



# THE SCRIBLERIAN

Fall 2004 Edition

A publication sponsored by the English Department and the SUU Writing Center, the Scriblerian is a publication for students by students. Revived this fall 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 contest, which drew 46 entries, was planned and supervised by co-chairs Melanie Banks and Brianne Millett and by members Liz Beacham, Tim Coray, Julie King, Melissa Riding, and Sara Stork.

## Contents

Argumentative- English 1010.....	2
1st Place Winner: Ashlee Nelson, “Purest Water Sports” .....	2
2 <sup>nd</sup> Place Winner: Stephanie Barth, “Corruption of Patriotism?” .....	5
Expressive- English 1010 .....	8
1 <sup>st</sup> Place Winner: Susan Crow, “The Powder Box Horse” .....	8
2 <sup>nd</sup> Place Winner: Michael Langer, “At a Glance” .....	11
Argumentative- English 2010.....	14
1 <sup>st</sup> Place Winner: Joseph Carpenter, “Political Apes?” .....	14
2 <sup>nd</sup> Place Winner: Laura Schiers, “The American Civil War and Saddam Hussein” .....	16
Expressive- English 2010 .....	18
1 <sup>st</sup> Place Winner: Ryan Kay, “Ascending the Touchstone” .....	18
2 <sup>nd</sup> Place Winner: Harmony Hesley, “Scientific Mud” .....	21

## Argumentative- English 1010

1st Place Winner: Ashlee Nelson, "Purest Water Sports"

As the sun comes up on a warm summer morning, I peer out of my tent to see it glistening against the glassy water. It is calling to me. After finally mustering up my strength, I take that first monumental step out of the tent. With life jacket in hand I run to my personal watercraft, commonly know by its brand name, Jet Ski to bid it good morning and take it for a refreshing ride. The engine seems to purr as the exhaust fumes tickle my nose and off I go. The Jet Ski literally seems to glide beneath me; this is what I call heaven. Aside from a few tempting motorboats, Lake Powell is all mine for the taking. As the day progresses, more motorboats with skiers seem to appear, and the lake comes to life. As I reflect on this memory, I begin to contemplate the safety of jet skiing versus that of motor boating; I realize that boating was not only safer, it was much more fun and versatile.

It is a well-known fact that jet skiers enjoy what is called wake jumping. As a motorboat passes, the jet skier drives as fast as possible over the crest of the boat's wake. The momentum of the Jet Ski hitting the wake causes it to bounce or jump the wake. This practice is especially popular with the thrill seeking teens. However, this game is the cause of some major tensions between jet skiers and boaters. Commonly, boat motorists are looking for perfectly glassy water for their ski and wakeboarding passengers; meanwhile jet skiers are trying to chop it up. Why? Choppy water is much more invigorating than smooth sleek water. Although it is possible to go much faster with glassy water, the thrill of riding over a huge wave is just more fulfilling.

Thus begins the endless battle of rights. Boat motorists feel that they have total right of passage. Their boats are bigger; therefore, they had better be respected. Jet skiers on the other hand feel they are entitled to the same rights as those allotted to boaters. They pay the admission fees and have passed the emission tests; they deserve the right to enjoy the lake. The boaters just need to understand that there are more ways to enjoy nature than skimming over the lake at an average speed of forty-five miles per hour. They feel like their sport is superior to that of all other water sports. Their purest attitude is snobby and appalling! At least it seemed that way until I looked in the mirror and found no other reflection than my own.

Although jet skiing has its benefits, boating provides a safe, clean, fun experience for a larger group of friends and family. Many boaters enjoy the great versatility found in a motor craft. Boats are typically able to accommodate ten to fifteen people depending on the size of the vessel. This means that families are able to recreate together. Our society is grossly guilty of neglecting the family. The fast paced, task oriented world finds it hard to take time with family and friends. Boating keeps its participants on their toes and allows them to escape the real world. Naturally there will be different talents and passions among family and friends; thus, boating allows its participants to enjoy a variety of sports such as skiing, wakeboarding, kneeboarding, tubing, parasailing and air-chairing (just to name a few). For the non-active type, a simple ride in the boat is equally thrilling. So whether a person is five or ninety-five they can enjoy the pleasure of boating. Jet Ski participants, on the other hand, must be over the age of twelve and pass the state safety and personal watercraft operation course.

However, even after many states have implemented such safety courses, Jet Ski injuries continue to grow. In 1995, The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) conducted a personal watercraft accident study. The study, which included all participants treated in an emergency setting for a Jet Ski related injury from January 1, 1990 through December 31, 1995. The JAMA's conclusion was that from 1990 to 1995, there was a four-fold increase in injuries associated with an increase in recreational use of Jet Skis. In fact, the rate of emergency room treated injuries related to Jet Skis was concluded to be approximately 8.5 times higher than that of motorboats. This same study, conducted in 1995, found that there were about 760,000 personal watercrafts (Jet Ski, Waverunner, Seedoo, etc.) in use at that time. Of those personal watercrafts (PWC), 200,000 were sold in 1995. The following table illustrates the PWCs share of boat accidents, injuries, and deaths in 1996:

Total	Involved PWC	Percent PWC
Boating Accidents	8,574	3,079 35.9%
Injury Accidents	3,995	1,316 32.9%
Fatal Accidents	591	55 9.3%

This data clearly shows that over a third of all injuries and accidents in 1996 were caused by PWCs alone. An article from News Canada, written last summer, supports the idea of boats being safe recreational tools across the board. It said that United States statistics show that boating is twice as safe as biking, five times as safe as driving, and twenty-four times as safe as scuba diving. In an effort to reduce these horrifying accident rates, the authors of the JAMA study offer several recommendations to aid in preventing injuries to Jet Ski users:

Specific training for PWC users would be appropriate, much like training that is offered for persons operating boats. Given the fast speeds that can be achieved on PWC, training requirements and enforcement may reduce the number of injuries considerably. (PWC Accident Study)

The flaw in this recommendation is that the JAMA has omitted a prominent characteristic found in many Jet Ski related injuries—alcohol.

In the past, a common trend has been get drunk on the party boat. Go out, cruise the lake, and enjoy a "good" beer. However, in recent years, due to changing demographics of various recreational watercraft users, the trend has changed. Recent observations denote that alcohol usually follows the Jet Ski crowd. This crowd is made up of lower class nineteen to twenty-five year old, fun-loving kids. I'm not saying there is a problem with this demographic of users; however, there is a proper place for alcohol if one chooses to consume, and this place is not the lake. It is vital that the parties of this crowd become responsible for their actions and respect the lives of those also enjoying the lake.

