing card games and other adults were just sitting there visiting and having a good time. After the card game was over, Grandma asked if anyone would like pie yet. Of course everyone did, and the pie was delicious.

After we were done with our pie, it was almost time to go home because we had school the next day. We had such a great time; no one wanted to go home. On the way home, we would be talking about the fun we had and looking forward to next year.

The Fight to the Finish

By Jodie Enos

**A reflection on the lecture,
book, and presentation by Glenn
McDole**

On the early morning of Monday, December 8, 1941, what the soldiers thought was going to be just another day, turned out to be a day that would be remembered throughout history, the day when Japan bombed Pearl Harbor. This was a day when Private First Class Glenn McDole would realize just what he had gotten himself into by joining the Marines. When he enlisted at the age of 20, he never imagined the horrible war and hell that he was getting ready to go through. World War II took this ordinary Marine and turned him into a hero.

After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Private Glenn McDole, also known as Mac, was flown to Los Banos in the Philippines. He was only stationed there until Christmas Day, 1941, and then he was ordered to go to Manila, where he sent a radiogram to his mother and father to let them know that he hadn't been killed in the Navy yard bombings. On December 27, 1941, he was commanded to go to Corregidor, also called "The Rock". During his time there, he was assigned to Ft. Hughes as a gunner to protect the harbor. After almost five months of being under attack by the Japanese, General Wainwright was forced to surrender Filipino and U.S. forces, on May 6, 1942.

Mac and thousands of other prisoners including two of his friends, Smitty and Ray Henderson, were taken to Bilibid camp

in Manila. This camp could be compared to Alcatraz. It was at this camp that the three friends would make a pact to share their water, food or anything else received in order to keep alive. The first meal at Bilibid was a rice ball the size of a baseball. The camp became a torture chamber, where there were many soldiers with vitamin deficiencies and skin ailments that couldn't be treated. A few days later, the Japanese shouted at them and made them all line up and start walking again. The prisoners were crammed into boxcars on a train and were taken to the Cabanatuan prison camps.

Being a POW, prisoner of war, at this new prisoner camp was a living hell. The food received was laced with worms and bugs. The soldiers were not allowed to take a shower, have blankets, or have beds. The floors were infested with lice. Rats and mice were crawling everywhere. Mac and his friends watched several soldiers die before they were recruited for work at another camp on Palawan Island. Up to this time there were 3,000 Americans that had died at Cabanatuan from malnutrition, war wounds, and the brutal treatment that they received. The date they arrived at Palawan was August 12, 1942.

Mac and all of the prisoners suffered several illnesses and injuries at this camp. While Mac, Smitty and Roy were on

Palawan Island, they all came down with malaria. When they were well again, they would go back to work digging the airstrip. One day Private Glenn McDole was goofing off and not working to his full capability when he was hit with a massive blow to his head. For several months, day after day he was clubbed on his head. One particular day, McDole taunted the Japanese guard making the guard mad. He hit Glenn on the top and side of his head. Mac acted like it didn't faze him. Then on St. Patrick's Day, 1943, Mac woke up and knew something wasn't right. There was a massive amount of pain that was coming from the lower right side of his stomach. He found out, after trying to work all day, that his appendix was about to rupture, and he needed surgery. It was performed with no anesthetics and took about three hours to complete. The wound became infected, and it swelled up to the size of a football. Dr. Mango would come and visit Mac two to three times a day. He would wash out Mac's rotten flesh with hot water to clear the infection. Mac did get over the infection, and eventually returned to work.

A day came when they knew they had to escape from this living hell or they would die by the hands of the Japanese. On December 14, 1944, the American soldiers believed that the island was under an air raid. The sirens sounded, and the P.O.W's were forced into their bomb shelters. After the sirens stopped, they were told to remain inside and not look out. After awhile, the suspense was getting to Mac and his buddies. Smitty told Mac to look out of the shelter. When he did, he witnessed the guards pouring gasoline on the shelters and setting them ablaze. The soldiers inside Mac's shelter continued digging a way of escape off of a hole that they had already begun to dig. They did get out, and Mac had to hide in the garbage heap for two days

so that he would not get captured. He was finally able to escape out of the garbage and swim five miles to a fishing net, where he was saved by the Filipino people.

The story of Glenn McDole is one that amazes me in many ways. There are several more horrifying and wonderful stories that could be written on Mac's heroic attitude and bravery, but there is not enough time to cover them in this paper. To think of someone going through all of the events and devastations that this man and his friends went through, is unbelievable. He is a hero, a man that was able to find amazing amounts of inner strength to help him fight to the finish.

Neuengamme

By Clayton Martens

A descriptive essay

It was a cold February day in northern Germany when I arrived at the Neuengamme concentration camp. My arrival in a warm, comfortable van was much different from the way that the prisoners would have arrived at the camp from 1938- 1945. I found myself visiting this camp because my family was in Germany with my father on business. Unfortunately, the prisoners would not have arrived just to tour the camp but rather to remain as workers and most likely die there. I had read about and seen pictures of camps like these before, but nothing could prepare me for what I was about to experience.

The first thing that I saw upon entering the camp was a cargo railway car that the Germans used to bring the prisoners into the camp. It impressed me that the prisoners were treated more like animals than humans as they were herded into these small and cramped railcars. As I walked on the snow covered path leading to the camp museum, I saw names inscribed in the bricks representing the countries where the prisoners had come from. Many of them had traveled long distances in the railway cars under horrible conditions.

The camp museum took me on a journey through the camp's history. There were detailed descriptions and photographs of the camp and prisoners. There were also displays of actual prisoners' belongings,

personal letters, and reconstructed examples of the barracks. I also heard recorded testimonies of various survivors relating their experiences while at the camp. I saw the ragged uniforms that the prisoners were forced to wear.

The building that now houses the museum was once used as a factory where prisons were made to produce rifles for the German army. I saw different cubicles where prisoners would have assembled the rifles under the watchful eye of the SS. According to the picture on display in the museum, the working conditions that the prisoners would have had were next to unbearable. They appeared dark, cold, and dirty. The bulk of the labor at Neuengamme was brick making. The prisoners were forced to work in a large, open warehouse that had ovens lining one wall. It was cold, dark and dreary. I tried to imagine what it must have been like to work in here. It would not have been a pretty picture. Just outside the building were the large clay pits where the men had to dig clay for the bricks. The prisoners would have labored by hand for ten to twelve hours a day with very little to eat or drink. It dawned on me after awhile that the point of brick making was mainly a way to exterminate the prisoner.

As I left the camp museum and walked some of the trails around the camp, I saw

many more things that were very disturbing. There were markers that indicated where horrible events had taken place. Some showed where prisoners had killed themselves by grabbing the electric fence. They must have felt that death was better than living under such conditions. A wide canal was along one side of the camp. I learned that certain prisoners were forced to dig this canal until they collapsed from exhaustion. If a prisoner was assigned the detail to work on the canal, it usually meant he was being punished and it was assumed that he would die while working there.

As I walked on the trail that led to the exit I saw the rows of monuments to the victims and where they had come from. The numbers of all the people that had died in the camp was shocking. Just the thought of that many people dying in such a short time was horrible. At the exit to the camp I passed a large pillar memorial that marked the site of where the camp crematorium had once stood. The inscription read "Remember Me". I saw much that day that I will never be able to forget.



Composition I

Angel

By Michelle Gullet

An essay about a meaningful experience

Soldiers go to war and see innocent people die everyday. Death and war go hand in hand. After a while, soldiers just become numb to it. There are always missions to be accomplished and several more right behind them. However, when the life of an innocent child is taken, everyone stops.

It was my third supply run in less than a week. As much as I loved being in helicopters I preferred not being in one in Afghanistan. My stomach was always queasy right before a flight. Once we were outside the wire anything could happen and today, nothing felt right.

As the last of the supplies were loaded into the aircraft, a military ambulance pulled up. Out of the corner of my eye I could see that the medic had given the crew chief a body bag. As the last box was strapped down the crew chief came over and asked if I would mind helping him with a mission he had just received. There were a lot of missions that day and this aircraft was short a crew member. I agreed without a second thought even knowing the mission had to do with the body bag. When a person works on the flight line a lot of times the soldiers closest to the aircraft would have to help carry in seriously wounded or dead. I had seen more than my share. The picture gradually fades from one's mind. The smell

however, is something no one will ever forget. That was life in a combat zone.

The journey to the fire base was long and hot. All soldiers are required to wear body armor and a Kevlar helmet when going on missions. To keep my mind off of the sweat rolling down my back, I began to think about home. My fiancé and his beautiful six year old daughter were waiting for me. They sent pictures and letters every month. My heart began to ache. It had been weeks since I was able to call home and talk to them. With a ten and a half hour time difference it was hard to catch them. I day dreamed a little more before we landed. Then it was back to work.

The back door was lowered, and the soldiers scrambled out to set up a perimeter. When the all clear was given a few soldiers from the firebase came onto the aircraft and helped me unload the supplies. Gunfire off to the east had the pilots a little jittery. Luckily, with all the help it only took a few minutes to finish unloading. The soldiers stationed at the fire base could finish carrying in the supplies. The crew chief signaled for the soldiers guarding the aircraft to come back in. A few minutes later we were air born. I started to get nervous about the next mission, so I bowed my head and said a quick prayer.

As the helicopter began its descent, I looked out the port door. There were two local nationals and a platoon of American forces. A blanket covered something on the ground close to the local nationals. Assuming it was the body, I braced myself. The crew chief and I were the last soldiers out. As we walked over to the body I could see that most of the soldiers looked upset. Some had tears in their eyes. Other soldiers seemed angry. That could only mean one thing. I had heard many stories about how Afghani men treated women. Women were simply used for procreation. Afghani women and girls were taught to be submissive and not to be seen. The men and boys were taught to rule their households with an iron fist. If a man wanted, he could kill his wife and any daughters she bore him. They wanted sons and if the woman could not produce them, her punishment would be death.

