



THE SCRIBLERIAN

Spring 2006 Edition

A publication sponsored by the English Department and the Braithwaite Writing Center, the Scriblerian is a publication for students by students. Revived during Fall Semester 2004 after a two-year hiatus, this on-line journal is the result of a competition organized by Writing Center tutors for ENGL 1010 and 2010 students. The Spring 2006 contest was planned and supervised by Chair Kodi Quarnberg with the help of Sarah LaRue, William Gordon, Josh Olenslager, Andy Bahlmann, and Kellie Jensen.

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Argumentative- English 1010

1st Place Winner: Whitney Barlow, "Rock or Trail"

I, as many others, love looking out the window of the car as I drive up the canyon. There are so many amazing things to look at. There are the tall trees, wildlife, roaring streams, and I never know if around the next corner I'll see a waterfall bursting from the rocks. As the elevation gets higher, the familiar feeling of clogged ears comes back, and then I begin to slow the car and pull off to the side of the road. I'm here, but to do what? This is a question many are faced with as they reach their destination in the canyons. A choice between a nice heart-pumping hike, or the thrill of a climb. While both hiking and climbing provide a chance to be outdoors and find the peace and solitude that comes from being there, climbing adds a sense of thrill not found in hiking.

Both hikers and climbers love the outdoor mountain air. The feeling in the mountains is so free and relaxing. They find themselves above the pollution of city air and breathing in the fresh scent of pine trees and mountain plants. They also both enjoy just being outdoors, and being able to get a little dirt on them without anyone caring. They don't have to worry about how they look or who will be seeing them. Almost all hikers or climbers find the mountains as a place to go to find solitude and peace. Still the question remains, which activity is better: hiking or climbing?

Hiking is a great activity to get the heart pumping and the legs burning. One can hike all day or just for an hour. While hiking, you have the chance of running into a variety of wildlife, ranging from moose and deer, down to squirrels and chipmunks. Hiking can also open a world of new sights and destinations. Hikers may choose a trail because it leads them to an old Indian ruin, or an amazing waterfall. They may choose a trail simply for the excitement of finding out where it will take them. All along the hike though, they will be seeing breathtaking scenes of the beauty nature provides. A vista filled with pine, aspen, oak, and maple trees may open up in front of the hiker. Then around the next bend they may be hiking through the thin walls of a canyon, just hoping that the mountain doesn't decide to swallow them up as they are hiking through.

When the hikers have finally made it to the end of their hike they will be surrounded by amazing views on every side. There will be nothing but crisp, clean air above them, and the sun shining down with its brilliant rays. Everywhere the hikers look they will be surrounded by the natural beauty of the earth. At the top of the hike the hikers will find complete solitude from the rest of the world. They can sit up there for hours thinking through any problem that they might have with nothing but the buzz of nature behind them. Once they have finished their thinking and soul searching, it is time to head back down the trail and back to reality.

Now, hiking seems like the ideal activity to do up in the mountains, but there is one better. It is rock climbing. Rock climbing provides the same beauties of nature as hiking, yet is also includes unmatched thrill and excitement. Any climber would tell you that she would much rather be scaling a wall than walking up a trail. There is a certain thrill that comes from climbing that cannot be felt as one is hiking up a trail. To start climbing, the climber first needs the right kind of shoes, a harness, hooks, and ropes. Once they have the gear packed and get up the mountain, it is time to get all set up. It is time to unload the gear and send the first climber up the wall to mark the trail for everyone else. Climbing is a great

sport for beginners all the way up to the very best. At one location, a single rock face can provide several different climbs with different difficulty levels.

Once a climber has begun her climb it is only her working to get to the top of the rock. Even though she has a belayer below her for safety precautions, it is only her, and the strength that she has, to enable her to conquer the rock and get to the top. As the climber is working up the mountainside, there is a certain thrill and excitement that comes from not knowing if her next handhold is going to be strong enough or if it will shatter, leaving her just hanging on with one hand. Then once the climber has grabbed back on, she is stuck looking around, stumped as to where her next step up is going to be. After a very long reach and a few shaky moments, she finally finds the right foot hole and is able to keep going.

Just like hiking, there are chances for solitude as one is climbing up the mountainside. While climbing, a climber can think through any problem and use that energy to help her make it up the face of the mountain. Finally, after all that strength and exertion, she makes it to the top. There is no excitement to match the feeling of accomplishment the climber feels when she can kiss the anchor and stand atop a face knowing what task she has just defeated. She can look around and, just like the hiker, enjoy all the natural beauty that the earth has to offer. The view from the top of the rock seems much more majestic and beautiful than it does from the top of any trail. Once the climber has soaked in the beauty from the top, it is time to go back down. Unlike hiking, however, it does not take any work to get back down. The climber simply has to sit back into her harness and just guide herself as the rope takes her down.

I have been a participant in both hiking and climbing; however, I have never received the thrill and excitement of climbing during any of the many hikes I have gone on. As I have climbed up different mountain sides, the same excitement is always hanging in the air.

At the base of the climb, I sit down to put on my climbing shoes, and even though they seem too small, I know they are a key part to having a successful climb. Then I stand up and put my harness on, realizing that it is the only thing saving my life if I slip and fall while reaching for my next hand hold. Next, I tie the rope through the harness and clip a little chalk pack around my waist to help keep my hands dry and ready to get me to the top. My friend Brady also puts a harness around his waist and ties the same rope to his harness. He is going to belay me as I climb to make sure the rope catches if I fall. Now that we are both geared up it is time to climb.

The first few moves are easy and quick, and I soon find myself half way up the mountain looking back on what I have just accomplished. Then I find myself in a tough situation, the next handhold is just inches from my reach and there are no real good footholds to get me there. As I begin to look around, I see a little lip in the rock that is just barely thicker than my thumbnail. Luckily, I have my climbing shoes on and the grip of the shoes allows me to stand on the lip and reach the next handhold. I am able to keep going after that, but then I find a faulty foothold and I begin to fall. Even though I only fall about a half foot, my heart begins to pound and my hands get clammy as the few thoughts that my life might be over have time to flash through my head. The rope catches and I find myself just hanging there. I use the adrenaline from the fall to get me up the rest of the mountain. Once I reach the top I kiss the anchor, stand up to see what I had accomplished, and take in the beauty that surrounds me. I watch a hawk soar above me for a few minutes and see a stream way below go rushing by. In that moment, I feel peace and excitement take over my body as I begin my descent back down to where Brady is waiting. After

that, I did a few more climbs and then packed everything up with Brady so that I could go home and tell my roommates the adventures of my day.

Even though hiking is a great outdoor activity, I feel sorry for all the hikers that will never get to experience the thrill of climbing. They will never be able to know the excitement of grabbing the wrong handhold, or the peace of being at the top of the rock by themselves as they look down at what they have just accomplished. So, I invite all hikers to leave their hiking boots in the closet and grab a pair of climbing shoes and experience what living is really all about.

2nd Place Winner: Saki Kawakita

“Wow! Everyone is much taller than I am.” This was my first impression when I came to the USA. Well, I know I am not a tall person, but Americans’ height is completely different from my height; for example, I can’t get lady’s size cloths at the store, because I’m too short for that. There are some Japanese, Korean, and other Asian students at SUU; however, no Asian is taller than the average American students. Why is our height so different? What is the main source to determine the human height? Is it genetic, population, or nutrition? I feel like one of the seven dwarfs in *Snow White* when I stay with American friends.

I’m Short Because I’m Asian

Even when I lived in Japan, I was a pretty short girl. I was always in the front of the line in my pre-school, elementary school, and junior high school, because I was the shortest girl in my class. So I always dreamed that I could be 5 feet 10 inches in the future, so I could play basketball better. But sadly it never happened, thus I always took the offensive side when I was in basketball team in elementary school, because my coach needed tall girls for defense.

One day, I said to my grandfather, “I want to be a tall girl!” He said, “If you want to be a tall girl, eat well and sleep well.” I tried everything that I believed could make me taller. I especially focused on taking great nutrients, like variety of vegetables or unpolished foods because my grandfather was a nutrition professor and grandmother was a cooking teacher. They gave me good advice from their professional view.

Still, the result is that *I am short*. I am not as tall as I want to be. How sad is that!?! So I thought tall people were eating better than me, but I was wrong.

In my freshman year, I lived in the Southern Utah University dorm with three other girls. They are all taller than me, so I decided to watch what kind of food they were eating. The first day, one of my roommates ate cereal for breakfast, no lunch, a lot of candy for snack time, and fast food for dinner. Another roommate ate only one meal, a big peanut butter and jam sandwich. Maybe she ate something more, but I don’t know. Another roommate ate ramen in the morning, pizza for lunch, snacks, and a frozen dinner. Those food styles were continued until the end of the year. There were few times that I saw my roommates cooking some meal. They usually went out to eat or made prepared meals, like canned or frozen foods. They didn’t eat well, but they are so much taller than me. It socked me so bad. I wanted to cry, because I strongly believed that great, healthy foods make people taller. It was not true from my experiences. I doubt that high nutrients in foods are more effective for human growth and I guess genetics are the biggest factor to determine human height. What is more, when I ate those “good foods,” such as fast-food with my roommates, I gained body fat! I didn’t grow taller like they did.