Another downfall of Jet Skis is their effect on the environment. Their two-stroke engines emit harmful gases into the waterways. Their gases have been proven to not only disrupt the ecosystem but also be harmful to those recreating in the lake. Along with the core dangers of Jet Ski operation, this is a reason for the ban of Jet Ski in the majority of the national parks along with many state parks. For example, at Lake Powell over 93% of the lake is off limits to Jet Skis. It has been said that Lake Powell, one of our countries treasures, is turning into a lagoon of sewage. The emissions tests simply aren't doing their job, and our national and state parks are suffering. If precautions are not taken, the water sports we all know

and love will disappear. Our lakes, oceans, and rivers will eventually become polluted to the point of a completely stagnant ecosystem.

This is a charge to protect your passion. It isn't about protecting your Jet Skis any longer; it is your love of the water and the recreational opportunities it provides. Boating is a joyful experience for all. It is something that a large group of friends and family can enjoy together. This earth has so much beauty to offer, why enjoy it alone? Diversify your water recreation. There are classes and forums held regularly in which you can learn a new art such as water skiing or wake boarding. The best part of boating is there is no age limit or minimum to enjoying a boating experience. The only restraint placed upon boaters, outside the general vessel navigation laws, is any participant under the age of twelve must wear a life vest. However, this single restraint is perfectly logical, because the common age of competent swimmers is about twelve years old.

Therefore, with the upcoming summer season, make recreation choices wisely. As for me, I will always live for water sports; it will just be behind a boat. The adrenaline rush of wake jumping is not worth the other risks incurred. Let us keep our loved ones safe and alive. Step away from the Jet Ski world and embrace the joys of boating. It is clear that Jet Skis do have their advantages; however, the versatility and safety found in boating clearly outweighs any possible benefits from jet skiing. So off I go to purchase my new boat for next summer.

See you on the lake... (Behind a boat that is).

---

#### Works Cited

"PWC Accident Study." The Journal of the American Medical Association. (Aug 1997). 25 Oct. 2004.  
<<http://www.rbbi.com/folder/acc/pwcstudy.htm>>.

News Canada. "Safe Boating . . . All Summer Long." Google.com 18 Oct. 2004 < [http://www.seek-online.com/boats/art\\_boats\\_0.html](http://www.seek-online.com/boats/art_boats_0.html)>.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner: Stephanie Barth, "Corruption of Patriotism?"

Approximately eight hundred and eight days have passed since the tragedies of September 11, 2001. In general, our lives have resumed: most of us fear little when boarding a plane, the thought of sight-seeing in Washington D.C. no longer evokes fear of "what ifs," and practically no one would pass up a trip to New York City for any reason. Neighbors are back to "friendly fire," arguing about who will mow the grass in between the yards, most hotel and convention center welcome signs have relinquished the "God Bless America" exclamation, and replaced it with a simple "Welcome to Hometown USA," and a sky painted with airplane vapor trails is the norm once more.

The world of today, October 20, 2004, remains separate from the era that existed but a few years ago. We are a society altered by memories of tragedy. The events that recently remodeled our nation remain scorched in the minds of those greatest affected by it. This is a principal reason why flag imagery is so prevalent today. Just between my dorm and the English building, there are two American flags placed prominently outside of residences. It would be difficult to miss a billboard splashed with a tri-color, patriotic background. Such illustrations present a question of intent in flag placement. The first anecdote involves that of people or families who choose to display the American flag in front of their residences. Do these flags on lawns or hanging from windows symbolize a representation of patriotism? The theoretical billboard may be a tactic for broadcasting a love of nation to the people driving down I-15, but who is to say it's not a clever ploy to bring customers into a business? Immediately post 9-11, it seemed that consumers all dashed out to Ace Hardware to pick-up a free American flag window cling to paste to the back of their Hondas. Those same once-cherished window clings, now cracked and peeling from three years of sun, bring justification to a dispute over commercialization: not in America, but of America. In analysis of three years past, one may argue that the days of complimentary US Flag lapel pins (now \$7.50 at [capitalshoppingmall.com](http://capitalshoppingmall.com)) have led way to a dynasty of advertising glory at the price of one of our national treasures.

Images of, and representing the American flag, are so frequent in the United States today that it's often difficult to decipher why the certain objects are painted red, white, and blue, and what their representation means to the creator.

To some, the majority of these pictures depict the flag in a manner that shows value and support for the United States (consider the second to last image). Some would contend that many of these images are disrespectful towards the U.S. nation. Some may call items, such as images two, five, seven and similar examples, exploitations of the flag. Some of these photos, no matter whom the audience may be, suggest thoughts of anti-American sentiment (fourth image, first line) or even satirize the flag (see the fourth image of the second line).

I believe the majority of US flags and their representation in today's society are intended to show patriotism and induce similar feelings from those who view or purchase such merchandise. Various items and images appear to miss the mark though. Amy Liu of the Los Angeles Times wrote "You Will Fly the Flag, and You Will Like It" after a local realtor inundated every house in her neighborhood with flags that she felt stood for, "the presumption, the imposition of sentiment and worse, the corruption of patriotism" (Liu). She countered the realtor in her column, with, "let's face it, the real motivational message is this: May the spirit of patriotism inspired by this flag move you so profoundly that you'll call

me at the following number, let me sell your house, and advance my sales ranking to the platinum circle” (Liu).

Some critics claim imperialism towards prominent music figures such as Toby Keith, the singer/song writer of the Country Music Academy acclaimed “Courtesy of the Red, White, and Blue”. Critics say that his lyrics demonstrate contempt toward the flag by noting it in an improper manner, the repetition of, “brought to you courtesy of the Red, White, and Blue”, and juxtaposing it with non-traditional ideals, “we’ll put a boot in your ass, it’s the American way” (Keith). The lyrics of the song, written in heartfelt respect and admiration, represent much more loyalty and esteem for our country than most any physical representation on mass-produced manufactured goods.