Nausea began to overwhelm me. The crew chief and I laid out the body bag and opened it. I took a deep breath before the blanket was slowly pulled off the body. The smell of burnt flesh filled the air. Pieces of flesh were sticking to the blanket. The crew chief turned and threw up. I dropped to my knees and tears came flooding out. The ground began to spin as I fell back. My lungs couldn't seem to get enough oxygen. Who could do such a thing to a child? Even being almost completely burned, her beautiful face and innocent eyes were still there. Her cheek bone was crushed and one of her arms was broken. Anger surged through my body as I stood up. When I turned to face the two local national men they were laughing. One of the soldiers that had found the girl came over. He told me that the two men were the girl's father and uncle. Disbelief set in quickly as I looked at them again. They were still smiling and talking. An anger I had never known before began to

swallow me whole. The girl was only seven years old. Supposedly, the young girl was playing and fell into the fire. The medic with the platoon agreed that this was no accident. That was obvious. My mind was filled with rage and sadness. I knelt down next to the girl's body. I was oblivious to the smell at that point. My heart was shattering. The girl never had a chance to live. Hearing the father and uncle talk without even a hint of sadness in their voices made me thankful that this girl had died. As awful as it felt to be thankful for her death, I knew in my heart that she was in a better place. The soldier was still next to me and rested his hand on my shoulder in comfort. I looked up at him.

"My daughter is seven," he said, not ashamed to let the tears flow freely. "Every time I look at that girl I see my daughter lying there. I wish we could kill those bastards for what they do to their women and children. But I would have to say they did her a favor. She's an angel in heaven now."

It was as if he had read my thoughts. He walked away with his head bowed. My heart broke. I knew exactly what he meant when he said he kept seeing his little girl lying there. My fiancé's daughter was a precious jewel to me. It was unfathomable how someone could do this to his own child. There was no remorse or sadness in those men.

I wiped the tears away and motioned for the crew chief. We carefully lifted her body into the bag. It was so difficult with her burnt flesh slipping right off of her bones. Reality set back in as did the smell of death. As we carried the angel onto the aircraft, the crew chief stopped. There was no room inside so we had to strap her down to the floor at the back of the aircraft. It was almost too unbearable to see the bag there, knowing what lay inside.

When the helicopter landed back on base, all of the soldiers got off, stepping carefully around the angel in the bag. Everyone was silent either in thought or in prayer. A soldier came over to help with the body but I could not let him do it. I needed to. The crew chief and I got in a truck and took the angel to the burial site for the local nationals. The mortuary affairs soldiers had already had the grave dug and prepared. They took the body inside to place her in a burial crate. When they brought her out they had tears in their eyes as well. The officer in charge handed me a stone. It was a stone for marking the graves. How she knew it was for me to mark, I will never know, but I knew what I had to do. On it I painted just one simple word. Angel.

Death and war go hand in hand, but when a soldier goes to another country and sees innocent people dying by the hands of their own people, it makes them wonder what they are really fighting for. But I know. We protect and defend the freedoms that keep our children from having to endure what the Afghani women and girls do. We teach these countries new ways of living so that maybe someday, they too will enjoy such freedoms. As for the angel I met that day in the desert, she already knows.

Give Her a Chance

By Deb Griffin

A reflective essay

I almost passed out when the policeman told me that all of the guns I was turning over to him were, in fact, loaded.

I had hidden the weapons from my husband several weeks earlier: three rifles and four revolvers, including a .38 magnum police special. I had made sure that they were all unloaded and hidden in places where he would never find them. I planned to choose a time when he wasn't around to drop them off at the police station, afraid that if he knew my intention to leave, he would use a gun on me. The fact that he had found them, loaded them, and then put them back, scared me half to death.

You would think that if I were truly afraid for my life I would have left him much earlier. It is difficult to explain even now, over a decade later. There is something about being an abused wife that seems to strip away the ability to think through logical steps clearly. I *know* this; yet I also know that when I witness an abusive situation, my first instinct is to wonder, "*Why doesn't she just leave?*" *When I catch myself in this inconsistency, I begin to wonder whether other rational adults respond in the same manner – whether they are also baffled as to why the woman doesn't just leave. Unfortunately, it is the sort of thing that nice people don't talk about, so I really didn't have input from anyone else.*

Let me just say that I am no longer a "nice" person. I decided to talk about this issue with a few people, hoping to gain a clearer understanding of other perspectives.

My current husband Pat got tears in his eyes when I brought up the subject. He remembered finding out at the age of 15 that his Aunt Helen had spent much of her first marriage as a punching bag. He was told that after Helen was beaten, his mom and dad would go over to her house. While his mom took care of Aunt Helen, his father would put cupboard doors back on and pick up broken glass, trying to restore some order. When he first heard this story from his older brother, Pat asked why his dad hadn't just killed the guy. The explanation was that killing their uncle wasn't their job. Aunt Helen had to decide on her own whether to stay or go.

Pat's reaction is directed at the abusive man: "What makes you think you can do this?" His initial response, like that of many good men in our part of the country, is a desire to physically hurt the guy. His second and more important response, however, is to make sure the woman is safe.

One night Pat actually rescued my daughter Cari from an abusive situation. As he was going back to retrieve some things from the abuser's vehicle, Cari kept telling him that he didn't understand – he was

going to get hurt! Pat responded that there was no way this guy could truly hurt him. He might hit him, shoot him, or cut him, but Charles would not be able to prevent him from keeping Cari safe. To Pat it was most important to keep her safe.

There is another male viewpoint that I've actually only witnessed on television talk shows. I would love to think that those situations are staged, because that fits best into my little piece of the world. Unfortunately, I've heard enough comments from adult males that I am forced to think that some men truly believe they have the God-given right to "slap their woman around." They are "the man of the house," which means they have the right to intimidate, beat, verbally abuse, and control their female counterparts. Comments like "She's getting what she deserves" and "That's what she gets for making him mad" are pretty good clues that these men (and I use the term loosely) are abusers as well.

I disagree strongly with this sense of inherent superiority and ownership. Some men say their values come from theological teachings. Yes, there is scripture about wives submitting to their husbands, but I can find nothing about husbands beating their wives. Ephesians 5: 25, 28 says, "Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave his life for it. Men ought to love their wives just as they love their own bodies." I never hear the abusive male quoting this one! Neither do I see bruises on them.

Some men say they are simply superior and this is just the way it is supposed to be, without any good reasoning behind their thinking. I'd wager that the bottom line is that most of these men grew up in families where their fathers or male role models abused the women in *their* lives. That would explain the breakdown in mutual respect between the man and woman.

To help me understand a woman's viewpoint, I recently asked a new friend, Wendy, what her reaction is when she sees a situation where the woman is being abused. She quickly responded that she has *been* a battered wife, so the vision of another woman going through the same thing is very troubling and emotional for her. Wendy explained that she had been an abused wife for seven years, and the reason she had stayed in the marriage for so long was "for the kids." Although this is an admirable ambition, it further emphasizes in this context the inability to think logically while in the abusive relationship. Can any good come from children watching their mother being beaten and/or humiliated and controlled?

I don't have to look very deeply to find an answer to that question. Aunt Helen's son also ended up beating *his* wife, causing her and the children years and years of mental and emotional abuse. In my own family I have one older daughter who finds mistreatment of any individual unacceptable, and another younger daughter who has found her male friends among the ranks of the abusive. I fear that she learned from watching me that women are *supposed* to be abused. Fortunately, about a year ago she realized how dangerous her choices were and began placing her focus in a healthier direction.

My friend Wendy's final comment to me is the one that really stayed with me. I asked her if she finds herself wondering why the battered wife stays, even though she has been there herself. Her response was, "No. She can't get out by herself. Someone has to help her!"

Then I remembered how I got out! I truly *couldn't* do it by myself. It was actually my daughter Cari who was observant and courageous enough to help me. She came into my room one night and said,

“Mom, we’ve got to get out of here or you’ll be dead within the year.” That was it! That was all it took to get my head out of the fog and to begin a new life.

Now when I find myself wondering why the abused woman “doesn’t just leave,” I am aware that I am not alone in reacting to the illogical scenario, nor am I alone in being able to understand what she is going through. I also know that the battered woman needs to have people all around her who are willing and ready to help.

The next time you wonder why an abused woman doesn’t leave, please *know* she can’t get out by herself. She needs friends and family around her who can protect, understand, empathize, and point out the truth. If you have even the slightest relationship with the woman I’ve described, reach out to her so that she has a chance to live.

Oh Deer, It's Time to Go!

By Vince Knoot

A multi-sided argument

The sight of a deer in Iowa used to be somewhat of a rare occurrence. I recall a time in the late 1970's when my dad actually turned the car around and went back to look at a relatively small herd standing near a two lane highway south of Grinnell, Iowa. What a change from today! In the last two-plus decades, the population of white-tailed deer in the state of Iowa has grown to where it is more of a rarity to not see at least a few deer on any trip made within the state.

Most Iowans agree deer are beautiful creatures deserving their place in Iowa's ecology. Likewise, few people want to see them near the point of extinction in our state, as was the case nearly a century ago. However, a time comes when too much of a good thing is not a good thing. Iowa's rising population of deer has become an ever-increasing problem in areas of public safety and economic loss, as well as ecological damage. Many experts and laypersons believe the deer population in Iowa needs to be reduced, and hunting is the most practical, economical and efficient way to accomplish this.

How did the state come to this situation? As you read previously, a century ago the deer population in Iowa was nearly extinct. In fact, "... by 1898 deer were virtually gone in all parts of the state, and the

hunting season was legally closed" (Iowa State University 1). Efforts by humans to re-establish the herd, along with help from nature, were successful. A factor contributing to this success is Iowa's excellent natural habitat which allows deer to "...have higher reproductive rates than those found in some other areas..." (Iowa State University 2). The combination of high reproduction and a ban on hunting led to a rise in the population, and ultimately the problem the state faces today.

Due to the proliferation of the species, "Populations were becoming highly concentrated in some areas by the early 1950s and began to damage agricultural crops. This led to the first modern hunting season in December 1953 in which 4,000 deer were harvested" (Iowa State University 1). This was done to reduce the herd size which "... had reached nearly 13,000..." (Stone 14). Compare that to today's numbers; following a 2003 survey of the deer population in Iowa, "The number has since grown to an estimated 500,000" (Alex). Allowing the population to continue growing is detrimental to everyone in the state, and not just because of crop damage.