Foods Make a Huge Difference

However, according to the Wikipedia dictionary, “Height is determined by the complex interactive combination of genetics and environment” (“Human Height” par. 4). Moreover, it said, “Nutrition is the most important factor in determining height” (“Human Height” par. 1). In a surprising fact, it said, “Asian populations were once thought to be inherently shorter, but with the increases in height even East Asian nations such as Japan and South Korea as diet changes it now seems that humans as a species probably possess a roughly similar genetic height potential” (“Human Height” par. 7). Thus, great nutrition is important for human growth.

Therefore, different kinds of foods make human heights vary. The Wednesday Report, called *Suiyou tusin* in Japan, discussed the difference between Japanese and American diets. Americans eat meat, milk, and cheese three times more than Japanese. Americans' daily intake of sugar and oil calories is 1.5 times more than Japanese intake. On the other hand, Japanese eat fish three times more than Americans (Sukimasa par. 1). This shows that Americans eat much more protein and dairy products than Japanese, except for fish. The Japanese diet relied on rice before World War II, because they couldn't buy meat for economic reasons; they spent great amounts of money for the army (Sukimasa par. 4). But now, the Japanese diet is changing. Their diet becomes an Americanized way; however, the total intake of calories is ten percent more than before World War II (Sukimasa par. 8). The reason for this is that the Japanese people are still keeping their basic food style even though they adapted another country's food culture (Sukimasa par. 10). So, because of America, Japanese culture has added protein to their daily diets. This resulted in the average Japanese height becoming 10cm taller between 1953 and 1997 (Cynical Politics par.6).

Since this study, Japanese people have changed their diets for the better; however, Americans have negatively changed their diets. According to the graph in U.S food supply 2004, researched by the USDA, got specific evidences of nutrients. In 1970, American eats 640 kcal of meat a day, but now is 550 kcal ("U.S food supply"). Their intake calories of protein are decreasing; in contrast, intake calories of fats and oils are increasing from 590 kcal to 850 kcal now. Sugar and sweeteners are also increasing from 610 kcal to 740 kcal ("U.S food supply"). In addition, Percentage of total needs of Zinc is decreasing from 46.9 % to 37.8 % ("U.S food supply"). It is a very important nutrient to make human taller; it researched by a famous journal, called *Nutrition*. So recent American foods style had many fats and sugar, but it hasn't enough essential nutrients for growth than before.

Considering these facts, did really American height change? Answer is "yes." In April of 2004, Robin Mckie wrote an article for the news paper, *The Observer*, Mckie mentioned that poverty and poor diet mean the average US man is getting shorter, while Europeans keep growing taller. According to his article, "In Europe, there is-in most countries-good health service provision for most members of society and plenty of protein in most people's diets" (Mckie par. 7). On the other hand, America has eight million people with no job, 40 million individuals with no health insurance, 35 million living below the poverty line, and a population that exists mainly on junk food (Mckie par. 8). The reason of decrease of US men's height is that poor nutrients of food. Low income people can't buy good food, and they rely on junk food which usually provides low nutrient value.

Consequently, Americans are getting shorter because of their poor diets. In research paper written by John Komlos and Marieluise Baur, who are professors at the University of Munich in Germany, discussed the reason of why Americans are getting shorter. They compared with American and European biological standard of living, Welfare State, social inequality, and health care system. They realized that Americans by 21st century are much more affluent but have fallen well behind West-Europeans in many aspects of biological well being, even as their body mass has risen beyond most European values (Komlos and Marieluise par. 14). They also said, "The life-expectancy of Americans has fallen behind West-European levels and is now about 28th in the world, 3.2 years behind Japan... (Komlos and Marieluise par. 4). So currently American food life makes not only American shorter but also it harms their body. Komlos and Marieluise concluded with "The richest are by no means the tallest or healthiest, or live longest" (par. 16).

This research proves us diet affects human height a lot, which made a result that Asians are getting taller and Americans are getting shorter (“Human Height” par. 7). On the other hand, there are other possible sources to make humans smaller. Wikipedia mentioned, “Height is determined by the complex interactive combination of genetics and environment” (“Human Height” par. 4). Thus it’s not clear to say that nutrition is the only factor in human height.

Everyone Can Be Taller

I was dreaming to be a tall girl. I did everything that I could do to be a tall girl, but my height never changed. So I thought this is meaningless that my grandparents always said, “Eat well if you want to be tall.” However, current research proved everyone can be taller by rich diet. It now seems that there is no difference to determining human height in race relation, but I didn’t grow taller. Therefore, it’s a time to reconsider my food style with recent researches.

There are a lot of kinds of people who are eating different foods in this world. In Japan, people have eating habit called *Itisiru-sansai*, a food style that means one soup, rice, main dish (fish or meat), and side dish. On the whole, their diet is more likely semi-vegetarian. Japanese eat fishes more than meat, and they do a little high-carbohydrate diet, because of the high percentage of caloric intake of rice. After World War II, Japanese started to eat bread more than before from the effect of America, but still many Japanese live on a diet chiefly of rice (Sukimasa par. 3). Especially around 1945, Japanese ate rice three times more than today; the reason for this is that they couldn’t get enough protein like meat and dairy products, thus, they ate much rice instead of meat or fish. They were lack of protein sources. That’s why it was thought that Japanese are small and besides, some people said “Asian populations are inherently shorter” (“Human Height” par. 7). However Asian’s average height is getting taller now. The possible reasons are;

1. Increase of the intake of protein because of development of import and export (Sukimasa par. 3).
2. Development of economy (“Human Height” par. 3)
3. Variety of food style (Sukimasa Par. 10)

After World War II, Japan made a well known goal to catch up to America and get ahead of America. Finally, Japanese economy has taken a sudden change. So all of the nation’s average of income increased; and then, they could buy enough foods until they felt full. The biggest change of Japanese diet is the consumption of meats, which provide essential nutrients for human growth, protein and amino acid (Sukimasa par. 6). It’s not too much to say that good sources of protein with Japanese semi-vegetarian food styles promote to make Japanese taller.

Japanese diets have positively changed. What’s about my food style? My family hates junk food and eating out, so my mother always supported my family with home made delicious foods. However, I was different from my family, because I don’t like rice very much; therefore, I ate side dishes more than the staple food like bread, rice and pasta. When I was in elementary and junior high school, I was provided with school meals for lunch every school day. Those meals were nutritionally balanced meals, because professional dietitians made all of the menus for kids. However I gave two thirds of my rice or bread to my friends all the time; consequently, my nutritive balance was not very good. Rice makes energy for the brain, but my intake calories of rice was not enough to control my body. Therefore my brain used

protein for energy to control my body instead of carbohydrates. This can be one of the causes for why I didn't grow up well.

Another cause I can consider is that the busyness and poor diet during my high school time. I went to the Drama high school in Japan, so I got up at five in the morning to go to practices, take classes, after school practices, and came home around eleven in the evening. Those days were really busy and I couldn't even get enough time to sleep. I also started to worry about my appearance; I tried a lot of kinds of diets to lose my weight. So I actually didn't eat well, because I didn't have the time to eat a proper lunch and dinner; I sometimes ate just yogurt and one fruit for my meal. According to the Wikipedia dictionary, it's important to take great sources of protein and sleep in a growth period, but I didn't do that ("Human Height" par. 8). Finally, my height became 3cm shorter than before my high school years.

Setting my height aside, it's clear that the average height of Japanese is increasing now because of their diet changes; on the other side, Sukimasa mentioned that the Japanese growth is stopping in the 1990s (Par. 10). There are some possible factors; the increasing of stresses, shortage of sleep, and changing diet from Eastern to Western which has high fat and sweetness. And the biggest factor may be the development of Internet and mechanical skills (Sukimasa par. 9). Many children spend too much time for Internet just for fun; they don't go outside for playing, they stay up late at night, and they usually don't eat well either. That may make them short (Sukimasa par. 9).

Surprising research shows us that Americans are getting shorter because of their poor nutritive foods (Mckie par. 8). It's hard to confirm whether this is true or not by sense of sight, but it's clear that American's height is changing. At least, there is no evidence which shows Americans are still growing. Now, Americans are the fattest in the world, not the tallest. And over fat or overweight causes a lifestyle-related illness which is the most serious factor of death in this society (Komlos and Marieluisse par. 3). It is no exaggeration to say that it takes an interest in health or a diet boom for American.

It should scarcely need saying, but this fact may affect Japanese height too; the reason for this is that Japanese always follow America as a model. If Japanese will keep following them, Japanese diet will be very fatty, salty and sweet foods and they will be short again. Japanese really needs to notice this fact, because foods affect humans a lot! It can make a huge difference.