But who is to say when some businesses or people have gone too far? Many cite US Code Title 4, Chapter 1, Section 3 as a reference that President Bush and multiple others are breaking a law that forbids the use of the American flag for promotional use. Even if there was a law against using the flag in a marketable manner, the current thirty-seven cent stamp, created by the United States Postal Service and sanctioned by the US government, and comparable products would not be illegal. The flags depicted on either presidential candidate’s website would not be illegal either (see Appendix figures 22,23). Neither flag shows exactly fifty stars, and many representations of flags, used by both current presidential candidates and politicians in the past, lack thirteen stripes (Blomquist). Even the subtle patriotic design of a gum wrapper thrown by political activists in a parade reminds most people of the flag of our country. This is a minimalist way to support the message of devotion to the USA.

If indeed there were an incident or series of incidents that began to devalue the American flag, one reporter credits the highly praised basketball “Dream Team” for this erosion. Dave Kindred, a reporter for Sporting News, attributes a main decentralization of the flag to “jerks” such as Michael Jordan and Charles Barkley who stood atop the gold medal stand in the 1992 Barcelona Olympics with the American flag draped over their shoulders. It’s not so much the act that’s outrageous, but it’s the fact that these men were allegedly covering a competitor shoe brand with the flag. Kindred reports, “‘Loyal,’ was Jordan’s key word of explanation for transforming his nation’s flag into an accessory to his greed. Loyal not to the United States, not to the idea of Olympic competition. Loyal to a sneaker company” (Kindred 80).

A Japanese immigrant from one of my high school classes frequently wore a shirt similar to this one (see figure 5). He sported the “Proud to be an American” design with honor and gratification. The shirt was saggy on his small frame, bore a few food stains, and a hole was beginning in the neckline. Nevertheless, he wore that shirt at least once weekly. This is a demonstration of patriotism, not because of the shirt, which many would mark as a commercialization of the flag, but rather because of the manner which he wore it in. On the contrary, a few years ago on the fourth of July, a local retailer sold cellophane-esc “flags” on toothpick-size dowels with the words “MADE IN CHINA” emblazoned to either side of the icon. Each flag was one dollar. This retailer would have a struggle defending any patriotism in such an act. The meaning portrayed by products such as this model, whether intentional or not, remains: production is sheerly for profit.

We must scrutinize for ourselves the endemic depictions of the US flag in today’s society. Some seem to be making a living marketing our flag, others seem to be making a living by attempting to protect it: most rest somewhere between. Either way, its likeness is ubiquitous, and any interpretation will evoke a patriotic spirit in me.

---

#### Works Cited

- Blomquist, Dave. "The American Flag." Skippy Dot Com. 15 March, 2004. 14 Oct. 2004  
<<http://www.skippy.net/blog/2004/03/15/the-american-flag/>>.
- Keith, Toby. "Courtesy of the Red, White, and Blue (Angry American)." Unleashed. Perf. Toby Keith.  
Prod. James Stroud, Toby Keith. DreamWorks Records, 2003.
- Kindred, Dave. "Team USA: Selfishness personified." Sporting News Sept. 6, 2004: pg. 80. 15 Oct. 2004  
<<http://web31.epnet.com> >.
- Liu, Amy. "You Will Fly the Flag and You Will Like It." Los Angeles Times 13 Sept. 2002. 18 Oct. 2004  
<<http://www.commondreams.org/views02/0913-04.htm>>.
- United States Code Title 4, Chapter 1, Section 3. Office of the Law Revision Counsel, U.S. House of  
Representatives. 17 Oct. 2004 < <http://uscode.house.gov/uscode-cgi/fastweb.exe?getdoc+uscview+t01t04+10393+7++>>.

## Expressive- English 1010

1<sup>st</sup> Place Winner: Susan Crow, "The Powder Box Horse"

We moved a lot when I was growing up because my father was a mining engineer. We spent most of our summers at mining camps far from civilization and the amenities. Independence and ingenuity were qualities we learned very young. We found we were capable of doing almost anything, but sometimes we couldn't do it alone. I found that out when I tried to make a powder box horse.

A powder box is a wooden box, sturdier than an orange crate, about sixteen inches long by twelve inches wide by nine inches deep. It was used to ship and store sticks of dynamite as dynamite; they called it "powder," hence the name powder box. Inside, the box smelled like pine and like the air smells after you fire a gun. The corners were intricately dovetailed to give the box added strength to protect the dynamite.

Powder boxes were used for everything, storage containers, shelves, chairs, and suitcases. My siblings and I used them as the basic building blocks of our adventures. They became railroad cars, boats, forts, huts and a thousand other things.

When I was five years old, my family lived in a mining camp outside Wells, Nevada, at a site called Spruce Mountain. The camp was situated in the valley between two hills and was surrounded by scrubby pine, cedar trees, and miles of sage brush. Because my father was the superintendent, our family lived in one of only two existing houses. Ours was the only place in camp with a flush toilet, and we only had that because my father had plumbed it himself.

My father could do anything. He could build anything, fix anything, weld anything, and there wasn't anything he didn't know. In my universe, Dad was next to God, and on most days Dad outranked Him.

At that time, I had three brothers and one sister. The oldest was Mike at 15, Sharon was 14, Alan was 9, Jim was 7, and I was 5. Mike was a serious, gangly boy who had two ambitions in life: the acquisition of a car and to graduate valedictorian of his class. Sharon was a talented pianist who drove Mike crazy because she never studied for anything and still got better grades than he did. Alan was the bane of my existence and the instigator of a thousand rule breaking adventures. Jim was the sibling closest to me in both age and size. We were normally best friends unless Alan wanted to play with Jim, and then there was no time for little sister.

One day, Alan decided to build a pony out of a powder box. He also decided he needed a servile helper so he invited Jim to tag along. I wanted to be a part of the whole thing, but when I asked, I was told I was too little. That made me as mad as fire, and I determined I would make a powder box horse of my own.

First the boys headed for the woodpile where broken powder boxes and bits of wood were stored for firewood. They sorted through the debris, and soon departed with two of the best boxes. I prowled through the remains, but the only boxes left were fairly poor specimens. Finally, I found one that was mostly all there and hauled it around to where the boys were working to see what to do next.

Alan directed Jim to find as many bent nails as he could, and straighten them out with the hammer. Jim was busily pounding away, so I went to find some nails. Most everything I found was rusty and bent

nearly in half. I asked Jim if I could borrow the hammer, but he told me I couldn't, I hadn't been invited. That didn't stop me. I went out and found a suitable rock.

I pounded and pounded under the hot summer sun. I smashed my fingers more often than the nails. The sweat dripped off my nose as I bent intently over my task. Covertly, I kept an eye on what Alan was doing, so I'd know the next move.