People think the situation has no impact on them and, therefore, don't perceive a problem. Whether people know it or not, if they live in Iowa, they are impacted

by deer. As tax payers, citizens pay a price when it comes to issues concerning deer. Every year, hundreds of thousands of dollars are spent dealing with problems caused by deer. Scott Falb of The Iowa Department of Transportation reports that due to vehicle-deer collisions, "...between 12,000 and 13,000 deer carcasses are picked up across the state in a typical year" (Alex). The costs of this clean-up (labor, vehicles, fuel etc.) is paid for with tax dollars.

The problem reaches deeper than just the state level. Many city governments face the same problems. Some of these cities have resorted to hiring companies specializing in the extermination of excess deer. One method utilized by these companies is the use of professional marksmen or sharpshooters to selectively harvest deer. This service carries with it a hefty price tag. For example, Kathryn Johansen, city staff liaison for Iowa City reports, a "...sharpshooting program cost the city about \$100,000 last year..." (Gluck). This was not the first time the city resorted to sharpshooting, and, it will not be the last either. According to city task force chairperson, Pat Farrant, "...the population is growing at such a rate it [sharpshooting] will be necessary this winter..." (Gluck). Iowa City is not alone in this situation. Many metropolitan areas in Iowa are facing similar problems and are dealing with them in various ways. Whatever method used is ultimately paid for with taxpayer dollars.

Another way deer affect Iowans, directly or indirectly, is by the damage done to crops, parks, and residential landscapes. I have personally observed the damage caused by deer to young trees. In the fall, a male deer rubs his antlers on small trees to remove the velvet covering that once supplied the means by which antlers grew. In this process, the bark is damaged or destroyed, ultimately killing the tree. I vis-

ited a farmer friend recently who had just planted five new oak trees, at a cost of \$200 each, only to have four of them already damaged beyond repair.

I have also talked to several farmers through the years, who have so much crop loss due to deer feeding, that the amount harvested hardly covers the cost of harvesting some areas. With our current system of government, some farmers' incomes are supplemented due to crop problems, again costing all of us in the form of taxes.

If increased taxes are not a concern, consider another fee affecting every Iowan who operates a vehicle. Due to the increasing frequency of car-deer collisions in the state, many insurance companies are being forced to raise premiums. According to Robert Saunders, an insurance agent in Johnson County, "It's been a dramatic increase. These [rates] are going up every year, and it's a big concern to the insurance industry" (qtd.in Nicpon).

Even more important than the costs associated with car-deer collisions is human safety. In the year 2003, "...an estimated 7,000 motorists reported collisions with deer in Iowa. Ten people were killed in those crashes" (Dukes). The fatalities are not limited to automobile drivers; in fact, "Of 48 motorcycle fatalities in Iowa this year [2003], four involved deer" (Alex).

For some, the aspect of financial loss and personal safety doesn't have much impact on how this issue is viewed. Perhaps the thought of having to kill some of these magnificent creatures for the benefit of the species is way beyond what they can fathom. This is the point where sound judgment and some proven science must take over.

Some groups of people believe humans should not intervene in nature under any situation, and killing an animal is totally out of their scope of thought. This train of thinking, if adopted, would have disas-

trous consequences for the animals, such as starvation, poor health and diseases. Any species allowed to multiply with no system to check the growth will ultimately self-destruct. The deer population is no exception to this rule.

Efforts to re-locate excess numbers of deer have been proposed as an option to eliminate local problems. While this may seem like a humane way of dealing with the issue, it ultimately is not a good solution. There are several factors as to why this is not the answer to the problem. First, the costs involved with trapping and transporting are high. Second, there are few areas in the country wanting deer, due to excess population problems of their own. The third and perhaps the most important reason relocation is not a viable solution is the fact of poor success. "Studies on relocated deer have found that a vast majority of the animals die from stress related to being trapped, moved, and released in a strange environment" (Iowa State University 8).

With virtually no natural predators remaining in Iowa, such as were present in pre-modern day (i.e. bear, wolves, mountain lions), what remains as the best solution to the dilemma? Many environmental experts agree that the best solution is to allow hunting to be used as a tool to control excesses and help maintain a desired balance. According to an Iowa State University publication, "Hunting is the most effective way of lowering population levels because deer are removed from the ecosystem with relatively low investments of time and tax money"(7)

Not only does hunting provide a solution with very little use of tax dollars, it actually has a positive impact on the economy in Iowa. "A 2001 survey estimated that hunters, both residents and nonresidents, spent more than \$47 million dollars on equipment and trip related expenses" (Stone

62). The influence of these dollars doesn't end there. As this cash is circulated throughout the region where spent, it provides an economic benefit to many people. It is estimated in this same 2001 survey that the \$47 million dollars spent had an economic benefit of "...more than \$76 million to the state" (Stone 62).

While it may be true there are isolated incidences of unethical hunters, and these usually tend to grab the headlines in the media, the vast majority of deer hunters in Iowa are safe, ethical and caring people. Not only do they pay the majority of money spent for conservation projects with fees raised through license purchases, outdoorsmen also pay taxes on equipment and ammunition, which are used to support efforts to improve all aspects of the environment.

A recently implemented program entitled Help Us Stop Hunger (HUSH) lends further evidence to the caring nature of many of Iowa's hunters. HUSH is a program allowing deer hunters to donate surplus deer to help feed underprivileged families. "In its first year...[2003] HUSH collected more than 1600 deer, donated by hunters to any of about 30 lockers, yielding about 80,000 pounds of ground venison, or more than 300,000 meals to customers of social service agencies in central Iowa..."(Tony).

While it may be impossible for everyone to agree on the issue of how to deal with the expanding deer population in Iowa, it is without doubt an issue Iowans must confront. Some people will steadfastly claim there is no problem, but the facts speak for themselves. Something needs to be done. Either nature takes control in its often harsh way, or man steps in and gives nature a helping hand. Hopefully, the latter will be the path chosen in Iowa. As a person who enjoys nature for its beauty and

enjoys hunting as well, I believe there can and must be a way to balance both activities for the betterment and survival of the creature we call the white-tail deer.

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Intelligent As a Mule

By Pam Keenan

An informative essay presenting a surprising new view of a chosen subject

I'm sure you have heard the old saying "stubborn as a mule." Did you know that this is a false characterization? If you were to say "intelligent as a mule," then you would be correct. The mule is not stubborn; he is extremely intelligent. A mule has the gift of self-preservation. A mule uses his intelligence to always think about the consequences of a task before doing it. If a mule refuses to do something, he has a good reason for it. His extreme intelligence comes from his breeding.

Both the male and female mules are sterile and cannot breed (American Donkey and Mule Society Inc.). A mule is a cross between a donkey stallion, which is called a Jack, and a horse mare, or between a stallion horse with a female donkey, which is called a Jennet. This cross produces a mule that is born with the unique mixture of having a friendly nature, extreme intelligence and extraordinary strength. Basically, the mule gets his smarts from the donkey and his strength from the horse.

Dr. Larry Buggia of the Annabessacook Veterinary Clinic in Monmouth, Maine, says the differences between the donkey and the horse can be explained by how each species evolved. The horse evolved in broad open plains, where he developed a natural defense to run when startled or frightened. The donkey evolved in hot, dry, hilly, rocky coun-

tryside, with situations less likely to lead to flight. This led donkeys to develop their ability to think things through and respond in the correct way to individual situations (Compton 2). Buggia confirms, "They evolved with a little more brain power"(qtd. In Compton 2).

A mule's intelligence is hard for people to apprehend. People have stereotyped the mule for so long that it's hard to convince them to change their opinion of them. The people who ride horses are the hardest ones to convince. I have a sister who has ridden horses for over 20 years. She had made the comment numerous times to people on trail rides that she wouldn't be caught dead on a mule. After she remarried and taught her husband how to ride, he decided he wanted a mule. Her husband had a bad back and had been told that riding a mule was easier on a person's back. This is true because a mule's gait is different than the horse's gait. The mule they purchased was young and hadn't been ridden very much, so my sister, being more experienced, was the one who rode the mule to break him in. She immediately loved him and regretfully admitted that her opinion had been wrong. She was a prime example of how stereotyping the mule had formed her opinion.

I have heard people compare their mule to having a 4-wheel drive. This compari-

son is made because a mule can go where a horse can't. The mule is sure footed and can travel on rocky and rough terrain. A horse will work until he drops dead to the ground; a mule won't because his intelligence tells him to stop when he is tired. If you give a horse too much grain, he will overeat and can founder which leaves the animal lame. A mule, by contrast, will quit eating when he is full. Another pleasing trait of the mule is if a horse and mule were to get in the same accident, the mule would be less likely to suffer injury.

The ability to withstand accidents was an important trait in leading the mule to play a big role in the growth of the United States.

The U.S. Army Cavalry Units chose the mule to transport their artillery, due to the mule having the strength and ability to withstand the environmental conditions and terrain. The mule would not get spooked and run away like a horse would (McKinnon 2). In fact, the ability to feel vibrations coming from the ground enabled the mule to foresee an attack from the enemy (McKinnon 2). As a result, the army placed great value on the mule. The Army understood the mule and treated him with great respect.

A mule is gentle and sensitive and usually like people if treated right. On the other hand, a mule has a very good memory and will remember the bad things any one has done to him. He will not forgive you like a horse does. You have to become friends with him on the ground and develop a bond before the two of you will work well together. You have to persuade a mule to do what you want. You have to use this persuasion without force. The mule, desiring a bond with his owner and needing non-aggressive persuasion which comes from the animal's intelligence, is often mistaken for being stubborn. Once you develop a bond with your mule, you will be able to motivate

him to please you. This bond will reward you with a devoted lifelong friend.

I consider my own mule one of my best friends. When I brought him home, I didn't ride him right away. I spent 30 to 60 minutes a day just talking to him, brushing him, giving him treats and letting him get to know me and trust me. It didn't take long for the two of us to bond. Now, if I am clipping thistles out of the pasture or scooping out the barn, he is right beside me. Sometimes he will purposefully stand between me and the window where I throw out the scoopings, to let me know that he wants my full attention. If I put the shovel down and give him my full attention, for even just 10 minutes, I tell him he has to move so I can finish, and he does. I have been told that I spoil my mule, but while the people who say this are spending up to 30 minutes catching their mule to go riding, all I have to do is holler out my mule's name and he comes running. I respect his intelligence, and he in turn respects me. He has all the qualities I would expect to see in a human best friend; he just happens to be a mule.