However, there is another factor that Americans are getting shorter;

1. It's really hard to make precise results, because America is a huge country (Komlos and Marieluisse par. 4).
2. There are amount of people in United States, called the melting pot of ethnic groups. For example, as more Mexicans and Chinese enter the US, these individuals may lower the average height (McKie par. 20).
3. The lack of health support (Komlos and Marieluisse par. 15)
4. There is a big gap between rich people and poor people (McKie par. 8).

To consider those factors, it's unclear that only poor diet style harms Americans height; however, throughout all researches, it is right to say that nutrients are very important to determining the human height.

Accordingly, the possible reasons for my lack of growth are because of the lack of protein intake and shortage of sleep during the growth period. The reason that I am short is not because I am an Asian, but my diet and life style in adolescence. From now on, there is no difference to determining human height in race relations. The most important things in becoming a tall person are how will eat and what will eat. Food will determine the human height. As the research said that Human height is changing the same as change of food style; both are related to each other. That's why Asians are getting taller; in contrast, Americans are getting shorter. Research proved diet changes make a difference. And the best way to be tall is just as my grandparents taught me; "Eat well and sleep well".

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Expressive- English 1010

1st Place Winner: Brandon Dixon, "525,600 Minutes: Measuring a Year"

I can remember standing outside my hotel room in Branson, Missouri; I was filled with excitement. I was so proud that our competition team had made it that far. As we loaded the bus to compete in the Branson World Championship Show Choir Cup, we could almost taste the anticipation. We were all members of the Spanish Fork High School Ambassadors, a show choir. Matching warm-ups were the attire when leaving for the competition. This was my personal favorite costume of the show. The warm-ups were black and sleek in design. White pin stripes ran down the sides of the jacket and pant with my name embroidered in bright red cursive lettering on the front. The warm-ups made our choir look distinct and professional. Our warm-ups united us, and together we were unbeatable.

The bus rattled into the parking lot of the Branson Theatre. It was here we were to compete. We started routinely into our stretches and vocal warm ups along with the 30 other singing groups from all over the country. I wasn't the only one who was eager and ready for competition; the energy seemed to run through the whole choir. As the time grew near for us to perform, we made our way into the theatre. When entering, we all knew that soon we were to perform. There were no more fun and games. This competition was real; we needed to get it right.

Finally the time came and the choir made its way onto the stage. We placed ourselves into starting position, and waited for our group to be announced. The feelings of joy and anticipation were gone and were replaced with ones of nervousness and fear. As the beam of the bright hot lights began to shine upon us, it was just like an early morning sun peaking through the mountains. It was time to perform; this is what I and the rest of the Ambassadors had been fervently waiting for over the last ten months.

The music was cued, and we started the energetic show. Every number was filled with song and dance. I was having a blast; it was unforgettably one of the best performances I had ever participated in up to that point. We had given our best efforts. Our choreography was together; our voices blended perfectly. It was an amazing show. All of the practicing, long rehearsals, and extra training was finally paying off. The crowd was generous in their applause after each number. Their encouragement was like fuel generating us all to perform better than we ever had before. The final song came and went, and before I knew it, I was back on the bus with the rest of the Ambassadors headed for our hotel. It had been an exhausting day. As we drove back to the hotel, our director, Rick Lunt, a tall, charismatic man, who always seemed to have a mischievous smile on his face, informed us we had made it to the semi-finals. Everyone was ecstatic and the joy could not be contained. For the rest of the ride back to the hotel everyone had a permanent smile plastered on his or her face. The judgments were based on musical selection, choreography, originality, and singing ability. Out of the 30 groups who were participating in the competition only 10 made it into the semi-finals and we were one of them.

Day two arrived quicker than anticipated. Although, I was excited for the day's activities, the night did not seem long enough for my tired aching body. I again dressed in my favorite black warm ups. They gave me the energy and stamina that I needed for the competition. With my warm-ups, I was ready for the long day ahead. A new day of competition had begun. The Ambassadors loaded onto our chartered bus and headed back to the Branson Theatre for the semi-finals. I was thrilled to be back and as I looked around, so was everyone else. It almost seemed unreal that we, the Spanish Fork High School

Ambassadors, had made it to the semi-finals. So many of the other groups were simply amazing and I did not think that we had a chance. In preparing for our semi-final performance, we as a team were more focused and united than the day before. We knew what needed to be fixed, and we were determined to make it right. We warmed up longer; we practiced our routine harder; we were determined to win.

We made our way onto the stage. The announcer's voice boomed over the crisp speakers, "Now presenting from Spanish Fork, Utah, the Spanish Fork High School Ambassadors!" The applause was raging as the deep red curtains drew back. The Ambassador band started to play the ever-so-familiar music; the show, our show "Love in Any Language" had begun. The time we spent on stage seemed to fly by. Song after song, we sang and danced with more drive and determination than ever. Before I knew it, the moment had already come and the sweet words of the final song, "Seasons of Love" flowed out of my mouth. While presenting all of our hard-work on the giant black stage, I began to see the audience's eyes swelling with tears. Why would this be? This was supposed to be a fun competition. This competition was all about winning and being the best. I had been practicing for the last ten months for this competition. How could it be that people were crying?

The song ended; we bowed and quickly left the stage. It turned out the people in the audience weren't the only people crying. Looking at my team members, many of them also had tear filled eyes. Driving back to the hotel Mr. Lunt gave us another pep-talk to tell us how well we did, but also things that we could improve on. As we continued to drive back to the hotel to get ready for finals, I sat pondering to myself what I had seen earlier in the performance. I began to wonder, "Was there more to this competition than being good and winning? Was there something more to the Ambassadors that I didn't know about?" I began to think there was more meaning to the warm ups, up-beat music, and catchy songs than I could not understand quite yet. These thoughts remained with me as I got ready for the final competition.

That morning turned into afternoon, and afternoon turned into evening. The time for finals was approaching ever so quickly. As I made my way into the historical theatre with the rest of the Ambassadors, I again began to ponder. "Was that what this competition was all about-winning?" My mind was cluttered with thought. So many questions racked my mind. We sat in a large musty room, waiting for just one more group before our time to compete. The Ambassador Presidency told of memories they had throughout the year. In those final moments before the final competition, we laughed of great times and cried over the good memories and hardships that we had during the last ten months we had been working on our show. The time came and it was time to perform for the last time. We were again on the giant Branson Theatre stage. The lights began to rise; it was our time to shine. The songs came and went, and we performed like we never had before. Our words were crisp and precise. The emotion ran through our bodies like a sudden surge of electricity had just entered. We danced like never before, every move articulating perfectly with each beat. This final time on the Branson stage, the songs seemed very different. The words that we had sung so many times before started to have meaning; each song had a unique and different message that we were able to share. My black warm-ups had a new meaning. They were what allowed me to have the emotion and the strength to share the wonderful message of love.

As the music to our final song "Seasons of Love" was cued, I began to sing these words:

“Five hundred twenty five thousand six hundred minutes!
How do you measure, measure a year?
It's time now to sing out, tho' the story never ends.
Let's celebrate, remember a year in the life of friends.
Remember the love!
Seasons of love!
Share love, give love, spread love.
Measure your life in love.”

As I sang those words, I along with all the Ambassadors and audience members were crying. It was then I realized what this competition was all about. It wasn't about winning, the upbeat songs, or the singing and dancing. It was about the message that we shared. It was all about the message of Love.

I had come to a point in my life where I really knew what was important. I have now come to realize that my friends and the memories we had created together are so much more important than winning could ever be. The lives of the people that we touched mean more to me than winning. We didn't win the competition that day. Looking back, I do not remember who won that day, and nor do I care. The lasting feelings that were created that day, and throughout the many wonderful months I was able to work with the Ambassadors will never be forgotten. The memories I have will be with me my whole life through and that means the world to me. I can now celebrate and remember a year in the life of friends, remembering the love, the many seasons of love. My black warm up suit will be my greatest reminder of these great memories; the memories that will always bring a smile to my face and warmth to my heart.

2nd Place Winner: Tiffany Dennett, “A Father’s Love”

Life is interesting when given thought as to how and why its little curves come careening at you, and what else can be done except struggle through and learn from the experience? There I was, a young girl living in Boulder City—population twelve thousand—just outside Las Vegas, Nevada. My family being fairly well off, I had never gone without as a child. I never would have entertained the thought of me being spoiled, but others probably knew otherwise. If I “needed” something, I got it, and I assure you it didn’t take much persuasion. I had Daddy wrapped around my little finger. But Dads are a lot smarter than a teenager realizes, and I was about to figure that out.

I was about fourteen this Valentine’s Day, and Dad was out to buy Mother a necklace. He asked me to accompany him to the little jewelry shop on Main Street. He described what he was looking for to an overly-friendly man who introduced himself as Lance. In only a few minutes, Lance had pulled out a few different displays of necklaces. I pulled in closer to Dad to get a better look. I couldn’t believe my eyes. The gems sparkled from the lights up above. They were absolutely stunning. I took a quick look around the jewelry shop and couldn’t begin to imagine how much all these precious stones might cost. “What do you think, Tiff?” Dad’s voice pulled me back to the necklace he was holding. It didn’t take more than a minute to know that was the one. The sapphire, Mom’s all-time favorite stone, also happened to be her birthstone. The rectangular faceted sapphire was delicately placed on a gold band with two smaller diamonds on each side. I knew she would love it!