Alan went back to the woodpile and returned with several lengths of wood. He used a handsaw to cut them to the proper size. Using the powder box for the body, he nailed pieces of 2x4s together to form a head and a neck, and then attached them to the powder box. Then he sawed four 2x4s into pieces of equal length, and nailed them to the insides of the box's four corners. The horse had legs. To my eyes, it looked perfect, even though the legs were a little uneven.

I headed for the woodpile. I sorted and rummaged through the wood until I found a piece a little too long for the neck and one a little too short for the head. Panting, I dragged them to my box. I had only been able to straighten about a dozen nails, so I had to use my resources wisely. I wasn't strong enough to pound the nails in completely; I was satisfied to get them in far enough to hold things together.

The effort was exhausting, but gradually the horse took shape. I got the head and neck attached to the box, but legs were beyond me. There was no way I could ever find four pieces of wood the same length, and I just wasn't strong enough to use the handsaw.

While I had been struggling, Alan had helped Jim build his horse. There they stood, two slightly rocky steeds waiting to gallop off into adventure. I looked at mine. There it was: a box with no legs, a too short head, and a too long neck. It looked more like a duck than a horse. Alan and Jim thought so too. They shrieked with laughter, and tried to top each other with their unflattering comparisons.

"It's a turtle!" laughed Jim.

"No, it's a duck!" chortled Alan.

"It's a HORSE!" I shouted defiantly, and straddled my steed. Crack! As I sat down, the slants on the top of the box broke, and I ended up stuck in the debris.

My brothers howled with glee.

"I hate you!" I raged, as I crawled out of the wreckage and fled their laughter.

My heart was broken, and only Dad could fix it. I headed down the hill to the mine. Usually, the mine was off limits, but this was an emergency. I rehearsed my grievances as I went. Every step magnified my woes. Luckily, I arrived at the mine just as Dad and Mike were leaving the tunnel. As soon as I saw Dad, I began to sob and run. He bent and effortlessly scooped me into his arms. He listened attentively to my pathetic tale, and when it was done, he took a handkerchief from his back pocket, dipped it into the ice cold steam of water coming from the mine, and washed my hot, sweaty face. (Dad never found the mother-lode, but he always managed to find water.) Reaching into his other pocket, he extracted his keys and gave them to Mike. Dad knew Mike would do anything if it meant he could drive.

"Go and help this girl build a horse," he said.

“Come on, short stuff.” Mike said, and lifted me over his head onto his shoulders. I felt like the queen of the world.

It only took moments for Mike to gather his supplies. He didn’t use an old powder box; he got a brand new one. He loaded a saw, nails wood, a tape measure, and a coil of rope into the truck, and then we drove home.

Alan and Jim stopped playing when they saw us drive up. I was sure they thought Mike was there to paddle them for being mean. Revenge was sweet. I maintained a dignified, haughty silence as I helped Mike unload the truck.

Mike didn’t say a word; he just started to work. He didn’t make me stand on the sidelines either; he had me hold the tools and keep track of the errant nails. He made me feel like an integral part of the whole process. First, he measured me to see how tall I was at the waist; then he cut the legs that length so it would be just the right height. Next, he cut head and neck pieces and two very small triangles of wood. I couldn’t figure out what they were until he nailed them to both sides of the head and I realized they were ears. The improvements didn’t stop there; large-headed tacks became eyes, and a piece of gunnysack became a saddle. Mike partially untwisted a six inch piece of rope and nailed it to the rear of the box. My horse had a tail! The last touch was a piece of rope nailed around the front of the head to look like a mouth with reins at both sides.

Alan and Jim stood in awe as this masterpiece of equine beauty took shape. With every improvement, they got quieter and quieter.

When it was finished, Mike lifted me onto its back. I wrapped my arms around his neck and hugged with all my might.

“Thank you, thank you, thank you!” I cried into his sweaty, saw dusty neck.

“That’s alright, short stuff,” he said. “You can do anything.” He looked sternly at Alan and Jim, who were gazing forlornly from my horse to theirs, “but sometimes you need a little help.”

The powder box horse disappeared long ago, and I’ve given up pounding nails with a rock. However, every time I see a powder box I remember the feeling Mike gave me as he helped me to succeed. I can do anything, but sometimes I need a little help.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner: Michael Langer, "At a Glance"

I was numb...fitting. He was numb the first fourteen years of my life, and I was numb that last two of his. I remember the smile on my face, completely fake. It was like plastic. It wouldn't go away. It stayed there the entire service. I remember scanning the faces of my family. I remember staring into the eyes of each and every one of them, knowing they pitied me. This knowledge is what put the false grin on my face. I would not admit defeat. I would not allow them to see me hurt. I wouldn't allow myself to feel hurt. He never did.

My attention locked onto the soldiers with their guns at ready. The smile stayed plastered on my face. I remember little of the detail of that day. I remember little of the detail of our relationship, and yet I am now closer to him than anyone. As I sit down and write out this experience, it is a mystery to me how I can know my father so well and remember almost nothing about him. I now know, beyond doubt, just how similar we are, and yet, when I think about this man...it seems I have seen him at just a glance.

I was suffocating inside of myself. I was a machine on autopilot. Waving, nodding my greetings, I was acting...fighting without realizing it. These people looked down on me. I hated them. I didn't want their well-wishing. Since the day I was born everybody had had such high hopes for me. Their voices rang in my head "so bright, so kind...God has given you so many gifts, I see such bright things for you Michael."

I had always been fighting. At first I fought to live up to all of the greatness they had seen in me, and then I fought to rebel against what they saw in me. As I stood there, I fought to stay alive. I knew my father, inside and out. I knew every corner of his mind. Destiny may sound corny, but we were born to walk the same path. Somewhere...probably a dark jungle in Vietnam...he had lost his path...he had lost himself.

"There is so much respect for him...all of this is so beautiful," my grandmother Parker said to me. She was referring to the uniforms, the flags, the view...I'm sure it must have been pretty to all of them. Looking back on the memory, I now see what they had seen. The grass was at its ripest green just before it began to turn yellow. The sky was open and blue. The view from the military cemetery covered all the way from Salt Lake to Provo. I remember the breeze, it was warm. The American flag flowed gently through it. She was right...it was beautiful.

I remember the way my mother's bangs gently fluttered as she looked out into the distance. The sunglasses hid her eyes, but I knew she wouldn't be crying. This bugged me, and then I remembered that I wasn't either. She had had such a hard life. She had a right to be cold. This man had added to her trials. She married him looking for the comfort and security she had so badly needed, but by then it was too late for him. He had been torn apart by war, and beaten down by guilt over things nobody understood.