The mule is starting to be a popular choice among equestrian riders due to a greater understanding of this intelligence. People are starting to realize that if a mule has an attitude and will not behave, it is because the trainer did not train the mule correctly. The mule is a unique animal and his intelligence has to be respected in the training process to get positive results. In short, you have to obtain and use the intelligence required to train, own and enjoy the very intelligent mule.

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All I Really Need to Know

By Alyssa Cunningham

A profile

To the average person, kindergarten may seem to be the equivalent of daycare. One may see it as a way to occupy five-year olds while their parents are at work. This is far from the truth. The reality is that every morning children across the country come to their kindergarten class and learn the “basics,” the principles and simple ideas that will become the foundation for the education and socialization in their future. In his book *All I Really Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*, Robert Fulghum states how important the learning in kindergarten is. In his words, “All I really need to know I learned in kindergarten. All I really need to know about how to live and what to do and how to be I learned in kindergarten....These are the things I learned: Share everything. Play fair. Don’t hit people. Clean up your own mess. Don’t take things that aren’t yours. Say you’re sorry when you hurt somebody.” Each day, kindergarteners come to class to learn these things about which Robert Fulghum writes.

Every morning at 8:05, twenty-three kindergarteners take their seats in Mrs. Hennessey’s room. The room itself is very welcoming. Right inside the room a huge picture of a caterpillar with the helpers for the week catches one’s eye. Simple, almost automatic tasks are delegated to these small children. Madison is the napkin helper

while Jayden is the door holder. Addison is the pet feeder, and Hannah is the weather watcher who alerts the class to whether it is sunny, overcast or cloudy.

Once everyone has settled down and taken a seat, attendance is taken. Although there are many runny noses and a few sneezes, the entire class is present. The morning begins with Sustained Silent Reading, a district program that aims to increase Iowa Test of Basic Skills reading scores. The kindergartners all begin at their desks, but they soon begin to wander throughout the room. Suzie and Madison decide they need to find different books and head to the bookshelf. Once they arrive, they are too busy talking and giggling to choose books. Mrs. Hennessey informs them that they either need to choose a book and sit down, or they can read at recess. Immediately both girls select a book and hurry to their seats. Since the kindergartners cannot read yet, they soon tire of staring at pictures. They begin to move and wiggle in their seats, and the volume in the room gets progressively higher. Once most of the students have stopped reading, Mrs. Hennessey prepares to move on. The kindergarteners clean up any mess they have made and take their books back to the bookshelf before Mrs. Hennessey begins the next activity.

She tells the children it is time for their morning lesson. Today's lesson is about the letter A. She has previously introduced the topic and is now following up. She sits in her rocking chair, and all twenty-three children find their assigned seats on the floor around her. She first reads a story about the letter A and the objects that begin with it. After the first page, the children begin to squirm. One child raises his hand to share that he has seen an apple, so twenty-two more hands shoot up into the air, wanting to share their "A" experiences too. Mrs. Hennessey asks them to wait until after the story, and twenty-two hands slowly fall back down. Again, the kindergartners begin to squirm, and the children are reminded of their body basics: sit on their bottoms at all times and keep their hands to themselves. They attempt sitting still, but the inevitable squirms and wiggles soon reappear.

Mrs. Hennessey finishes the story and begins to talk about objects that begin with A. She asks questions such as, "What begins with A?" or "Do you remember what A things we talked about yesterday?" After each question, many little hands rise in response. She calls on Connor first, but his answer is simply, "Umm, I forgot." She calls on Hannah next, but Hannah has no answer either. The kindergartners are so excited to raise their hands that they forget they do not know the answer. After the short question and answer time, the students all return to their seats. Caden runs to his seat but becomes bored sitting alone and starts to lick the back of his chair. Josh F. is also bored, so he gets out his markers and begins coloring on his hands and arms. Mrs. Hennessey again catches their attention, so markers and tongues are put away.

She announces that it is time for recess. Hannah, the weather watcher, announces that it is overcast outside which means everyone has to wear a jacket. There are

a few moans and groans, but most of the children are so eager to go outside they do not care about what they have to wear. After putting on their coats, they line up at the door and take their partner's hand. They walk quietly down the hall, hand in hand, until they get outside. When recess is finished, twenty-two children run back into the room. Caden is missing, but a small voice announces that he had to go to the bathroom. Almost immediately three hands appear in the air, and three small, high-pitched voices announce that they too have to go to the restroom. Mrs. Hennessey dismisses them after she reminds them that they need to take care of bathroom breaks during recess, not afterwards.

It is time for another short lesson. In today's math lesson, the story *Ten Black Dots* is used to work on counting to ten. When Mrs. Hennessey tells the class that they will be reading it, Caden groans and says, "I don't want to." He is sent to his seat where he cannot fully enjoy the story. Josh F. is playing with the craft materials and will not stop picking his nose, so he is also sent to his desk. Mrs. Hennessey reminds Josh F. that kindergartners do not take things that are not theirs, and the craft materials were not his so he cannot take them. She stresses using manners and always being polite. "We start at square one. They know nothing and some of them have no structure at home," she tells me. "I know I have high expectations of them, but if they do not start out right in kindergarten, they will never do well."

After the math lesson, it is time for lunch, and then it is time to go home. The children all look tired, and Mrs. Hennessey is grateful that today is a short day. Two students accidentally get on the wrong bus as they are leaving, but the bus driver easily catches the mistake and corrects them before they leave the school. Mrs.

Hennessey goes back to her quiet room to prepare tomorrow's lesson before turning off the lights and shutting the door. "Some days the kids look so exhausted when they go home, I just know that they will take a long nap. It's hard work, remembering how to count to ten and use your manners," she jokes as she leaves.

Although this day may seem simple and insignificant, these kindergarteners are constantly learning and demonstrating values that adults sometimes lose somewhere along the journey to later life. Robert Fulghum describes how life would be if everyone behaved as kindergartners do in his book *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*. In his words, "Think what a better world it would be if all – the whole world – had cookies and milk about three o'clock every afternoon and then lay down with our blankies for a nap. Or if governments all had a basic policy to always put things back where they found them and to clean up their own mess. And it is still true, no matter how old you are – when you go out into the world, it is best to hold hands and stick together." We all can learn a lesson from Mrs. Hennessey's twenty-three kindergartners.

Porky's

By Mary Haege

A narrative essay

It's a hot, steamy, summer night and being a restless eight-year-old, I cannot sleep. I roll over onto my side and stare aimlessly at the digital alarm clock that refuses to change time. It reads eight-thirty. I'm hot and uncomfortable, and all I can think about are ice cream and snow cones. I am contemplating getting back out of bed and sneaking down to the kitchen where I can indulge in the creamy, vanilla ice cream in my freezer when I hear a small creak. I shoot up in my bed only to see my dad decked out in a black, leather jacket and large, black sunglasses. In his hand, he holds a much smaller version of his leather jacket.

"This is for you," he says. I slip the jacket on over my pajamas and start to talk loudly and excitedly, but he hushes me immediately.

"Shhhhh!" he exclaims, "You'll wake up your brother and sister." I agree that would be a bad thing, so quietly I slip on a pair of clean jeans, and we silently sneak down the spiral staircase and head for the front door. Once outside, I hear the soft purr of my dad's 1971 Mach 1 Mustang, which, since I can remember, is music to my young ears. I now can hardly contain myself because I have a good idea about where he's taking me. We both slip into the car. My dad eases the gear shift into reverse, slowly lets

out the clutch, and gives the black stallion a little gas. We roll smoothly into the vacant street, and he again shifts into first gear, then second, and then third. As he accelerates, I'm instantly sucked into the back of my seat. I try to look out to see what's going on around me, but the car is so low to the ground that my head doesn't reach the window. The only things I can see are tree-tops and streetlights whizzing by in a blur of light and color. The adrenaline is now pumping violently in my veins as he pulls into a parking lot and takes the spot marked with a black and white checkerboard design. This is his favorite parking spot. I pull the door handle gently to let myself out of the roller coaster car and I immediately feel eyes all over me.

"Are you hungry?" my dad asks.

"French fries and a Green River!" I reply. This is a favorite of mine. We both walk toward the grill and a nice young lady with curly hair and glasses takes our order. As I wait patiently, I scan over the scene. I see white, plastic picnic tables overflowing with empty bottles of Budweiser and classic cars similar to my dad's all around me. One thing in particular steals my attention: The front end of a 1966 Chevy is attached to a wall and inside it is a small DJ booth and an announcer bobbing his head to the classic tunes of the 50's and 60's. As the

song "Surfin' Safari" comes to an end, the announcer comes over the loudspeaker, welcomes everyone to Porky's Muscle Car Night and declares that he is ready to host the hula-hoop contest. Four or five girls around my age run to the small twenty-foot by twenty-foot dance floor directly in front of the DJ booth and wait patiently for the man to hand out the hula-hoops. The DJ hops down from his 1966 throne bearing different colored hula-hoops. He hands me a light-blue striped hula-hoop and then continues to distribute to the other girls. He then jumps back up to the DJ booth and tells us to take our marks, get set, and go. We all begin to move our hips like worms during a storm. I hear the familiar Beach Boys tune "Wipe Out" as I look out around me and see hula-hoops dropping to the ground one at a time. I start to get really excited and continue to wiggle and jiggle as the hula-hoop makes rotation after rotation around my waist. Finally, the last hula-hoop, in slow motion, falls to the floor. Upon seeing this, the announcer runs toward me with hand-fuls of bubble gum and licorice.

"Congratulations," he says in that announcer-like-voice of his, "you're the hula-hoop queen!" I am so excited I almost faint as my dad struts over to me with my fries and Green River.

"You were wonderful," my dad says, and we both glow with pride. He takes my hand, and we make a few laps around the parking lot, critiquing the classic cars as we go. I start to get tired, and my dad offers to drive us home. I agree, and we walk slowly back to the black batmobile and slide in.

On the way home, my dad and I reach a stop light, and a yellow Super Bee pulls up next to us on our left. My dad, unable to control his testosterone, revs his engine at the Super Bee, inviting him to race. The Super Bee willingly accepts with a low rumble. I exchange glances with my dad,

and put my seat belt on a little tighter. As the light turns green, my dad pops the clutch and power-shifts from first, to second gear. Already the posi kicks in and the back end fish-tails left and right. He jams the gear shift into third and finally fourth gear. The experience is similar to the Silly Silo at Adventureland except with the smell of burning rubber all around me.