We continued looking around at different cases, all full of dazzling necklaces, earrings, broaches, bracelets, and rings. One particular ring caught my attention. Placed on black velvet, a white opal stood out from all the others. The stone was beautiful—smooth and pear-shaped, surrounded by fifteen tiny rubies.

“Oh, Daddy,” I exclaimed, “Look at this one!” Lance hurried over and more than willingly placed it in front of us. I had never owned a ring like this before, and as I carefully slid it on my finger, I wanted it badly. The wheels in my head started spinning. My friends would be absolutely jealous! This wasn’t a want anymore; I needed this ring.

“I sure like this one, Daddy. Isn’t it beautiful?” I searched his face for some kind of hint. He didn’t say anything for a minute, but then a smile tugged at the corners of his mouth. Hope and excitement sparked. If I played this one right, he just might spoil me the way I want him to.

“Let’s go, Sweetheart.” Dad smiled at Lance. “We’ve been gone a little too long. We don’t want Mom getting suspicious.” The excitement vanished, and the hope plummeted. I handed the ring over, politely thanked Lance, and headed for the car. The whole way home I thought about Dad’s tiny smile as I played the sweet, innocent, desirous little girl. I couldn’t give up hope; just keep trying. And try I did! What would work better than sidling up to him when he got home from work, putting my arms around his neck, and giving him a kiss or two? Or being particularly cheerful and loving towards him?

On Valentine’s Day, Mom received her necklace, but all I got was the same old chocolate rose and a valentine. It seemed all my efforts were in vain; my plan was thwarted. After that, I’m sure Dad noticed the lack of attention he now received from me, but what else was a disappointed little girl to do? However, I didn’t know what Dad had up his sleeve.

Time passed, and Easter morning was here. As usual, my siblings and I were excited to find our Easter baskets filled with candy and a small gift. I opened the traditional card from Mom and Dad, popping a milk chocolate egg into my mouth as I read. It said the same things it did last year: "We love you and are so proud of the lovely young lady you have become. Keep working hard." Next I picked up the small, neatly wrapped package, its size and shape rousing my curiosity. I tore the paper off and held a black velvet ring box. *This can't be what I think it is.* Holding my breath, I slowly opened it. Inside was the beautiful opal and ruby ring I had so mischievously sought after. I took it out and slid it onto my right ring finger. All I could do was stare at it. I had only owned a few cheap cubic zirconia stones bought at a little pawn shop, but now there were sixteen real jewels sitting on my hand. I felt so grownup and important now that I had a glamorous ring. I looked at Dad and couldn't help but smile. He smiled back.

"I love you," Dad said.

"Thank you," was all I could say.

My pride in my new ring grew as the weeks passed. Its beauty and brightness were lovely! One night, as I was getting ready for bed, I took my precious ring and set it next to me on the counter as I washed my face. Mom walked into the bathroom to put a stack of clean towels in the cupboard. She stopped dead in her tracks when she saw my ring.

"Tiffany," Mom looked at me with her all-knowing-mother look. "I don't recommend leaving your ring there next to the sink. What would you do if it fell down the drain?"

"I dunno," I tried to mumble as toothpaste foamed from my mouth.

"Don't ever take your jewelry off in the bathroom or kitchen. You never know what could happen to it, and once something so valuable is gone, it's pretty difficult to replace." I smiled and nodded with my spoiled, teenage attitude. After spitting, I headed for bed.

The next morning, as I put the last blue pillow sham on my bed, placed my bear in the middle, and turned to my jewelry box, I was surprised to find my ring out of place. I tried to think where I would have put it the night before, but the more I thought, the more I started to worry. I looked until Mom called up the stairs for us to leave for school. *Oh, well. I'll look more when I get back.* But my mind wouldn't let me forget about it all day. I had to find that ring.

As soon as I got home, I headed up the stairs and started searching. I looked through my jewelry box one more time. Nothing. Under the edge of my bed. Nothing. I started panicking, and then Mom's words from the night before seemed to hit me in the face. I ran to the bathroom. It wasn't there! I felt sick to my stomach. *What do I do?* A ring as expensive as mine isn't easily replaced! Mom was right! *Ugh...I hate when she's right.* I didn't know what to do. *Maybe it'll show up when I least expect it.* I pushed it from my mind, trying not to think about it.

A few days passed, and my ring wasn't showing up. I knew I couldn't tell Mom. I couldn't cave in and let her know she was right—again—and I definitely couldn't tell Dad. After the trust, love, and faith he showed in giving me that beautiful ring, I just couldn't tell him it was gone. I was afraid that with the ring gone, the trust and faith of my father would go as well. The guilt was almost overwhelming. I couldn't face them!

One night, about four days after I realized my glamorous ring was missing, I was simply lying in bed, contemplating what I should do. The guilt was about to kill me, and I needed some answers. I purposely left my door ajar, and when I saw Mom's shadow pass, I called to her. She came in and looked at me. I must have looked worried, because she sat on the edge of my bed and asked me what was wrong. I couldn't take it any longer. The guilt had been dammed up inside, eating me away, and I no longer cared whether she was right or not. I spilled the whole thing, crying as I did so. When I was done, she simply touched my hair and looked at me very patiently.

"You have to tell him, honey." She spoke truth, and I knew it. As much as I didn't want to, I knew that is what I needed to do. I felt better after I had confessed to Mom, but the guilt hadn't completely disappeared. It took another day before I found the humility to tell him.

Dad had just gotten home from work, all smelly and dirty from the job site. After a relaxing shower and hearty dinner, I hoped and prayed he would be in a pleasant mood. But then the opportunity came. Dad and Mom were sitting in the living room watching the news together. Mom looked at me as I walked in and smiled an encouraging smile. I sat down, waited until I had Dad's attention, and jumped into it. I told him everything, just as I had Mom, and I cried even harder. I just knew he was going to be disappointed in me. When I finished, my head hung low, avoiding any eye contact, and I waited for a reply. But nothing came. I looked up after a long minute to see Dad's eyes filled with love and affection.

"Tiffany," he said. "Why didn't you tell me sooner?"

"I just couldn't, Dad. I didn't want to disappoint you. I know how much that ring cost. I'm just a kid, but you still trusted me and let me have it. I didn't know what you would think."

Then, Dad reached into his pocket, fumbled for just a minute, and slowly pulled out my beautiful opal and ruby ring. He held it out to me, but I just sat there bewildered. I didn't know if I was more confused or relieved at that point. I simply put my arms around Dad's neck and cried. He had it the whole time.

"I'm sorry, Daddy."

"Don't cry, Tiff. You were simply careless when you left it on the bathroom counter, and your mother and I were waiting for you to tell us. But it's all over now. Just know that I love you."

So, Dad was smarter than I thought. I sure love being daddy's little girl, and I don't hesitate to admit that I have him wrapped around my little finger. I still have my exquisite ring. It's safely in my jewelry box with my beautiful emerald, but the lesson I learned that night is worth more than both those rings and their precious gems. I love my dad, and I know he loves me. His love and trust will always be priceless.

Argumentative- English 2010

1st Place Winner: Justin Nelson, "Pursuing Inclusive Classrooms"

On a school day in December of 2005, a mother in Murray, Utah, got a call from her daughter's first grade teacher, Jennifer Henson*, asking if she would stop by the school to talk about something going on within her daughter's classroom. When the mother walked into the classroom, the room looked as if it had been turned upside down. Chairs and desks were tipped over, papers were strewn across the floor that had been removed from the wall in an apparently destructive manner, and the teacher herself looked quite disheveled. Henson cautiously told the mother about a boy who had disrupted the classroom multiple times through violent outbursts of rage spurred from just a small frustration he would have with his work. The chairs, papers, and desks were all his doing. He didn't just knock the chairs and desks over either. He threw them across the room almost hitting this mother's daughter in the head. She explained that she had approached the principal and the district about the problem before, but they continued to allow the student back into the classroom citing their "inclusion philosophy." This time, however, Henson felt compelled to involve a parent who might take some action, especially since that parent's daughter could have easily been hit by the chair thrown by the out-of-control student (Nelson).

The problem within Jennifer Henson's classroom has been ongoing for over six months now and very few solutions have been proposed. Parents have spurred many questions within the district as to how effectively Murray schools are dealing with problems that arise due to the inclusion philosophy that they are trying to practice. These questions cannot be left unanswered. What exactly is inclusion? Are the schools of Murray District provided with the resources they need to make inclusion a successful practice? If not, what are the tools they need to acquire and the actions they need to take in order to make it a successful practice? Although the idea of inclusion seems to be positive and ground-breaking in terms of education, without proper preparation, the results can be disastrous. When applied in schools that have taken the proper actions to prepare, inclusion can be a very positive and novel approach to an increasingly diverse population.