"Michael, isn't this great? This is truly an honor to him." My aunt Lynn had put her hand on my shoulder. She was a small woman, short brown hair and hazel eyes. There were wrinkles forming on her face that I suspected were more from depression and stress than simply age. All in all, she was completely average looking, down to the grey sweater and skirt she was wearing. She was my one source to my father. I resented her.

“Yeah it is amazing. The best thing is everybody here knows how much he deserves it.” What was I saying? I sounded like some friend of the family...this was my father! I was pretending to stare at the Green Beret sitting atop the casket. I was shocked at how upbeat I sounded. I felt Lynn staring into me.

“Michael I’m sorry you have been put in the center of this. I’m sorry it is so hard for you to express what you are feeling. You have a right to be angry. I know that look Michael. Your smile hides so much... but I know those eyes. Your father had the same eyes when he came home from Vietnam, but his never went away. Don’t let that be you...he would hate that.” Her voice was so soft, her words flowed into me. Her hand was still on my shoulder. I didn’t know what to say.

Lynn was still looking at me. She saw right through the façade that had so easily fooled everybody else. She was the type of woman who could read a person like a book. She was doing this to me. She had done this to my father. Just like him, I was afraid of this. I had too much to hide. For a few moments, I didn’t bother to open my mouth. I knew nothing would come out. Finally, from a place that to this day I have trouble finding, something came out.

“Why wasn’t I there Lynn? He could have answered so much for me...about me, about him...he was finally willing to. There is so much I will never know, and it is my fault.” I was waiting for the tears to form, but they never came. Every word came out with ease. The smile was gone. My face was a cold, empty slate. I had stopped pretending to focus on the Green Beret, and was now looking over the rows and rows of tombstones. “He tried. I gave him nothing in return to show that I cared. Now I’ll never know the answers. Grandma Langer has a right to her bitterness.”

“Michael, it isn’t bitterness. You and your father are so similar. Both of you were such a ray of light to so many people. Now...just like your dad, there is something else there. It is something that only she and I can see...and I’m sure your mother. It isn’t so much that you *were* cold to him; it was that you were actually able *to be* cold. It reminds her so much of him after the war, it scares her. She loves you.” She was waiting for me to respond. Quickly, she realized I wouldn’t...I couldn’t. She gave me a soft squeeze on my shoulder and then removed her hand. Before she left she stared at me one last time. I knew without looking at her, that at that moment she was seeing my future. She untangled my soul. She saw exactly what I had been trying so hard to find, and then she left. It would be up to me to find it.

I wanted to yell at her to stop. To tell me what she saw in my father and me. A million questions were pounding into each other inside of my head. I wasn’t breathing—I wasn’t even aware of being alive. All I could do was yell silent questions inside of my head. Then, the loud burst of the gun salute shot me into a lost memory. I was in a desert. I was with my father and I had a .45 caliber Colt in my 10 year-old hands.

“I’m not strong enough for this, can’t even get close, and it kicks so much...” I was whining.

“Michael you’re jerkin’ the trigger. You can’t jerk it. You have to pull it gently.” My father had his dark sunglasses on. I couldn’t see his eyes, but I knew his focus was on nothing in particular. He had always had a way of seeing everything while looking at nothing. I remember his deep tan, and his jet-black hair.

“So it really isn’t just about strength...yeah, I guess that makes sense,” I responded as I started to understand his lesson.

“Your strength plays a role, but focus on that trigger. Don’t give up on it, it’ll work.” I remember the way his eyebrows went up over the brim of his sunglasses. Despite still not being able to see his eyes, I knew he was looking at me. He was seeing me, and more importantly, teaching me. He told me a lot with those words, and it really had nothing to do with shooting a gun.

I snapped out of the memory. The gun salute had ended the ceremony. People were walking by me, still nodding their condolences. My little cousin Brooklyn gave me a hug and then walked on with her parents. The sun reflected off of her white blonde hair as she walked away.

Another memory flashed into my head. It was a recent one, about a week before. It was one of my father walking out of my yard towards Lynn’s car. He was completely dependent on Lynn to get there. I watched him walk away. He couldn’t walk. It was a hobble. He was a broken man, but...I didn’t see this. I saw a hero, a warrior, a leader, and for the first time I saw my father. “I love you guys.”

In response to my words, without help, but with extreme effort, he turned and faced me. He had virtually no control over his face at that point, but he smiled...awkwardly, painfully, longingly, but it was there.

He taught me another lesson with that smile. Not until recently have I figured it out. That day, that moment, we both knew it was our first and last goodbye. He knew that I saw through his diseased body and saw my hero. I now know that he saw through all of the anger, all of the mistakes, all of the pain I was going through at that time and saw me as a hero. I was a hero that wouldn’t fall short of my goals, our goals. He made the mistakes and fought the battles so that I could learn from them. Our path was the same path...he sacrificed so I could make it to the end.

## Argumentative- English 2010

1<sup>st</sup> Place Winner: Joseph Carpenter, "Political Apes?"

A primatologist sits quietly and observes. He carefully documents his observations just as he has been conditioned to do. Through years of training, the primatologist learned how to record the behavior of primates without influencing the observations. He meticulously records every interaction between the apes. Once all of the data is collected, the researcher interprets his findings and publishes them for others in the field to learn from. The interpretation of these findings should be non-biased, but unfortunately observer bias often taints scientific discoveries.

Scientific bias can take many forms. The form of bias I will address is that of political bias; the politics to which I refer are those that reflect the ideologies (common ideas) of a group such as liberals or conservatives. I am not going to argue whether politics should play a role in scientific research, for I agree that politics should play no part in science. However, no matter how much we oppose something, we can't necessarily stop it from occurring. Scientists are trained to observe. Whether in the laboratory or in the field, a good researcher should document everything. Unfortunately, researchers often omit data that seems unimportant to the overall outcome of an experiment. These omissions result in bias by removing the ability for other scientists to draw conclusions based upon all the facts. Science covers the broad field of knowledge that deals with observed facts and the relationships among those facts. The relationships among facts are determined by humans and are, therefore, subject to bias.