"Did you see that, Mary?!" he asks me. "We just blew the doors off of that Super Bee!" I figure that because my dad always brags about the giant engine in his car.

"Yeah Dad, you were wonderful," I reply with a smirk. We both glow as the sleek, black jet reaches home. Again, I gently lift the door handle and ease slowly out of the car, making sure not to slam the door. We both creep down the long, narrow, driveway and across the brick patio to the front door. My dad quietly opens the front door, and we both step inside. Once in, we are both greeted by my Boxer, Fritz. We both listen to make sure no one is awake, and then we slowly make our way back up the stairs and to our bedrooms.

"Goodnight Dad, I love you," I say in a quiet whisper.

"I love you too," he says. With that, I gently close my door and crawl back into my not-so-uncomfortable bed. I click my lamp off and pull the covers over my head. That night, I dream about racecars and Green Rivers.

The Summer of '71

By Doug Smith

A personal experience essay

The summer of '71 started like most summers, no more school, no more books. 12 glorious weeks of freedom and fun! I was looking forward to spending the majority of my free time on the river. The river was my safe haven, my heaven here on earth.

Ben and I were best friends. We shared our lives together. Boy Scouts, sports, classes, we did it all together. Sure, we each had other friends, but when the two of us were together; well, it just didn't get any better than that!

The day started like all the other days that summer. "Mom, I'm heading down to the river!" I hollered as I tore through the screen door. I was at least half a block away when it slammed shut. I never heard her reply, but it was always the same: "You be careful, you know you can't swim!"

Ha! I didn't need to know how to swim! The mighty Skunk River was barely knee deep in the summer, we had to search high and low to find a hole waist deep. It would get so shallow in August that we could ride our bicycles from sand bar to sand bar, kicking up spray as we shot through what little water meandered by. Being a worldly eighth grader, I knew what qualified as dangerous and what didn't. The Skunk River was not dangerous in August, no matter what my mother thought!

It was mid-morning, a beautiful, clear day. It had rained upriver recently, and the river was deeper than normal, but still only around 3 feet deep. It was getting hot already-all the more reason to float down the river on inner tubes. We were allowed to roam a two mile stretch of the river: a mile upstream from the bridge and a mile downstream. This allowed our parents to drive by at any time and still see us. The rules were hard and fast, and we understood them! If our folks came by and couldn't see us from the bridge; we were dead meat! However, we were alright with this rule. We would jump in upstream, float under the bridge, go down to the bend, climb out, run back upstream, and jump in again! Only this time, Ben hollers "Let's keep going!"

"WHAT! Are you nuts? We can't keep going, our folks will kill us!", I yelled back. We had never gone past the bend, out of the sight of our parents. We had never even discussed it before! He surely wasn't serious, was he?

Oh, no! he was dead serious! "They will never know. We'll just go a ways past the bend, and then we'll get out and walk back up. Besides, I've always wanted to see what's around the corner. We'll be fine!"

He was right. We would be fine, and our parents would just have to get used to the idea that we weren't little boys anymore; we

were young men. We could handle anything this little creek could throw at us! Today was the day we would make our move. We would take on this uncharted, wild river. We would tame it, march back triumphantly, and no one would be the wiser! Break the rules and not get caught. We were so cool, so very full of ourselves.

As we rounded the bend in the river that day, I began to see the world as a larger, more exciting place. I wasn't with my parents, or any other adults. It was just Ben and I. We were on our own, and it was beautiful! As I lay in my tube, quietly bobbing down the river, all I could see was the bright, blue sky with those soft, cotton white clouds framed by the green leaves from the trees that stood shoulder to shoulder on the bank. I wasn't on the Skunk River; I was on the mighty Mississippi. "Huck" and I were breaking away from civilization, floating on our raft, running away from home, becoming men.

It felt so powerful! I was alive! My own man, not taking orders or advice from anyone! I was totally relaxed, with my hands and feet dangling in the cool water, while the sun slowly baked my brown skin to an even darker shade. The silence was so loud all we could hear was the occasional ripple in the quiet stream. The hours drifted past, moving as slowly as we were. This is what life was all about, no cares, no worries! Just complete and total peace. This is living! Then, I heard Ben holler.

Ben was the same size as me, about 5 ½ feet tall, except that he was a toothpick. Tall and lean, his scruffy blond hair was such a contrast to his tanned face. He was a kid who wore nothing but blue jean shorts all summer. You never saw his scrawny frame covered by a shirt. He was loud and kind of mouthy, now that I think about it. So, it wasn't a surprise to hear him holler on such

a still day, but the tone of his voice brought me back to reality.

"This water is a lot deeper, and it is moving fast!" he yelled. As I sat up, I realized we were no longer floating quietly along the embankment, but we were now in the middle of a stream that had changed dramatically! We had floated a long way downstream; we were a long way from the bridge, and a long way from home. This was not the river we started out on hours earlier; this was a different stream. This was a fast, deep river, one that I didn't belong on. Ben was a good swimmer, but when he jumped off his tube to see how deep the water was, he came back up and hollered "I can't touch bottom", I could tell by the tone of his voice he was really worried. I thought to myself, "I am on an inner tube, and it doesn't matter how deep the water is.

I smiled and waved at Ben, letting him know that I wasn't concerned about this minor development. We were men, and men don't let little things like deep, swift water bother us. And then I saw what lay about 200 yards ahead! Another river had joined ours, and it entered from the north at a right angle, creating a swirling mass of swift, muddy water. My body went cold, I couldn't move. I just stared at what was quickly coming up on me.

When Ben yelled, I snapped out of my trance. I tried to paddle to shore as fast as possible, but if you have ever floated in an inner-tube, you know how tough it is to paddle anywhere. I was in the middle of the river and moving swiftly towards the roughest water. It was coming up fast. There was nothing I could do; I was going for a ride into this rolling mass of water. I thought, "Stay calm; hold on to your tube and you will float right through." That is precisely when my tube flipped over!

Under I went. The murky water swirled around me as I tried to find which way was

up. I couldn't see, I couldn't tell up from down, and I couldn't swim. The current was rolling me sideways. I could see light from one direction, but couldn't move toward it. I was being tossed by an overpowering force that I couldn't grab, couldn't pull, and couldn't kick, and it was winning! Something hit me, hard, in the back. I was being dragged along the bottom, held down by the force of the current. It was all happening so fast, so violently. I couldn't right myself; I couldn't stop rolling. My lungs screamed! Dear God, was I going to drown in this boiling deluge?

Then it released me, just as quickly as it had grabbed me. It rolled me to the surface, allowing that sweet air to tear into my searing lungs! I grabbed for more air, kicking and screaming. I felt the sand under my feet, and I pushed with all my strength to jump away from this quiet monster that had me in its watery grip. It was over as abruptly as it had begun. I was against a sand bar, with my hands and feet on solid ground, and my face out of that damn river. I collapsed onto the sand. I could hear Ben hollering as he ran to me. I have never seen his eyes that wide or seen him look so scared. He said I had been under for longer than a minute, and he didn't think I was coming up. I thought I had been under for hours and that I wasn't coming up.

As I lie there, looking up at that same beautiful blue sky, and those same white clouds, it slowly came over me what I had just been through. I must have lain there for an hour, trying to stop shaking and collecting my thoughts. It was then I realized that I really was becoming a man, for I was now responsible for my own actions. Mommy and Daddy weren't there to watch out for me. If I screwed up, I paid the price; no one else. I had not listened to my parent's warnings, and it almost cost me my life.

We got home quite late that night. We had walked quietly downstream to the next bridge, and hitchhiked home. I was grounded for going around that bend, for breaking the rules. I never told my parents of my ordeal that day. I didn't want to be grounded into the next millennium, but I also think I didn't want to scare my mother by letting her know how close I had come that day to losing my life.

I always fought my parents' efforts to restrict my freedom. I now understood why they wanted to have some control over my life: They didn't want me to lose it! As I lie in bed that night, I couldn't shake the fact that I had almost died at the bottom of a normally quiet stream, but I also couldn't shake the fact that I had moved a little closer to becoming a man.

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Composition II

Quality Long Term Care

By Kim Spencer Kline/Dana Jordan

A proposed solution to a problem

It is inevitable that sometime in one's lifetime he/she or a family member will need to be placed in a nursing home. Most people have had grandparents or parents in long-term care facilities. What if that care facility neglected or abused their patients? What if their lives were in jeopardy simply because the facility was short on staff? Unfortunately, this neglect and abuse occurs too often. For instance, the Des Moines Register has printed more than seven articles between March and April of 2004 about the Abbey Nursing Home, advising the public of the numerous non-compliance issues and hefty fines imposed on the facility (Kauffman). On April 4, 2004, Kauffman reported that the Department of Inspections and Appeals declared the forty one residents of the Abbey in "immediate jeopardy." The inspections department then proceeded to shut down the facility and evacuate the residents. Indeed, the residents were in jeopardy. In one recorded incident, a female resident died from choking on food while unattended in the dining area in December, 2003. During an interview with former Abbey employee, Joanie Grace, a long-term care nurse of 15 years, she accounted that the staff could not locate an oxygen tank to assist in resuscitation. The majority of the non-compliance and dangerous issues stemmed from lack of adequate staffing. To

remedy this problem at all long-term care facilities in Iowa, we propose that the Iowa Legislature implement specific nursing staff requirements and implement laws to enforce penalties for non-compliant facilities.

Inadequate Staffing Issues

Incidents of abuse, neglect, and accidental death occur all too often, not only in Iowa, but across the nation. A shortage of qualified LPN and RN nurses and Certified Nursing Assistants on each shift results in most of these transgressions against the elderly. Many patients have high levels of acuity that demand more extensive care and additional time from skilled nurses. Joanie Grace has dealt with these issues too often. She reflects, "If I am responsible for 58 patients on a shift and some of them require G-tube feedings, trach care, and vent monitoring, a sick patient down the hall may not get assessed until he or she is acutely ill and needing hospitalization. We may have been able to treat the patient at the facility if he or she had been assessed sooner." She continues, "This adds to the burden of financing healthcare. We need more staff. The inability to provide necessary care is scary for the patient and for the nurse whose license is on the line." Unfortunately, Joanie's experiences in the long-term care field are not uncommon. Inadequate staffing poses risks for patients and nurses alike. Residents may be

unattended at crucial times that can result in falls or choking incidents. Calls for assistance to the bathroom or shower may be unanswered for long periods of time, leaving residents lying in their own bodily waste for hours. Important information in medical charts may be overlooked or omitted by overburdened nurses, resulting in incorrect dosing of medications or improper diets that could lead to serious medical complications. The nurses are directly affected as they are held accountable for any mistakes or oversights in patient care. Proper staff-to-patient ratios could prevent many of these problems.