Inclusion is a philosophy that is not unique to the Murray School District. Many school districts throughout the world have adopted it as policy. The idea is that all children have the right to be educated with their peers in mainstream classrooms ("Inclusive Classroom"). Deborah Sorensen, Vice Principal of Murray High School, stated that Murray believes that every child has the right to receive an equal education in the "least restrictive" environment possible. She stated that becoming an inclusive school district was the means to achieve this goal (Sorensen). An inclusive classroom is usually one that contains a majority of children with "typical" developmental characteristics and a few children with physical or psychological disorders, thus incorporating those with disorders into mainstream classrooms ("Inclusive Classroom"). Although the idea is encouraging, the implementation of such a program is not necessarily easy.

The challenges in schools that have inclusive classrooms are varied. There is obviously a risk concerning safety, specifically with emotionally disabled students, as observed in Jennifer Henson's classroom. Schools must be prepared to deal with children who might bring weapons to school or become violent and out of control within the classroom. Most schools have some form of a safe schools

policy. When implementing an inclusion policy, the school must understand that student safety outweighs the inclusion of one who threatens that safety. In Henson's case, the student who threatened and continues to threaten the class has not even been diagnosed with an emotional disorder and therefore has not been classified as a special needs student. When informed about the boy's actions, the principal stated that he would not suspend a child for actions that could be a result of an emotional problem (Nelson). The boy in question was allowed to slide by a safety *policy* by remaining in the classroom because of a possible emotional disorder that could conflict with a *philosophy*.

Andrea Nelson is the parent of the daughter referred to in Jennifer Henson's first grade classroom. After seeing the predicament that the classroom was dealing with and hearing that the principal was not going to guarantee her daughter's safety, Nelson approached the district office about the blatant disregard for the safe schools policy. The district told her that the principal has liberty to enforce the safe schools policy as he sees fit, and to some extent, the policy can be interpreted to best fit the needs of the students. They backed up the principal's decision of inaction despite the fact that the undiagnosed boy committed three misdeeds of the possible eight that are grounds for suspension or expulsion from school according to the safe schools policy (Nelson). The infractions were specifically "...willful disobedience or open defiance of proper authority; willful destruction or defacing of school property; [and] behavior or threatened behavior which poses an immediate and significant threat to the welfare, safety, or morals of other students or school personnel or to the operation of the school" ("Safe and Orderly Schools"). Not only is it a disservice and a danger to the students in the classroom to disregard these infractions but also a disservice to the boy who has an obvious need for extra assistance with regards to his education.

As stated before, Murray School District is not the only district to follow an inclusion policy. Antinette Haggerty, a sixth grade teacher for Iron County School District at Cross Hollows Intermediate School, stated that Iron County School District has an inclusion policy but that they have made sure that the safety of their students is not jeopardized by this policy. "Safety must come first," she stated. Her district assesses each student with a disability as to how much assistance they actually need. She said that within her own classroom she has had students who could pose a threat but that the district has provided an in-class aid to altogether prevent potentially dangerous situations from ever happening (Haggerty).

Safety is not the only issue that Murray School District and other school districts implementing inclusion must resolve. Educators who include disabled students in their classrooms face the challenge of coming up with curriculum that is stimulating and challenging for the typical student but not impossible or overly frustrating for the disabled student. The goal is not to leave anyone behind and to provide equal opportunities for all; however, if a teacher is constantly focusing a large part of his/her attention on the disabled child or children in the classroom, the typical students will be left behind and will not receive the attention that they also have a right to. This problem seems impossible to handle with the resources that Murray District has provided to their schools.

The pursuit of a successful inclusion program is not an impossible one. Steps can be taken to prevent and resolve these problems. Murray School District must address the issues before the uplifting idea of inclusive education creates a fiasco. Due to a lack of manpower in the Murray schools a student could easily sustain injury due to a violent outburst from an emotionally disabled child. A typical student's grade could suffer, their test scores go down, or all in all, their potentially great educational environment lost due to excessive time spent by teachers trying to include students with disabilities.

The mainstream educators should be expected to insure that disabled students are included but they cannot be expected to spend an excessive amount of time dealing with these students. The most effective resolution to this problem is extra staffing. Each student with an apparent disability must be assessed to see just how much assistance they actually need. Some students may need their own personal aid, and some may require assistance in a separate, highly structured classroom to teach them skills that will help them function in a mainstream classroom. Although safety is a very important aspect of a child's educational environment, inclusion cannot be ruled out for those children who may risk that safety. Specifically trained aids, staff members, or school behavior disorder units must be on hand to prevent any unsafe situations. The mainstream educators, especially if not properly trained, cannot efficiently offer the extra attention disabled students need in order to prevent a possibly dangerous situation. This situation is also true for children with specific and spontaneously acting health problems. For example, a teacher should not be expected to deal with a child who has a severe case of epilepsy without proper training or enough information about the child's case. It is impossible to come up with a formula for every district to follow when it comes to how severe or dangerous a disability is and how much attention the disabled children require. Murray School District must personalize each of their students' needs instead of making general policies and programs for all of them. The staffing they have right now to deal with this issue is not sufficient.

The hiring of staff for assistance in and out of class may not be enough in some cases. Those disabled students who are overwhelmed by the curriculum taught in the mainstream classroom should have the right to a modified curriculum to best fit their needs. When teachers are faced with this problem, the changes teachers make in their curriculum can often be beneficial to all the students in the class as the teachers are forced to personalize the lesson plans to work with each one of their students' needs. When the teacher finds this overwhelming, the district can assist them by hiring staff that review the teacher's curriculum and create modified assignments that best fit the disabled students' needs.

Some may ask, "How could Murray fund these programs?" The answer is that they have already begun to restructure the funding of certain programs within the district with the closure of the alternative high school, Creekside. Surpluses of funds that are put into that school every year are now available for use in other areas of the district (Sorensen). Obviously the district must initially use this extra money to prevent the choices and actions that typically lead students to attend the alternative school in the first place. Murray must then use the extra funding to prevent further problems with inclusion, similar to the troubles in Jennifer Henson's first grade classroom.

The district has good intentions with their inclusion philosophy, but good intentions alone will not save the student who is injured because no one was there to prevent the emotionally disturbed student from having a violent outburst of frustration. Good intentions will not save the test scores and grades that will drop because teachers are too busy dealing with those disabled students who struggle with comprehension. Murray School District must make an attempt to correct and prevent these problems. With proper planning before implementation, inclusion is a noble and achievable goal, and it can be valuable in the educational aspect of a disabled student's life as well as beneficial for typically developing students as both become socially integrated.

*Name changed for privacy

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2nd Place Winner: Brett Shumway, "Is Southern Utah Prepared for Higher Gas Prices?"

Everyone in the United States has felt the squeeze from high gas prices; however, in recent years certain factors such as natural disasters and war have caused the cost of petroleum to come to an all time high. This has been a source of debate and controversy in this country, one that has caused many citizens to question what the future holds. Those that can't afford high gas prices are left with a huge economic dilemma, but more than just a higher cost to drivers: experts say that a rise in the price of petroleum will eventually raise the cost of everything else. Luckily, the price of 85 octane gasoline has leveled off at about \$2.30 per gallon. For now, Americans are becoming complacent with what they have to pay, but what happens when gas rises above 3, 4, or even 5 dollars per gallon? Can the average middle class consumer afford it, or is there an alternative fuel that could be used in the place of gasoline?

People in small communities are among the first to be adversely affected by higher fuel prices. If fuel prices continue to rise in the United States citizens in small communities such as Cedar City will be negatively impacted; more specifically it will affect students, the elderly, and other people living on low incomes. Some preventative measures must be taken in order to protect normal life. If not, at some future date people might not be able to afford simple things such as driving to work, and life as we know it would change.

Over the years gas prices have risen and fallen, and when the price gets too high the government steps in by causing gas to be rationed or, as in recent years, by opening the national fuel reserve. So far, the government's measures have helped to somewhat stabilize gas prices; however, many are concerned that government efforts have not gone far enough. A common concern among Utahans is the thought of what would happen if gasoline becomes unaffordable.

Many students that attend Southern Utah University live far enough off campus that they have to drive to school. Many of them also have to drive to work. The cost of gasoline as it is now makes those commutes costly, and if gas prices continue to rise, the daily commutes that SUU students make could become too costly and unmanageable. Aaron Adams, a junior at SUU, lives in Parowan and commutes to Cedar City almost every day for school and work. He says that even though gas prices have gone down in recent months, he still spends thirty to forty dollars a week in gasoline. To a student living on a tight budget, that much money is a large part of his income, and if gas prices continue to rise he is afraid that he will not be able to afford to go to school.

Living on a tight budget is not uncommon for students at Southern Utah University, with tuition now at about \$1,800 for one semester, housing costs constantly rising, and the gamut of other expenses that SUU students have to pay; it is no wonder that the price of gas is a concern. If gas prices shoot up again, many students like Aaron Adams will have a hard time finding an affordable way to get to school. Given that public transportation is virtually nonexistent in the Cedar City area, transportation is a common concern for the average SUU student.