Frans de Waal's book, *The Ape and the Sushi Master*, strongly reflects a liberal feminist agenda. He spends most of the book focused on the success of a female-dominant sexual society. Frans de Waal writes almost exclusively about the bonobo, a close relative of the chimpanzee. The existence and unique character of the bonobo struggle to find acceptance with some human societies of the world. De Waal attributes this to "puritanism." According to De Waal, a puritan society equates sex with sin and fights hard to control sexual urges. De Waal implies that puritans are misguided, and furthermore, that sexual openness is appealing and normal. A bonobo society would be quite the opposite of a puritan society. De Waal argues that a society's reluctance to accept bonobos stems from political reasons. De Waal's research of captive bonobos presents a society dominated by the females of the species, in stark contrast to the typical male-dominated human society represented by chimpanzees whose society is violent and male dominated. He makes the argument that "the bonobo's female-centered society is inconvenient for those who are invested in male-biased evolutionary scenarios" (146). He continues that the bonobo has not been given due attention because female dominance in such a close relative of the human could require reconsideration of underlying assumptions that apes naturally and biologically evolved into a patriarchal society. According to de Waal, those scientists and members of the public who are invested in a notion of humans as naturally inclined to resolve conflict through aggression and violence uphold chimps as the biological model of human culture.

In the book *Significant Others*, Craig Stanford brings into light de Waal's political agendas. Stanford argues that researchers of the bonobo, such as de Waal, fail to acknowledge the difference between captive and wild bonobo behavior. In the wild, bonobos behave much more similarly to the chimpanzee, especially in sexual and carnivorous activity. Studies of wild bonobos show that females are "no more erotic than their chimpanzee counterparts" (Stanford 28). Why would de Waal fail to acknowledge

differences between wild and captive bonobos? Upon closer reading of de Waal's statements, it becomes clear that he does not deny differences, but downplays them readily. He claims that there is no *relevant* difference between how captive and wild bonobos behave. De Waal immediately follows this statement by using examples from the field where female bonobos use intercourse to obtain food from the males. However, this behavior is quite different than the dominant behavior of females in captivity who take what they want from the males. Stanford also points out that extensive meat eating and meat-sharing has been observed in wild bonobo groups, but most primatologists, such as de Waal, refer to the bonobo as the "vegetarian" great ape. De Waal's agendas become more clear when he proposes, " If one of our closest relatives fails to fit the prevailing views about aggressive males and passive females, one possibility to consider is that the prevailing views are mistaken" (De Waal 148).

Many people not only disagree with the assertion of the effects of politics in science, but also deny the existence of such influence altogether. I agree that there are cases where science is not subjected to political bias, but it is clear from reading de Waal's book that he is strongly influenced by politics, even as he accuses others of the same charge.

It is the nature of abstract scientific thought to attribute "meaning" to data. As such, the use of the symbols of language is inevitably colored by one's experience, beliefs, social background, morality and politics. While scientists must constantly strive for true objectivity, as long as the human mind is a product of social experience, the ability to achieve that purity sought by science will be attenuated.

2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner: Laura Schiers, "The American Civil War and Saddam Hussein"

*"Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves." -Abraham Lincoln-*

The American Civil War was a time of great tragedy and sorrow. Many historians still do not agree on the official cause that began a war to divide a nation, but slavery was an undeniable factor. History has a way of repeating itself, but the question to be asked is, can we learn from our past to build our future? Many connections can be drawn from the American Civil War, those affected by it, and the events of today. The institution of slavery during the nineteenth century can be compared to the capture of Saddam Hussein in our day. Those affected by the American Civil War, especially the middle-class workingmen of Britain in the late 1800s, can also be compared to the many people who support the democratic ideals and freedoms that many cherish today.

By 1860, America had formed into an independent nation that was booming, both economically and industrially. However, divisions among people and ideals began to form around the issue of slavery in the United States. The southern states, especially South Carolina, thrived on the vast cotton production made possible through slavery. The northern states, however, relied heavily on a growing agricultural industry, especially that of wheat. As the North continued to shy away from slavery and become more powerful, the southern states decided to secede from the whole, or the Union. The southern states, or the Confederacy, believed that it was their right to become a separate division with their own form of government and control. Soon, the division of the nation ran so deep that a call to war rang out with the first gunshot on Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861 ("The American Civil War"). That gunshot began one of the most devastating wars that the American nation has ever known.

During the course of the American Civil War, ambassadors were sent to different countries to seek out allies. One of those nations was Great Britain, the most powerful country during the nineteenth century (Brauer 57). Many of the British upper-class and various government leaders, including the Prime Minister, immediately favored the southern states simply because they did not believe the conflict in America would last very long, and the southern states continued to win many battles early on in the war (Hayes 228). Soon, however, with key victories at Antietam in 1862 and Gettysburg in 1863, the North began to overpower the southern states and change the course of the war. Shortly after the Battle of Antietam, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation that freed the slaves in both the North and the South. As the war continued, the North became even more dominant and, in time, blockaded the southern states, which made import or export of any goods impossible ("The American Civil War").

Although both the North and the South were hoping to be allied with Britain, Britain was heavily dependent on resources from both sides of the conflict. Eighty percent of the cotton Britain used in its textile industry was imported directly from the southern states (Park 432). However, a series of bad harvests forced the British to drastically increase their imports of wheat and other food from the North (Barney 155). As much as Great Britain needed southern cotton, it needed northern wheat even more. This threw many of the British middle-class workingmen into unemployment and caused many of the textile industries to close. By 1864, of the 440,000 workers in the textile industry in Great Britain, 310,000 lost their jobs and fell into poverty (Park 432).

Although these people had lost their jobs and were risking losing their lives, there was no call for action against the northern blockade. Many wonder why, in the face of such hardships, there was no call for retaliation. Joseph H. Park states, "One of the reasons which can be advanced as an explanation of the workingman's attitude is his hostility to slavery. Slavery was, doubtless, an institution which he abhorred. They were firm in their hatred of slavery, and firm in their faith of democracy" (435). Only thirty years earlier, Britain had passed its own Emancipation Act, which freed the slaves in that country. Britain could not, and would not, support a group that still supported slavery. Not only did these workingmen support the North's position on emancipation, they also greatly supported the ideas of freedom and democracy that the North represented. They could have easily called for war against the blockade, but they could see the outcome of the greater good and had experienced the results from their own Emancipation Act.