Current Legislature

The state of Iowa currently addresses minimum staffing requirements as “adequate staffing” but does not state an actual minimum number of staff members for the facility size and resident acuity levels (State of Iowa House File 297). None of the regulations are well-defined. However, when the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals finds this is an issue within a facility, the facility is fined for non-compliance. The ambiguity of the language allows these non-compliance issues to be appealed, in which case the facility may be released of its liability to pay the fines. The Iowa Legislature House File 2290, where staffing requirements for health care facilities is addressed, excludes extended care facilities. The bill reads as follows:

“1. A health facility, *other than an extended care facility*, shall ensure that it is staffed in a manner that provides sufficient, appropriately qualified direct-care nurses in each department or unit within the facility in order to meet the individualized care needs of its patients and to meet the requirements specified in this section.” Bill: H.J.259.2, Sect. 4, 135M.4, 5:4-9.

Exclusion of long-term (or extended) care facilities leaves the staffing requirements in the hands of the facility to decide how much staff to provide. Inadequate staffing has often been the result.

Complaints

The issue of staffing problems presents itself over and over in complaints to the Iowa State Ombudsman’s office, as well as in state inspections. A licensed practical nurse or CNA who does not report for work due to personal reasons, such as illness or emergency, leaves the facility understaffed. As a result, the staff must scramble to find someone to cover the shift of the absent employee, often requiring another nurse to pull a double shift. The staffing deficiency also poses scheduling problems. Qualified employees are needed to cover three shifts, including weekends and holidays. This situation has worsened over the past three years as complaints to the Ombudsman’s office have increased by 103% from 2001 to 2003 as illustrated below.

The Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals performs annual inspections of each facility, and it issues fines based on the level of non-compliance within a facility. As stated above, facilities can appeal these fines and be exonerated. In addition to fines, the penalties for six months of non-compliance often result in loss of Medicaid/Medicare certification, which means the facility is unable to receive additional Medicare patients until the facility has reached the “reasonable assurance” period when they are eligible to apply for recertification (Wood). Wood’s research found that other states, such as Wisconsin, have unsuccessfully tried sanction of receivership which entails sending in state administrators to manage a flailing, non-compliant facility until it is functioning properly once again. The use of fines and penalties have proven to be ineffective in most cases

because, when faced with thousands of dollars in fines to pay, many long-term care facility owners will voluntarily close their business and sell it to the highest bidder. Some reopen facilities under a new name or declare bankruptcy. Many facilities are owned by corporations or partnerships that, upon being closed down in one state, simply open another facility in another state without repercussion and proceed to run it into the ground as well.

Though all of the fines and penalties are aimed at punishing the owners and administrators of facilities, in the not-so-long-run, staff and residents suffer the consequences. A facility owing huge debts for non-compliance issues has less money to operate the facility efficiently. The result is inadequate staffing, poor wages, and inadequate management or lack of valuable resources, which directly affects the well-being of the patients. In addition to these problems, many incidents of abuse and neglect go unreported as staff and administrators fear for their jobs. A reform in long-term care is desperately needed in order to properly care for the people who live in those facilities. It is their health, safety, and financial well-being that are at stake.

Giving Our Elderly the Quality Care They Deserve

First, we propose that Legislature clearly define staffing requirements for long-term care facilities, implementing specific staff-to-patient ratios based on the number of residents and level of acuity (care), just as this issue is mandated for other health care facilities. Each facility should be required to contract with a private nursing pool to provide staffing in emergency situations. In order to ensure adequate staffing, each facility needs to develop a state mandated management team that consists not only of the facility's administrator and staff, but also a state administrator from

the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals who interacts with this management team monthly. A state administrator team member should oversee no more than 15 local facilities in order to ensure an adequate amount of time for problem-solving. The management team would be responsible for overseeing and maintaining proper staffing ratios, efficient resource management, problem-solving for quality care issues, and employer/employee relations with incentive programs to encourage good employee attendance and quality work. The state administrator would be responsible for offering alternative solutions to specific problems, such as finding reliable staff, in order to help facilities maintain full compliance.

Next, we propose that the Iowa State Legislature implement laws to enforce penalties for non-compliant facilities. Our proposal requires that any long-term care facility that does not meet 90% compliance following two consecutive inspections loses their Medicaid/Medicare certification as well as lose their license to own and operate a long-term care facility in the state of Iowa. Fines based on level of non-compliance would be issued, and the facility would have thirty days to transfer its residents and close its doors. In order to prevent similar circumstances from reoccurring, the existing public registry needs to be changed to provide state licensing agencies with a detailed history of all owners/corporations of long-term care facilities, complete with all non-compliance issues, penalties, and fines. Serious complaints should be included in this registry. The registry needs to be accessible on a national scale and should make use of a grading scale for easier deciphering of information. Information should be graded on a scale of 1-4, mirroring the grading scale of the inspections department. Implementation of a complete public regis-

try can help to prevent other long-term care facilities from being opened anywhere else by the same people who ran shoddy, unsafe operations elsewhere.

The Other Side

Some may argue that current Iowa regulations are sufficient as stated in House File 2290. However, this leaves the responsibility in the hands of the facilities with little accountability. The implementation of the management teams would provide the accountability and the resources necessary to provide quality care in a safe and positive environment.

Other options have been suggested such as cameras in residents' rooms to monitor the level of care in order to stop elderly abuse and neglect (Huggins). Not only is this infringement of a citizen's right to privacy, it also "institutionalizes" the atmosphere of long-term care. This option is not conducive to healthy living arrangements for our elderly.

The state has considered incentive programs to hire better quality nurses, but this does not solve inadequate staffing problems if a facility is more interested in the bottom line than in the care of their residents. Facility administrators may argue that they can not afford more nurses, but the management team we have proposed would look at time-management issues within the existing staff to better allocate responsibilities. Also, funds that are spent on the lengthy inspection and appeals process could be allocated to the monthly management of facilities.

The Bottom Line

With the increase in complaints about the elder care in Iowa, the time has come for Iowa lawmakers and citizens to set a higher standard for quality of life for our elderly generation. Iowa standards in long-term care should set the example for the rest of the nation. Our proposal eliminates the staffing problems, shifts the financial

aspects into a more positive direction, and encourages quality healthcare in a positive environment. Happy, healthy residents are the best advertiser for long-term care facilities, and a positive work environment promotes loyal and competent employees. The focus in long-term care facilities needs to be directed back to giving the best care possible to the residents, where it is deserved.

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A Proposal for Financing Higher Education

By Joe Carrington

An essay that establishes a problem, explores and refutes alternative solutions, and proposes the best solution

Financing for a college education is one of the biggest investments students can make in their lifetime. However, it is becoming more difficult every year for families to finance a higher education. The blame for this problem is getting pushed back and forth between the state and federal aid programs, the colleges and universities, and the families reaching for this dream. It is time that all groups work together to make the American dream of a higher education a reality to more American families. Today, I propose that we reform the whole process of financing college and college tuition, and that we draft a new plan for educating the next generation.

Background

Thirty years ago a trend started in this country. Going to college after high school became a normal part of our society, and the enrollment rates across the country had a sudden boom. With the sudden rise in number of students, colleges and universities found themselves in need of more faculty and staff and better facilities. Therefore, tuition went up. However, this started a new and not so good trend. Institutions began to see that with all of the demand for a higher education in this free market, they could raise tuition when they saw fit and families could still go because of federal and state aid. In the 1999 -2000 academic year

alone, college tuition had risen at a rate of fifty times faster than inflation rates (Price). State and federal aid is greater now more than ever. However, it has not kept up with the dramatic increases in college spending. According to Tom Price, although each individual amount a student may get from state and federal aid is larger than ten years ago, that amount is worth substantially less. The federal government blames this crisis on colleges and universities spending money foolishly and raising tuition costs at unaffordable rates. The colleges blame it on insufficient help from the states and high enrollment rates. Then, in turn, the states and families blame the federal aid program for not having enough money to offer. If we keep pushing the blame, nothing will ever change.

Past Proposals

The problem of paying for higher education has been a well discussed topic in the legislature. However, every solution that stems from these discussions fails to meet the people's needs. In October of 2003, House Republican Buck McKeon proposed the Affordability in Higher Education Act. This Act would penalize colleges by "deny[ing] some federal funds to institutions that raise tuition and fees substantially above the overall inflation rate" (Price). The Republicans take the stand that colleges

are foolishly spending money, and states are lowering their involvement in aid. McKeon comments that, "We have been putting more and more money into higher education, and we just can't keep up [with rising college prices]. We fall further behind as the schools increase their tuition and fees, and as the states lower their help for schools" (qtd. in Price).

On the other hand, democratic leaders in the house claim that McKeon's proposal would hurt innocent students, so they urge for more federal aid. Travis Reindl of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities argues that "If you throw schools out of the [federal aid] programs, that just means there isn't money for the students. And your stick is going to come down disproportionately on the lower-income students" (qtd. in Price). Democratic leaders feel that federal and state aid programs need to keep up with the enrollment rates to solve this problem. Yet republican leaders point out that "The federal government provided two-thirds of all student aid last year [2002 - 2003]: \$15.8 billion in grants, \$1.2 billion in work-study funds, \$5.4 billion in tax credits, and \$49 billion in guaranteed and subsidized loans" (Price). The congressmen noted that "those amounts represent a substantial increase above inflation in all categories over the decade" (Price). Both sides are only looking for who is to blame for the problem, and not for an actual solution.

Neither proposal will solve the problem of financing higher education. We cannot just take the easy way out and suggest that we need more money in the aid programs. We cannot blame colleges for raising tuition costs since more students enroll in higher education every year. Institutions need to make updates in faculty, staff, and building improvements in order to meet the demands of the next generation. We definitely cannot

ignore this problem because higher education is an important part of American society, now more than ever. In order to hinder this financial catastrophe, we must work towards a solution together: colleges, families, and federal and state aid programs.