Of course, students are not the only ones that would be adversely affected by higher gas prices. Many elderly people live on very fixed incomes and are not prepared to handle ballooning gas prices. If prices continue to rise, these people will be forced to take money from other parts of their budgets in order to pay the higher cost of gasoline. Furthermore, experts predict that with higher fuel costs we will see

higher shipping costs that will in turn drive up the cost of everything else for consumers. Therefore, higher gas prices affect both the elderly that drive and those that do not drive.

More than just students and the elderly, higher gas prices would affect the average middle class consumer. With existing prices already squeezing the average consumer, many fear that another increase would make things unendurable. Jed Burnett lives in Cedar City and works in Saint George. He recently had to trade in his pick-up truck for a smaller compact car because the cost of gasoline was becoming too expensive. "I was working almost an entire day just to pay for the gas I used in a week", says Burnett. Now that prices have leveled out and he drives a more fuel efficient car, he does not have to worry as much about the cost of gas; however, he fears that gas prices, "can only go up from here". Stories such as this are common, and represent the concerns of many people living in southern Utah.

Many in southern Utah are concerned that the lack of public transportation in the Cedar City area could become an insurmountable problem if gas prices became completely unaffordable. Some are concerned about the effect the current war and other political unrest in the world are going to have on US oil prices. Furthermore, economists are predicting that countries such as China and India, which are already using more oil than they ever have in the past, will continue to use increasingly larger portions of the world's oil causing prices to rise even more in the future. All these factors combined make it obvious that something must change.

Advocates of alternative fuel sources say that the answer is in the research and large scale implementation of alternative fuel sources. In fact, many experts say that the answer can be found in corn. That is, E85 ethanol, which is a blend of 85% ethanol made from corn and 15% gasoline. This is a renewable source of fuel that is better for the environment than gasoline and improves performance because it has a higher octane rating than gasoline, which allows higher horsepower and torque. GM has already produced 1.5 million vehicles that can run on either E85 ethanol or gasoline, and gas stations all over the country are beginning to place E85 ethanol pumps alongside the traditional gasoline pumps ("E85 the 411"). Proponents feel this is the type of proactive thinking that will prevent United States citizens from being negatively affected by future increases in oil costs.

Rand Bettridge, owner of KB Oil, agrees that providing an alternative to gasoline is important. When asked how hard it would be for Cedar City to switch to an alternative fuel, he responded that, "plans to provide an alternative fuel in Cedar City have been in the works for years; however, the main problem stopping progress has been that there just are not enough farmers growing corn to make products like E85 ethanol". He also stated that propane is currently available at the pumps in Cedar City, and that he would like KB Oil to make methane and ethanol based fuels available at some future date. However, according to Bettridge, the problem remains that there is not enough supply of any of the gasoline alternatives to sustain America's ever growing appetite for fuel.

A change to alternative fuel will be a long, arduous process. It requires a change from the gas station owners, fuel producers, and consumers; still, if local gas stations are not willing or able to offer alternative fuel, then people living in Cedar City have no reason to buy cars that are capable of running on alternative fuels, and nothing will change. Southern Utahans will remain vulnerable to the future's even higher gas prices.

One possible solution could come from the government. The government should invest money not only into research of alternative fuels but also into those that produce them and the gas stations and that would sell them. The government should implement a program to give tax breaks to gas stations that provide E85 ethanol or other alternative fuels, and pass legislation requiring all new cars to be E85 ethanol ready. This would motivate owners to change, in turn motivating consumers to buy vehicles that are E85 ethanol ready. This would create a stronger market which would motivate farmers to produce corn. Or, research should be furthered to see what would be the most efficient alternative to gasoline. The United States would be more economically independent and consequently less dependent on foreign oil.

This would be a monumental change and it would not be easy, but it is necessary. With a progressively more interdependent global economy and the politically volatile world in which we live, it is necessary that the United States take a proactive stance and begin now to implement programs to wean US citizens off of gasoline and on to an alternative source of fuel. If preventative measures are not taken soon, the economic mess that will ensue will be many times more complicated and much harder to fix than simply taking preventative actions today.

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Expressive- English 2010

1st Place Winner: Victor Fadool, “An Ode to Running from Hopeless Repetition”

All that I’ve ever wanted is a life that does not so closely resemble hell. Perhaps, I thought, moving clear across the country to Utah would change everything. Mother Nature definitely has the power to do this for me, right? I mean, that’s how it’s worked out my whole life. I grant control and responsibility to my environment (which is the easiest way to change) thus doing none of the work. This manipulative tendency masked my insipid portrayal of a codependent victim of circumstance. Interestingly enough, this parallels what I feel the infamous and rebellious Beat writer Jack Kerouac experienced in his acclaimed novel *Big Sur*. Running for practically his entire life, Kerouac was hit with a superfluity of reality shocks. These shocks are like subjects in school. We have to take them, but we each understand them at special times in our lives or sometimes not at all. Fear, love and passion are those primary focuses with which I graciously identify. Bob Dylan, the poetic and passionate folk singer expresses these sentiments with lyrics and Jackson Pollack, the artist, through his neoimpressionist works. But like any surreal life concept, it is a double-edged sword, a cycle. My life has been a cycle of realistically challenging, beautifully magical, hopeless repetition.

The cycle began the first time I ran away from home. Home was the easiest place to leave yet the hardest place to return. Manipulatively, I provoked situations that provided me with the justification I needed to leave the beautiful home that was so generously provided by my parents. There was a majestic sensation in my body that radiated from each step I took every time I ran away from home. No longer trapped in a prison I’d created out of insecurities and ignorant fears, the world was mine for the taking. Pristine is the perfect word to describe how I felt the first time. The second, third and fourth built strength and were perceived as courageous. Then slowly, the habitual cycle became an ironic reminder of everything I had been running from that I never realized was an endless cycle of repetitive hopelessness. This seems to be the theme throughout Kerouac’s adventure to Big Sur. He describes how he “realized gone the last three years of drunken hopelessness which is a physical and spiritual and metaphysical hopelessness you can’t learn in school” (7). This hopelessness he meticulously describes is the exact feeling I will forever empathize with, as it surfaced each time I would return home stripped of pride, incoherent and disturbed. The manipulation burned out, the sentiment diminished and basically the entire routine got old not just to me, but to everyone I hurt when I ran away inevitably to return. Kerouac and I shared a similar understanding:

I HAVE to get out of there—But I have no right to STAY AWAY—So I keep coming back but its all an insane revolving automatic directionless circle of anxiety, back and forth, around and around, till they’re really by now so perturbed by my increasing silent departures and creepy returns.
(199)

Realizing how dangerously lost I was in such a self-defeating cycle, my parents made a desperate decision to rescue me. They became facilitators in my life-long marathon. This time I would not only be running away from my home, but from my entire life in Texas. It was in Utah that for eight months I was given the opportunity to segregate myself from the gratuitous influences in Texas and initiate a self-transformation. Through intense introspection and the guidance and help of fervent individuals, I was

able to halt the unpromising, repetitive cycle of despondency. Utah was my Big Sur, but unlike Kerouac, I chose to see it for what it really was- a beautiful rebirth, not a hideaway from a life I would always hate.

The once toxic hatred I felt for Texas had disappeared. Upon returning home, I felt ready to re-enter *my* society with a new and intelligent perception on life. I felt ready to interact with adults, the working class and the successful. My girlfriend of five years, Melissa, had waited for me to come back home and essentially, I felt I had everything I'd ever needed. In other words, I was ready to run away from my past and this time it was acceptable. With the love of my life at the time, my family, trust and self-confidence I finally felt like I escaped the immaturity of adolescence. Life was good. However, that was not good enough for me. Love was the only thing good enough, because without love, life was meaningless. For five wonderful years I thought I knew what love was. That all changed very fast. And by fast I mean like picking up sand at the beach and watching it pour from the cracks in your grasp. With every attempt to save each swiftly falling particle, you inadvertently accelerate the process until the wind steals its escape and carries it away forever. Forever meant deprivation of love, the one fragment of my life that kept me together.

Beginning my new life with my girlfriend on what I thought was a parallel path proved to be nothing more than just an imaginary illusion that I fostered as a false sense of security. Our *love* had slipped right through our hands and died in what I feel was the most hurtful, destructive and depressing way possible. Literally twenty two days after I broke up with Melissa for submersing herself in the drug world, I was shocked to find out that she had married a 23 year old she had met on ravematch.com, a drug addict's My Space. On her eighteenth birthday, she went into a courthouse, rolling on ecstasy, and married him. It wasn't a month later that she got in a car accident that paralyzed her from the waist down. On top of that, she had a miscarriage and her parents found out at the scene of the accident that she had married the man, thus taking her off their insurance. I'll never forget our last words when she was in the hospital.

"You're pregnant? You were trying to trap him (her husband) weren't you?" I asked.

"I'd have done the same to you," she retorted.