Many correlations exist between the American Civil War, the British workingmen of the nineteenth century, and post-9/11 America today. The institution of slavery can be compared to the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein. His actions, while he was in power, were degrading, inhumane and horrifying, much like we view slavery today and how many viewed it during the nineteenth century. Many people did not support the war against Saddam Hussein because they felt as though it had no connection with the events of 9/11 or Osama Bin Laden. However, it was for the greater good, the same greater good that the workingmen could see with the abolition of slavery, that Saddam Hussein was removed from power. This caused a chain of events that allowed for the reformation of a country and opportunities for the democratic ideals of freedom and choice to be realized by the world. This new hope, the same kind of hope seen by the British workingmen and many others today, is only a shadow of greater events to come.

---

#### Works Cited

"The American Civil War." HistoryChannel.com. 2004. History Channel. 29 Sept. 2004  
<<http://historychannel.com/>>.

Barney, William L. *The Civil War and Reconstruction: A Student Companion*. New York: Oxford UP, 2001.

Brauer, Kinley J. "British Mediation and the American Civil War: A Reconsideration." *The Journal of Southern History* 38 (1972): 49-64. JSTOR. SUU Sherratt Lib., Cedar City, UT. 29 Sept. 2004  
<<http://www.jstor.org/>>.

Hayes, Paul. *The Nineteenth Century: 1814-80*. New York: St. Martin's, 1975.

Park, Joseph H. "The English Workingmen and the American Civil War." *Political Science Quarterly* 39 (1924): 432-457. JSTOR. SUU Sherratt Lib., Cedar City, UT. 29 Sept. 2004  
<<http://www.jstor.org/>>.

## Expressive- English 2010

1<sup>st</sup> Place Winner: Ryan Kay, "Ascending the Touchstone"

"Rope!" my partner Dave yells to me. I give him some slack on the rope so he can clip his next piece of gear. Once he has clipped the rope, I take the slack out of it and continue to belay him. From what I can tell, he has placed a large cam into a big crack. I know that this is a solid placement and will not be ripped from the crack if he falls on it. I get uneasy on the less solid pieces, such as the small 1/4" nut that he often places. He then climbs ten feet above them, making for a possible twenty-foot fall. I watch him attentively, ready to respond quickly to a fall and keep the rope from slipping through my belay device.

This is the first climb I've done being more than 150 feet off the ground. I've experienced a lot of "firsts" in the almost twenty years since I've been coming to the park. I still remember the first time, as a young child, going to Zion with my mother. I was in awe of the mesas and cliffs long before we reached the opening of the canyon, and it just got better as we came closer to the park.

I went to the Narrows on this trip and still remember the different textures of the rock walls. In one spot, there is a calcified section of rock polished by years of people from all over the world running their hands along it. In a recent trip to the Narrows, I ran my fingers across the same rock. The sense of touch triggered something in my brain. All of the sudden, my mind was flooded with memories and emotions of all the times that I'd been here. All moments were one, and they were the present. In that moment I remembered my first time touching the calcified stone as if it had just happened.

I also went canyoneering for the first time here. My friend James took me down Mystery Canyon. I had a choice between going down Mystery and going to Lagoon, a superficial theme park. It was a no-brainer. I fell in love with the backcountry canyons of Zion and have continued to explore them since. I have usually been able to explore at least one new canyon every year. I have been back to Mystery several times since, and every time it is just that, a mystery. How were these canyons carved and whittled into such beautiful form? It seems more than just a matter of consequential erosion. To me it looks and feels like art, the way the sandstone swirls and rolls around you. The flowing curves and the multi-colored layers of sandstone are akin to an abstract sculpture.

The last part of Mystery Canyon bestows a natural paradise. Its sheer towering painted sandstone cliffs intersect with bluish emerald pools at their bases. The pools are spring fed and decorated with maidenhair fern and scarlet monkeyflower. It's as if time, Mother Nature, and the creator all worked together to create this beautiful space. They chose for their palette the complementary colors, those opposite each other on the color wheel. Blue and orange; red and green. The red monkeyflower contrasts the green ferns. The orange of the Navajo sandstone and blue of the pools appear to vibrate alongside one another. They invoke some kind of archetypal idea or emotion, some primitive feeling, some, some, something or another. It's something that is realized by few but felt by all, something very powerful, something. Hmmm, I wonder. I try to realize and understand it all but only realize that my feeble mind can't grasp something so deep. I realize to simply appreciate it all.

As we make it further into the climb, I find myself gazing upon some Indian Paintbrush, it's green leaves contrasting the red rock. I am only on this cliff side for a short time, but the Indian Paintbrush will spend its life here. Its roots cleave to a slit in the rock that provides just enough water and nutrients for the

plant to live. If I were a plant I'd want to live here, away from it all but, paradoxically, in the middle of it all. As I hang from the anchor belaying Dave, I let my mind wander transcendently for hours, keeping one hand on the rope, ready to catch a fall.

We are now on the eighth pitch, about halfway up the thousand foot cliff. To this point I've been keeping my cool, but I'm anxiously anticipating free climbing the rest of the route. This means I will no longer be relying on the rope as a means to ascend the cliff. Instead, I will be climbing the rock's face, holding on with my fingertips and stepping on minuscule protrusions in the sandstone. Dave reaches the next anchor and fixes the rope. He yells down, "Rope fixed." As I disconnect all the gear from my anchor, I load it onto my back and harness. I double check to make sure I am tied in to the rope. I then yell, "Climbing" to Dave and proceed to unclip the last carabiner holding me to the cliff. No longer able to rest any of my weight onto the rope, it's all on me. I try not to let the overwhelming height and exposure go to my head. Despite this, my nerves are on edge, ready to react in an instant.

Pushing worries and thoughts of self-defeat out of my head, I start climbing the face. Here I am: six hundred feet off the ground, climbing at the top of my ability, keeping my balance with my fingertips while gently stepping up on the loose soft sandstone. I find myself obtaining a Zen mind state, focusing on each single movement and on the rock directly in front of me. And the rope, Damn, the rope! There must be ten feet of slack in it. I freeze. "Up rope!" I yell to Dave. "You're cool," he yells back. I cling to the rock while he takes the slack out of it. I feel safe again knowing that I won't fall at least ten feet toward the canyon floor before the rope catches me. I get back into my Zen mind state and continue climbing.

I must have twenty pounds of gear on my back not including the extra 300 foot rope dangling below me. The gear hanging off my shoulder harness keeps getting in the way of bringing my legs up. It even gets wedged into the crack. I don't notice until I make the next move and am suddenly stopped by the gear stuck in the rock. I have to climb back down, get it unstuck, and continue climbing.