A Call for Change

What America needs is to hold all four parties accountable. We need a new law passed that will set limits on college tuition increases and will expect state grants to keep up with tuition and enrollment rates. We need more money secured for students to receive federal aid. We need to draft a new plan for determining the EFC so that loans will not get out of control for students. Also, families need to be informed earlier on about college tuition and financial aid, so they can start planning. America needs a four part plan for a four part problem.

The Family Level

Families are expected to start saving for college as soon as a child enters preschool or elementary school. Yet according to the New England Board of Higher Education, the average age of white and African-American children, when parents first receive information about college financial aid is fifteen, and for Hispanic children it is seventeen (New England 72). Families need a better way to be informed of the realities and expectations of college. One way to do this would be to rearrange the way our country looks at high school. We should use all of the high school years to talk more about college, not just the senior year. More high schools need to be accountable for preparing students for college and for informing them of college finances. Classes should form around helping students decide what career they want to go into and if they want to go to college at all. I also propose that families be expected to pay a yearly fee for each of their children in high school. The state would keep that money in an

untaxed fund that would gain interest. This new fee will make students work harder for their education knowing that they are paying more, and will lower the drop out rate, knowing that they have something invested. Each community within the state should also impose a new tax to match each yearly amount. After all, the children in these schools will be the next generation to run our communities. Shouldn't we make it a point that they receive knowledge and skills from a higher education? Some citizens may object to this new tax, but they need to look at it as an investment. Just like social security is an investment to take care of the elderly, this new tax will secure the future generation's right to gain knowledge and skills that they need to prosper and lead our communities into the future. Then, when the students graduate, the school will pull the money with its interest back out and divide it up evenly amongst the graduating class as scholarships. This will help students prepare for a career more efficiently and help their families better prepare for college costs.

The high school fee I am proposing could possibly lead to the same problems of higher education cost that America faces now. However, now that our lawmakers are aware of these problems, they can carefully draft a plan that will avoid such occurrences. For a student who stays at the same high school all four years, the plan is simple. A fee would be paid by all incoming freshmen, be matched with taxes from that community, and gain interest. Then the new amount would be divided between the fewer number of graduating seniors as scholarships to one of the states colleges or universities. For a student who transfers between schools during high school, the process is more complex but will work. As long as the high school fee and tax was equal state wide, every student would be worth the

same amount. The only difference between schools would be the actual number of graduating seniors minus the number of their freshmen class. This way, students would be allowed to transfer anywhere within the state, and a check from their previous school would be mailed along with their transcripts to the new school. The amount of the fee and tax would be determined by each state alone. The states should carefully consider their poverty levels and make sure that high school does not become an impossible dream like college has. For example, students that would pay a fee of \$100 per year, gaining 5% interest, would accumulate \$420 by their senior year. Then, the state would match this dollar amount with the communities' new education tax dollars, and bring the total to \$840. For a freshman class that starts out at 65 students, loses 5 each year, and ends with a senior class of 50 students; the total estimated amount for that class would be \$48,300. This would provide a \$966 scholarship for each of the 50 seniors, which is more than double the fee they originally paid. If the state and community leaders work together on this plan, it will succeed.

The College level

Colleges are foolishly spending the money in their budgets which is driving up tuition costs at catastrophic rates. "A new study being released Monday [January 2002] on the skyrocketing cost of higher education says only five states have four-year public colleges that low-income students can afford without financial aid," and "In a third of all states, low-income students need loans even to attend some two-year community colleges . . ." (Associated Press). It is time that colleges and universities are held accountable for these raises in tuition. Institutions within each state should be required to prove that they are using state aid money to help students receive an

education, not for lavish facilities or presidential salaries. It is understandable that colleges need to make updates and improvements with the increasing number, in enrollment. It is also a necessity that colleges provide a decent salary and benefits for the faculty. However, it is also a reasonable request that all colleges spend their money more wisely. In order to control this, each state needs to set up a checks and balance system that will only provide institutions with aid and grant money if they are spending that money reasonably.

The State Level

States should consider the national rate of inflation and the cost of living within their respective states. They then can determine a reasonable rate of tuition increase for each year. If an institution within that state raises tuition above the reasonable rate, then that institution should be required to prove a need for the extra income. This will help neutralize the fast paced increase in tuition. However, states should also be required to contribute to the institution's financial needs. With enrollment rates at an all time high, the state's aid budget is offering less to each individual. States should be required to adjust their contributions of student financial aid according to the enrollment percent of institutions within their state each year. There must be a greater cooperation between state leaders and institutions within the states in order for a change to begin.

The Federal level

The federal aid program should be the last piece to the puzzle. Currently, it is one of the first places families, institutions, and states look for financial help with this problem. Yet, this does not make sense because it is the states and the colleges within them that are breeding the next generation of voters who will affect and lead those states and colleges. Families should seek federal help to fill the financial gap with grants and

loans, not as a main source of living with loan money. When it does come time for the federal aid program to disburse grants and loans to students, it needs to do be done more efficiently. If families are expected to start saving for college when a child starts school, then why does the current system only look at families' financial histories from the past year alone? The federal government needs to make new FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) forms that will not only look at a family's history since a child started high school, but also that will take into consideration home equity, IRA accounts, and other assets. This will offer a more accurate answer whether families need aid or not, and how much they will need. There also needs to be a greater amount for students' income-protection allowance. Currently "students get a \$1,750 income-protection allowance.... After that, under the federal need analysis, [students] will be expected to contribute 50% of [their] income to college costs" (Davis 151). Students will be required to pay more if they work more, but many students need to work in order to live. They won't have enough money to save aside for school and the extra work will affect their concentration on their school work. If the federal program would take time to restructure its approach, it could offer greater assistance to those who need it and disburse aid money more accurately.

Time for Action

This is a four part problem, and yet we keep trying to blame only one party. It is time for families, colleges, and the state they belong to hold each other accountable. Then America will start to see the rates level off and catch up with each other. Finally, the remaining amount a family needs for a higher education could be paid for by the federal government's aid. Because each person is different, no plan has ever worked

for everyone. However, my proposal requires all four groups to work together to meet the needs of individuals within the states and communities. This will not make financing for higher education perfect for every person in America, but it will bring us a lot closer than we have ever been before. It will stop the tuition rates from dramatically climbing, and it will better help prepare students and families for college. Now that my voice has been heard, it is time for action!

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Death Becomes Her

By Dana Jordan

A literary analysis

Dealing with the death of a loved one is very difficult. In “The Story of an Hour” by Kate Chopin, the main character of the story, Mrs. Mallard, illustrates the complexity of grief. In the story Mrs. Mallard is told that her husband’s train crashed and that her husband, Brently Mallard, was amongst those presumed dead. However, because of Mrs. Mallard’s heart condition, her sister Josephine and her husband’s friend Richards were apprehensive about breaking the news. They anticipated she would be shocked and all consumed with grief. As expected Mrs. Mallard cried, but unpredictably, then pulled herself together and went to her room. I believe that Mrs. Mallard was an optimist; although the shocking loss of her beloved husband was devastating, she was able to look toward her own future. This optimism explains her private celebration of her freedom.

Most people wallow in grief when their spouse dies, but Mrs. Mallard is not “most people.” In her room, all alone with nothing but her thoughts, Mrs. Mallard sat in front of an open window letting herself relax. Like the author, Kate Chopin, I feel that Mrs. Mallard has been through a lot in her short lifetime and has learned to look on the bright side of things and learn from all of her experiences. Although she did feel pain

for the loss of her husband as she, “wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment, in her sister’s arms” (para.3), Mrs. Mallard chose not to dwell. Instead she took in the nature outside her window, the partly sunny sky, trees budding, and birds chirping as she breathed in freedom (para.5). With a positive outlook she thought, “There would be no one to live for her during those coming years; she would live for herself” (para.14). Here Chopin is probably referring to the expectations forced upon women of the era (late 1800’s). Women had certain duties as wives to sustain a certain social status. Thinking for themselves and making decisions without their husband’s consent was unacceptable. Therefore, the death of her husband would be the only acceptable way to be free without society disapproving of her. Mrs. Mallard accepted this new freedom with open arms.

Some may argue that Mrs. Mallard’s response to Brently’s death is inappropriate. They might claim that a woman should mourn the death of her husband for months or even years, at which point the poor widow might remarry and resume life as a normal citizen. I believe, however, that Mrs. Mallard should feel no guilt for her concealed feelings. Because, as the story suggests, Mr. and Mrs. Mallard had been married for several years in which she was

loyal to her husband. Mrs. Mallard knew that her husband had loved her very much as she reflects, “the face that had never looked save with love upon her” (para.13). Because of this security, she is able to close the door, accept his death, and move on with her own life.

While Mrs. Mallard was still sitting in her room thinking self-asserting thoughts, Josephine (concerned about her sister’s heart condition) demanded that she open the door immediately. Josephine thought Mrs. Mallard was going to make herself sick with anxiety and sorrow. On the contrary, Mrs. Mallard was “drinking in the very elixir of life through that open window” (para.18). It is here in the story that Chopin gives her readers Mrs. Mallard’s first name. Josephine referred to her as Louise. I trust that Chopin wants us to think of Louise with her own identity, rather than “Mrs. Brently Mallard.” The story continued as “Louise” reluctantly opened the door for Josephine. They went down stairs where Richards was waiting for them. As they descended, “There was a feverish triumph in her eyes, and she carried herself unwittingly like a Goddess of Victory,” (para.20). not in a way a grief stricken widow would look down, with her face hidden behind a black veil during a funeral, but as a woman that was ready to take on the world, climb the highest mountain, or maybe write a novel (like the author).

Because of the reader’s private relationship with Louise, thanks again to Chopin, the reader is the only other person that knows of Louise’s true feelings. The reader is thrust into Louise’s perspective, and obviously, she didn’t want to deal with the reality outside of her room. As Josephine insisted she opened the door, Louise responded with, “Go away. I’m not making myself ill” (para.18). Louise was in fact excited and happy, but she couldn’t tell anyone else that.

(Remember, it would be unacceptable for a woman to be happy when her husband dies.) It is the reader’s little secret that Louise is excited about her new liberty. The other characters in the story have no idea what Louise is feeling, only the reader does. By this point in the story the reader is hanging on every word and silently cheering for Louise, hoping no one notices the “feverish triumph in her eyes” (para.20). I was just hoping that Josephine and Richards would leave and I would get more insight from Louise.