"That's twisted," I said as I felt a sick feeling swell up like a flock of birds in a tree fleeing from the sound of a shotgun.

"No, that's security," she said like the bitch that she is.

There aren't enough words to describe the animosity that ran through my entire body like an electroconvulsive shock after I heard her, so distant, gone and disheveled. It felt like a thousand knives stabbing me over my entire body. My best friend, my love, alive, yet not even a telephone call could reach her. I lost her forever. And to this day I still feel the pain of that loss of a relationship that was not eternal.

Now, I look at relationships like the artist Jackson Pollack perceives his relationship to his paintings:

When I am in a painting, I'm not aware of what I'm doing. It is only after a sort of 'get acquainted' period that I see what I have been about. I have no fears about making changes, destroying the image, etc, because the painting has a life of its own. I try to let it come through.

It is only when I lose contact with the painting that the result is a mess. Otherwise there is pure harmony, an easy give and take, and the painting comes out well.

This semi-optimistic perception on love humored my thoughts that this breakup would be just like the other times we drifted away from each other and quickly found ourselves back together. She goes away for a little bit, gets messed up, and then with the aid of my nonchalant evasiveness, she realizes that I won't baby her and that being a crack head is not the route she wants to take. Our bond was stronger than any of that stuff combined. But this time there was no hopefulness in the separation. This loss of contact to me, like Pollack, was like experiencing death; a fever pitched pandemonium that contaminated my daily dosages of contentment and stability with fear and acrimony.

Again, right when I thought the hopeless cycle that had lead me absolutely nowhere was finally beginning to branch off, I realized it was just a mirage. I wanted to die. Not to escape to the ease of death, but to rid myself of the innocuous disappointment of living. Really this sounds pessimistic, and it is. But, after playing a victim of circumstance yet again, it was to be expected. This became the outlook on life I clung to for almost a year. Happiness came in cycles and created almost what I see as a manufactured, bipolar twisted head. I began to wonder if happiness was real. During this stage of grief I began the memoir *Chronicles*, by Bob Dylan. I was intrigued by his grandmother's statement that "happiness isn't on the road to anything. That happiness is the road" (20 Dylan). I completely and compellingly agreed with the first part. Happiness leads one nowhere. Inevitably, if one is happy, it plays no part in economic or psychological success. And if happiness is the road, then how/why do we as humans deviate from what was simply and pragmatically laid out for us. It's almost as if life really is fantastically easy, but we willingly manipulate our predetermined path to give us conflict that's irresolute as a daily fuel. It was driving in that straight line with all the essentials to live a moral and ethical life but, because one thing disturbed my mock stability, it became not good enough. Do you see the circle?

Happiness was not good enough for me. The brat in me wanted something higher than happiness. I think others would call that freedom, independence, even heaven. Irresponsibly naive, I gave that rare achievement the title, Love. Love was no longer an emotion to me. It was a feat to be conquered. It was an adventure to the end of that imaginary rainbow. The pot of Gold that never existed to begin with but, over the years, gave false hopes of attainment. Love was something I could not find. To search for love was to search forever. To find love was to find death. This mindset gave me that excuse I needed to screw up. I could now regress back to my old ways and get high to escape my fears of hopelessness. And, to tell you the truth, it's all a part of the circle. Bob Dylan says it perfectly, "They'll stone you and say that it's the end. Then they'll stone you and then they'll come back again. Yes, but I would not feel so all alone, everybody must get stoned." I was surrounding myself with the same idiots that could all revel in the same pit of apathy, drugs, and fraudulent happiness. I was living by that old Latin colloquialism, that the seductive rebel Angelina Jolie has tattooed below her belly button, *what nourishes me also destroys me*. Ironically Latin, it personifies a dead language. Languages are just fuddled words that have provided us with the ability to destroy human existence as we know it, the centrifugal force holding together that cycle of bleak repetition. Dylan's son Jakob sings it exactly how I felt it, "I know I ain't changed, but I know I ain't the same. And somewhere here in between these city walls of dying dreams I think of death it must be killing me."

I couldn't handle this blasé, self-destructive path that led to nothingness. This was my revelation. For almost a year I had thrown away everything important to me at the expense of running in the same circle of loss and escape. Relating to Kerouac:

I [saw] myself as just doomed, pitiful—an awful realization that I have been fooling myself all my life thinking there was a next thing to keep the show going and actually I'm just a sick clown and so is everybody else—All of it, pitiful as it is, not even really any kind of commonsense animate effort to ease the soul in horrible sinister condition (of mortal hopelessness). (41)

I knew exactly what I was doing and was having a lot of synthetic fun in the process, but I knew it was leading me nowhere. That's where I had a problem. When I could think about something before I did it, know that it was wrong but lack the strength to follow my heart, I knew I had a huge problem. I always tell people, drugs, sex, violence, religion, whatever it may be that one uses to escape from reality, are symptoms of the problem. Why is the individual doing it? That answer will lead him to sanity! It is here that I found the key to my heart.

I'll never forget the day I realized that passion was the meaning of life. Luckily, I began to embrace, love, and explore this idea. Passion, I found, is the one thing each and every human lives for. It's the escape tactics and any other form of negative energy that serves as inhibitors engendered by hatred that distracts us from this passion. I can now look around and see what was visible my entire life, the magnitude and clarity of passion. It's once one discovers who they are and what they want (passion) that they can create (like the artists including myself that I have mentioned) a personal path to success. Dylan will tell you that "sometimes that's all it takes, the kind of recognition that comes when you're doing the thing for the thing's sake and you're on to something..." (Dylan 44). This recognition is beautiful. Dylan describes its onset so vividly and perfectly that I have to divulge its entirety:

Little things foreshadow what's coming, but you may not recognize them. But then something immediate happens and you're in another world, you jump into the unknown, have an instinctive understanding of it—you're set free. You don't need to ask questions and you already know the score. (62)

Sitting here I perspicaciously write of the life I'm creating for myself. College, marriage, death, whatever is now, or is to come comprise my existence. I am unique, just like everybody else, like Bob Dylan, like Jack Kerouac, like Pollack, like many other masters of passion climbing the same eclectic ladder of life. And this is true, life *is* a ladder. This metaphor resonates a simplistic understanding of life that, surprisingly, has been obvious since the beginning of time. It's what life is all about, discovering meaning from having passion. Passion is an omnibus of future tense adjectives that leave no room for comfort in immobility. Passion is comfort in constant change and the stability that results from its relentless pursuit. Move forward fearlessly into a newfound comfort of passion. Reframe thought patterns that fear the unknown, to the inspirational embrace of change, "It dawned on me that I might have to change my inner thought patterns... that things had become so familiar and I might have to disorientate myself." (Dylan 71)

It is time for new journeys, thought patterns, and dreams. It is time to try something new and take risks. Where my old memories symbolize the enlightenment of true friendships that were created, my experiences and knowledge personified the end of hopelessness. Running away from my past is like being a child all over again. Naïvely, I can tell myself that the past didn't matter, delightfully push it aside

to deal with later, and hopefully forget about it. Kerouac says it best: “[’] Infancy conforms to nobody’-- the infancy of the simplicity of just being happy,” (30). This simplicity, despite the run, is helping me to engender a clear mind and an ability to function on terms of maturity, rationality, and reality. The simple acceptance of true happiness, self-betterment, and longevity of knowledge is my new emphasis. It is only up hill from here.

It is *now*. Now, ironically enough is Utah. Yes, I ran back to my saving grace that for months in Texas I knew would be my home once again. However, I am no longer running from my Texas home or my past, I am running into my future. To be able to actually embrace this potential, I learned to forgive myself. Forgiving *me* is one of the hardest things I have ever done. But, it was the final chapter in destroying the cycle of hopeless repetition. My life is no longer a monotonous and juvenile escape. My life is mine; a new cycle of self-awareness and accomplishment. I have gained control over what I relinquished to the arms of laziness, insecurity and quick fixes. Surprisingly, (to me especially) I did it in Utah. They say running away from your problems never solves anything, but I feel that nothing in life is ever really *solved*. In the cyclic abrasiveness of life, running enables you to enjoy that hopeless feeling of inconclusiveness. What it really depends on is the direction in which you’re running.

2nd Place Winner: Nichole Barney, "Hindsight"

When I was young, my grandparents owned a small, ten-acre farm that was situated near a highway in Enoch, Utah. As the only child of a single mother, most of my childhood was spent exploring all of the wonders that the family farm had to offer. My days consisted of climbing dusty haystacks, sliding down cement irrigation ditches, catching wild stray cats, and doing whatever it took to entertain myself.

If there was one thing my 'second home' specialized in, it was horses; my grandpa had owned horses for longer than I had been alive. When I was seven or eight, my mom and grandparents gave me my first horse, Clue, which Mom had bought from a friend who couldn't afford to feed her. Clue was a very tall, and very fast, sorrel quarter horse, which meant she was a light orange-brown color with white "socks" on three of her legs and a white stripe on her face. With Clue came independence that I had never known before, and I spent all of my afternoons riding and exploring the trails of dust and sagebrush that surrounded the small farming community. Clue and I had the same interests: we both liked to explore, and we both loved to run with a speed that would make the winds jealous. I wouldn't let anything prevent me from doing what I enjoyed most . . . except for my own foolishness.