In the end, it turns out that Brently Mallard wasn’t really on the train. He surprised everyone when he unlocked the door and walked in, as Louise and Josephine were coming down the stairs. Brently, unaware there was any accident or that they all thought he was dead, was very surprised at their reaction. Josephine screamed and Richards tried to hide Brently from Louise’s sight. However, none of the characters were prepared for what happened next. Louise’s heart disease (Chopin suggested this earlier in the story) was too much for our leading lady. Her heart could not sustain the shock of seeing her husband alive. She died of a heart attack. Doctors assumed, “of joy that kills” (para.23). It is interesting that she didn’t die when they told her Brently had been killed. It is after the transformation from “Mrs. Brently Mallard” to “Louise” that she ultimately dies, when she sees her husband ALIVE. The story leaves me with an eerie feeling that Louise was so overwhelmed with the disappointment of seeing her husband that her heart was broken. The broken dreams of the future that she and the reader shared were gone, and now even Louise is gone. Optimistically, I would say that either way, now Mrs. Louise Mallard is, “free, body and soul, free” (para.16).

Think, Act, and Feel Positive: An Effective Treatment for ADD/ ADHD

By Kim Spencer Kline

An essay speculating about the causes of a trend

In the U.S. today, there are an estimated two million children diagnosed with ADD and ADHD (Attention Deficit Disorder and Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder.) Many of these children will carry the disorder into adulthood. Though the cause of the increase in diagnoses of ADD and ADHD is still unclear, treatment options are expanding. Research into the world of the disorder produces such treatment options as prescription medication (Ritalin, Adderall, and Concerta), non-prescriptive alternatives (herbal remedies), behavioral, cognitive, and literary therapy. New discoveries include visual therapy and “green time.” With so many choices available to parents, it can be quite difficult to decide the best course of action for their child. Studies have shown that the most effective treatment plan involves cognitive/behavioral therapy, with prescription medication used in conjunction with the therapy. Its effectiveness depends on many factors, such as environment, family relations, and financial means. Teaching families to erase the stigma of ADD and ADHD through recognition and encouragement of positive attributes opposed to expending all of their energy to stifle negative ones can produce healthier, happier children, lead to fewer behavioral incidents at school, and create strong family ties.

Understanding how ADD/ADHD affects a child or an adult is the key to beginning a treatment plan. Negative labels are attached to the person with the disorder, such as stupid, lazy, bad, unorganized, and disruptive. These labels then lead to low self-esteem, depression, and poor social connections. Edward M. Hallowell, M.D., a psychotherapist and speaker on ADD/ADHD, describes what it is like to live with the disorder: “It’s like driving in the rain with bad windshield wipers. Everything is smudged and blurred, and you’re speeding along, and it’s really frustrating not being able to see very well.” As a parent, wife, and sister of four ADD/ADHD family members, I know this is an extremely accurate description.

A diagnosis of ADD/ADHD suddenly sheds light on why a person behaves as they do and why they seem different from others. The next step is to reverse any psychological damage that has been done by negative labeling. The best approach to this is to find the person’s strengths and build on them. People with the disorder are actually quite gifted. They tend to be highly creative and resourceful. They may be intuitive, having a “feel” for things, though they are unable to explain how they arrived at a conclusion (Hallowell). My husband, who is an ADD sufferer, is extremely gifted in carpentry and mathematics, and possesses

what Dr. Hallowell calls a “sixth sense.” “It is important for others to be sensitive to this “sixth sense” that many ADD people have, and to nurture it,” says Dr. Hallowell. The result can lead to highly productive and talented individuals. The best time to begin nurturing talents is during early childhood.

Teachers who are skilled in working with ADD/ADHD students can have a positive impact on a child’s school experience. Much of the disruptive behavior exhibited by ADD/ADHD children stems from the inability to focus for extended periods of time. Impulsivity also plays an important part. Children with this disorder tend to act without thinking, such as blurting out answers instead of waiting to be called upon, interrupting when others are talking, or running around when they are to be seated. Many times these problems are treated ineffectively, with much of the focus on punishing bad behavior and inattentiveness. A constructive approach is to take into consideration that ADD/ADHD children need short breaks during monotonous tasks. Class lectures, tedious assignments, and extended periods of reading are problem areas for these children. Medication is often used to control the behavior of children in the classroom setting but it is not always enough to keep the attention of a child during a long school day. Children who are not medicated consistently perform worse in classroom activities than their peers. Focusing on a particular subject is easier if the task is broken up into short, manageable segments. Consistent positive feedback for staying on task through each segment enforces positive behavior and lessens the opportunity for bad behavior. Initially, this may be difficult and time-consuming for the teacher; however, the end result is a child with more successes than failures. This means fewer behavioral problems and fewer phone calls to parents.

The families of ADD/ADHD children and adults tend to suffer nearly as much as the person with the disorder. Homework hassles, angry outbursts, and risky and unruly behavior create high levels of stress within the family unit. Training family members how to deal with the disorder is an important component in the treatment process. According to the American Academy of Family Physicians, “fostering a partnership with the family, child, teachers, nurses, psychologists, and counselors is critical in providing long-term care.” The family unit is where the teaching and modeling of values takes place.

The most important value parents can bestow on their children is to have a positive outlook on life. Negative connotations normally associated with ADD/ADHD may follow a person throughout his/her lifetime. Constructive family interaction can minimize this effect. The burden of the disorder can be lessened through the formation of routines, posted schedules, clear and concise rules, and encouragement of positive traits and talents. When a curious toddler is investigating everything within his/her world, there is often a fascination with “no-no’s,” forbidden objects, or activities. This behavior is impulsive and uninhibited. One of the most effective learning tools for parents to use is the process of redirecting their child’s attention to something more acceptable. This process works well for ADD/ADHD children as well, not only for curbing behaviors, but also with cognitive processing. Telling the ADD/ADHD child “no” with a brief explanation of why, followed by a redirecting of attention to something constructive and acceptable, will instill better reasoning skills over time. Our adopted son had ADHD when he came to live with us. We explored all of the treatment options, trying each one that the doctors and therapists recommended, except

medication. Finally, we realized that he responded best to simple explanations of why he could not do something, with redirection to an acceptable task. He quickly developed the ability to reason through situations and make good choices. Because he was being encouraged to do things in which he excelled, his negative behaviors decreased considerably. Helping the child tap into his/her talents and building on those talents will help the child succeed in important areas and give him/her more confidence in difficult areas. Practicing positive thinking skills and reinforcing good behavior can lead to healthier and happier individuals. Instilling good habits makes the family unit stronger.

Many children and adults are simply medicated to deal with the frustrations of their disorder or to make someone else's life easier. Prescribed medications do not teach the person with the disorder how to rethink situations or find effective methods to deal with the "blurred windshield" of life. If the medications are stopped, the person is no better off than before being medicated. Though prescribed medications like Ritalin and Adderall are helpful, when used without other methods, they are not the best solution. They should always be used in conjunction with other treatments and on an "as-needed" basis.

Literary therapy, which consists of fully researching the disorder, sounds like a great approach to understanding the how's and why's of ADD/ADHD. However, many people with the disorder have difficulty reading or staying focused long enough to get through so much information (The Health Center). This treatment option is used primarily for adults.

Vision therapy, another approach in its infancy stage, may seem a little odd at first, but Dr. David B. Granet, director of the Ratner Children's Eye Center in San

Diego, noticed an interesting trend occurring in many eye patients. In an April 2000 article in the Optometrists Network, it was stated that "by reviewing the charts of 266 patients, doctors at the center found that nearly 16 percent of the people with ADHD had convergence insufficiency problems. That's more than three times as many as would be statistically expected." Convergence insufficiency is the inability to focus the eyes at a close range (Schram). Dr. Granet warned others not to jump to conclusions about convergence insufficiency causing ADHD. It may be that it is just one more symptom of the disorder. Vision therapy is used to correct the eye problem, involving eye muscle strengthening and focusing tasks. It may be helpful as part of the treatment plan for some ADD/ADHD people. Once again, this treatment option alone does not impart important coping skills necessary for daily living.

The treatment option referred to as "green time" is actually a wonderful opportunity for strengthening the family unit. Green time is spending time outdoors with nature, and there is little dispute that this is healthy for an individual. Frances Kuo (a professor in the departments of natural resources and environmental sciences, and of psychology at the University of Illinois) recommends daily doses of green time. The results of a recent study conducted by Kuo and other researchers provided evidence that "exposure to ordinary natural settings in the course of common afterschool and weekend activities may be widely effective in reducing attention deficit symptoms in children" (NewsRX.com, quoted in Obesity, Fitness, and Wellness Week). Families can benefit greatly from walking daily through a park, playing outdoor games in grassy green areas, and embarking on nature hikes. This is one treatment option that can be easily incorporated with other available options. It

provides opportunities for bonding within the family unit and promotes a healthy life-style.

The best approach overall is the use of cognitive/behavioral therapy, combined with positive reinforcement of a person's strengths. Success is not always defined by what a person accomplishes. For many, including those with ADD/ADHD, it may be defined by their ability to cope with a difficult disorder and lead a happy, healthy life. "It can be exasperating to listen to people [with ADD/ADHD] talk," says Dr. Hallowell. "They can sound so vague or rambling. If you take them seriously and grope along with them, often you will find they are on the brink of startling conclusions or surprising solutions. What I am saying is that their cognitive style is qualitatively different from most people's, and what may seem impaired, with patience and encouragement may become gifted." There is a bright future for the millions of sufferers of ADD/ADHD as long as the negative associations of the disorder are stripped away or minimized.

Through the years, I have gained useful insights about the intricacies of ADD/ADHD individuals. Some of those individuals have been treated improperly or inconsistently, and they have fallen through the cracks of life. Others have benefited from devoted individuals willing to go the extra mile to help their family members, students, and clients become successful at coping with the disorder. Those who have achieved success are those who were encouraged to look at their disorder as a gift instead of a disability. Much credit goes to the supporting family members who have been willing to look beyond the unruly, inattentive behavior to nurture the incredible talents within their child or spouse. Incorporating positive reinforcement with other treatment options removes the negative stigma

of ADD/ADHD and promotes confident, healthy attitudes. Everyone wins.

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