I was ten years old and in the fifth grade. My mom and I lived in a condominium on the other side of town, but I was enrolled in the elementary school near my grandparent's house. One day, as the yellow school bus drove us home, my friend Kevin and I agreed to meet up at his house. Kevin lived just up the "street" from my grandparent's house, which, in farming terms, meant that he lived about a mile away. I would bring my horse, and he would bring his roller blades. I would ride Clue, Kevin would skate next to us, and we would just follow random roads for the fun of it. Outside the small, blurred windows of the bus, steel-gray storm clouds darkened the surrounding mountains and skies in a way that was especially oppressive to kids who planned to spend time outdoors. It was spring, and we weren't about to let a few clouds stop us from having fun, especially after being cooped up during the winter snows. We made our plans, and I got off the bus, at the end of my grandparent's dirt road, anxious to get home and saddle-up.

I hurried up the dirt road that led to my grandparent's red brick farmhouse. I walked in the door, tossed my backpack on the couch, and made a beeline for the scuffed and dusty riding boots that I kept in the laundry room. As I pulled my worn black boots on, I gave my grandma a quick explanation of where I was going. Her reaction was to try and talk me into staying home. She had a feeling, a sense that went beyond the storm she saw when she looked out the living room window. Because I made a habit of seeking out storms, I had ridden in the rain many times in the past, though my grandma never liked it when I did. To me, she had always worried too much. Whenever I had tried to climb a haystack, she would make me stop in case I fell. When I would slide down the irrigation ditch, she would get anxious that I would drown, though the water was only a foot deep on a good day. Whenever I rode, she would tell me that I might fall off. I always got the impression that if she had it her way, she would have locked me up in the house to prevent something bad from happening. So, when she tried to convince me to stay home, I treated it like any other day that she tried to talk me out of riding, and I made up my mind to go anyway. I chose to ignore her premonitions, even though she had been more insistent that day than she had ever been in the past. Back then, I had no idea what that choice would cost.

As I prepared to walk out the door, Grandma made her final argument: "It's been raining and the roads are slippery. Your horse could fall." I laughed at that point since, unlike cars, horses had the same traction on wet pavement as they did on dry pavement, as long as there wasn't any ice involved. I pointed that fact out to my grandma, assured her that I would be alright, and walked out the door to catch Clue and saddle her up.

As I rode Clue down our dirt road surrounded by old, broken down wooden fences and green alfalfa fields, I couldn't help but notice the fresh, rain-scented air and the empowering sound of thunder over the distant mountains. Even though the weather threatened to throw off my plans if it started to rain, the energy it emitted was amazing. There was no wind that day, but the storm's presence could be felt all around. It filled my surroundings with power. It was as though the storm had brought the world around me to life. Clue seemed to enjoy the atmosphere as well as she walked with an eager pace. Storms never did spook her.

To get to Kevin's house, I had to ride along the side of Minersville Highway. Minersville Highway was a well-traveled road that led to some neighboring small towns. Riding to the side of it was not dangerous, but crossing over it could have been because of the 55 mile per hour speed limit and regular traffic. The turn onto Kevin's paved street was on the other side of the highway, so I had to cross over the two lanes of traffic to get there.

When I got to Kevin's house ten minutes later, I found him waiting outside with his roller blades on. We barely had the chance to say "hello" when a mixed-breed dog trotted up to us. The dog was of a medium build, a lab or a collie, with shaggy brown and white fur. Kevin explained that it was a stray that had been following him around for about a week. She seemed like a really friendly dog, and although Kevin tried to sound like she irritated him, I could tell that he was attached to her.

Once I was introduced to the dog, whose name I have forgotten, Kevin and I set off down Kevin's street talking about our teachers, homework, and various other things that ten-year-olds talk about. The dog trotted down the street with us, dancing playfully around Clue's feet. The two animals seemed to enjoy each other, and they both seemed to be having as much fun as I was.

But the fun didn't last. The next thing I knew, a car with chipped and faded red paint sped down the street toward us. The driver put on the brakes as the dog ran into the middle of the road, but she didn't stop in time. The dog yelped as the car hit it. The dog was lying on its side in the middle of the road, and Kevin was the first to reach her. Miraculously, the dog was alive, but she was hurt. Kevin looked sick and pale, and I couldn't believe what was happening. It almost felt like a dream. My first impulse was to run home for help, and with very little persuasion, Kevin agreed that I should go.

I galloped away toward home on the compacted dirt that stretched along the edge of the road. There was a brown church at the very end of Kevin's street where the street intersected with Minersville Highway. The church was one of the few places in the area that was surrounded by a sidewalk. What happened next amounted to nothing but sheer stupidity. I knew that the dirt would blend into sidewalk as I neared the church and highway, but I wanted to get home fast to find help. I slowed Clue's pace slightly so that she could keep her footing as she made the transition onto the cement, but I didn't listen to my own gut-feeling that told me to stop that horse *before* we got onto the sidewalk.

We galloped onto the cement sidewalk, coming closer and closer to the point where the sidewalk wrapped around the block to run parallel with the highway. Clue's shod hooves rang and echoed on the ground as I saw the turn coming, but I knew we wouldn't make it at the speed we were going, and Clue refused to slow down. Clue always had a tough mouth (meaning that she didn't respond very quickly, or easily, to commands). I pulled and yanked on the reins as the corner drew closer, but she was determined – she was running toward home and wasn't going to stop for anything!

I knew my horse well enough to know that when the sidewalk ended she would try to turn around the block and onto the highway in the direction of home. It felt like slow motion, even though it had to have happened in an instant. I remember the pit I had in my stomach as I realized that there was nothing I could do, and, in a flash, I pictured what would happen when we galloped in front of the speeding cars. I could feel the fear as it made my heart pound and my breath stop. It heightened my senses instead of dulling them. I took in every detail: the sight of the cars and trucks on the highway, the heat in my face and the sweat on my hands as I gripped the saddle, and the feel of the horse as her weight shifted to her right side while she turned the corner. I knew we were going to go down. I could hear the sharp and deep sound of metal horseshoes scraping on pavement as Clue's feet slipped out from underneath her. I could feel myself instinctively lean to the left as a counter-balance. I couldn't believe it was happening.

Strangely, I didn't feel anything as my 1,500+ pound horse fell on top of me. I remember making that observation in the back of my mind as Clue struggled to get up and regain her footing. Panic had the opportunity to sink in. It dawned on me that I was lying in the middle of a major highway. A couple of cars passed by on the other side of the road, but they didn't stop and only barely slowed down. Instinct kicked in, fed by a fear that screamed of the dangers around me. I tried to stand up and pull myself off the road. I immediately knew something was wrong when, while I jumped to my feet, I felt a searing pain shoot up from my lower leg as the broken bone pulled apart. I fell backward, still struggling to push myself off the road with my good leg. I managed to gain a few feet when a man, an off-duty cop who witnessed the accident, appeared and cautioned me to stay still, but I had too many worries to listen to his advice. What happened to Clue? Did she have the sense to get off the road? Where was Kevin? Was he still waiting for me to bring help?

I looked over just in time to see Clue trot back home. Once I knew she had made it, I tried to tell the man about the dog, but I wasn't sure if I was making any sense. Everything felt chaotic, and I had a hard time explaining what happened. The man, whose face is blurred in my memory, asked me questions while we waited for the ambulance. The strange thing about accidents is that some senses are dulled while others are sharpened. I was only vaguely aware of other people who had stopped to see what happened and of the traffic that was speeding by on the highway, but I did notice the way that the asphalt smelled like a mixture of oil and rain. It wasn't really raining, but an occasional drop or two would fall out of the sky. My leg didn't hurt, but it was cold and a little tingly, like it had fallen asleep.

It felt like an eternity before the ambulance came to take me to the hospital. I had been very lucky. My stupidity had given me a badly broken leg and a slightly damaged knee, but nothing more. I was fine, the horse was fine, and, as I found out much later, the dog was fine.

I think back at all of the warnings I had: my grandma, whose premonitions had been 100% accurate, and all of my own instincts that I had continually ignored. She may have been overly-cautious most of the time, but what I failed to see was the opposite extreme within myself.

I learned many important lessons that day. I learned that, while taking risks is a part of life, it is also wise to use caution and good judgment. Hiding away because something bad *mighthappen* isn't right, but ignoring common sense and intuition isn't the thing to do either. There's a rule in the horse community that says, "If you fall off, get right back on." I made a choice that day as I drifted in and out of sedated sleep. I chose to get back on. Almost two months later, when the day came that I finally got the ok from the doctor, I was back to riding the trails on Clue. I chose to live my life knowing that there would be risks, but I wouldn't live my life recklessly. The accident taught me caution, not fear. It taught me how to be strong, how to survive, and how to listen to my instincts and the instincts of others.