I make it to the next belay station, my hands shaking and my nerves rattled. I hand Dave my daisy chain so he can clip me to the anchor. I lay back, resting on the anchor, glad to have something solid holding me to the cliff and glad to be alive and done with the first free pitch. Dave knows this is my first big wall and sees the state I'm in. He asks if I'm doing all right and I tell him that I'm nervous, but I can make it to the top. I pass up the opportunity to lead the next pitch, content with belaying once again. He rearranges all the gear and takes only what he will need for the next pitch.

After Dave has started climbing and has his first few pieces in place, I look down at the shuttles carrying the hordes of people in and out of the park. Most of the drivers make this a routine stop, pointing out the climbers to their passengers and then moving on. I see tourists taking pictures of us, so I take a picture of them. We won't be able to make each other out in the photos but at least I will have a good shot of the shuttle. Sporting a huge cheesy smile, I snap a self-portrait with Angel's Landing in the background. I take another of the streaming shadows created by me and the dangling ropes and gear. That will be a good one to show off to my friends. "Are you watching me?" Dave yells. "I've got you tied off, just snappin' a few photos." "Watch it." "I'm watching you, keep climbing."

I feel the park is much more enjoyable now that the shuttle system has been incorporated. Instead of hearing a constant drone of private vehicles, I hear only one shuttle about every fifteen minutes. Before the shuttle system was in place, there was no place to park, no room on the road to walk or ride a bike,

and road raged tourists trying to see the world out of a car window. And to top it off, the beefed up rusty pickup truck spewed rich exhaust fumes from the missing part of its muffler. Canyon over-lookers could hear the monstrosity from atop Observation Point 3,000 feet above the canyon floor.

Climbing throughout the day, pitch after pitch, we work our way through the last little section. This part of the climb is crazy. Inside a set of dihedral rocks I can no longer see all the way to the canyon floor. I squeeze my body through, under, and around the maze of crumbly eroding sandstone. I climb out of the conglomerate and onto the top of Touchstone. Yes, I've made it!

We spend some quality time at the summit, basking in our accomplishment. I admire my surroundings: the Ponderosa Pine and the vanilla smell emanating its bark; the feeling of being above it all; the view of Angel's Landing and the West Temple. "Yeah!" I contemplate the life the Ponderosa has lived up here, far away from humans and among the hardy desert plants and the lizards who dare brave these enormous cliffs. I think about the Russian badass, Ron Olevsky, who first ascended this spire, unknowing of what lay ahead or if it was even scalable. I try to imagine how he must have felt when he reached the top and how he came up with the name Touchstone.

"It's all down hill from here," Dave says to me. "Damn, don't say that. You're going to hex us or something." He phrases one of his lines, "Cool and confident," as he rappels off the edge and back down towards flat land. When he is safely tied off to the anchor below, he yells "Off rope!" I set up my rappel device and enjoy my last moment in this spot that sees so little human interaction and that I worked so hard to get to.

It doesn't take long until we are back on the desert floor standing at the base of the cliff. We coil up our ropes and sort our gear between the two of us. Never have I felt this awkward standing on flat ground. After living in a vertical world all day, I have grown accustomed to not having a flat surface to stand on. I have to walk around to regain my balance and get used to striding instead of climbing.

I thank Dave for taking me on such an incredible climb. "Would you do it again?" he asks. "Hell yeah, I would!"

Like a cheesy movie we solemnly drive off into the sunset. We leave the park and all its wonders. We drive past the park entrance. What constitutes the park boundary? Is there something special two feet on one side of the line that's not on the other? It's an arbitrary matter, not worth much thought really. What does it all mean? It doesn't matter. As we make it further out onto the highway, I contemplate how many valuable things I have learned and experienced in this area. I rescued my brother out of a ravine over there to our left on Gooseberry Mesa. As we pass Monkey Fling Mesa (named so for the test monkeys thrown off the mesa by ejection seats), I remember spending my sixteenth birthday up there around a campfire with good friends, good wine, and good scenery.

Will I continue to create such fond memories here? Are there still more experiences to be had and more to explore? Or have I already had my best times and explored the best canyons? Is it all down hill from here? No way. I don't believe all that downhill talk. It can only get better from here, my friend.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner: Harmony Hesley, "Scientific Mud"

After registering for the 2010 English class, it became apparent to me that I did not know English as well as I thought. I would think that with thirteen years of English, I would be able to comprehend the title "Science and Values." After the first day in class, I screamed to myself, "I'm doomed!" Science and I mix as well as oil and water. I have been studying construction management, and it seems science rarely comes up. If science does appear in class, it is easy enough that I can understand it. After putting more thought into it, I have found that science is and always has been in every part of my life. By no means is science as I use it complicated. The science applied in my daily life is simple. Unknowingly, I have been using scientific methodology to learn important lessons in my life. For example, I know water and dirt make mud when combined, or so I thought mud turned out to be quite complicated. What I thought was simple fun, turned out to be a complex experiment.

Over the years, I have conducted various experiments with mud without knowing I was using scientific methodology. As a teenager, I spent many summer months working in my Grandma's garden. Grandma planted corn, squash, soybeans, and other vegetables in what was to become my own little experiment in agricultural engineering. I wanted to reduce the time it took to weed that garden. It seemed that every possible type of weed known and unknown to humanity grew in that garden. In the sweltering heat, I would go out into the garden, pick a row, and pull every weed. I noticed that sometimes the weeds would practically slide out of the ground. Others would break at the dirt. The ones that broke at the surface made the process twice as long, because I had to dig deeper into the ground to remove the root completely. After working a couple summers, I finally determined two reasons why some weeds came out easier than others did. Reason One: Weeds have one of two different kinds of roots, a single main root that grows straight, or roots that branch out and spread wild. Reason Two: The amount of water in the ground was the primary factor for the root coming out easily or not. After watering, it was much easier to pull the weeds. Taking advantage of this enormous discovery, I would always weed the garden right after watering. After a few more trials, I realized that water was not the only factor. Another factor was how much water was in the ground. In order to get the perfect mud consistency for pulling the weeds, I needed to either use as much as possible, or barely enough. Too much water resulted in a puddle. If I did not use enough water, then the sun's heat would quickly evaporate it.

Mud has to be just right in order to pull weeds. Not only does mud have to be the right consistency it also has to be just right for many other activities.

At one time or another, almost everybody has participated in a raucous "mud fight." I have had a few mud fights myself, and from experimenting with mud, I know that too wet of mud is like throwing soup. If it is too dry, it breaks and falls apart in my hand. Mud of the proper wetness is ideal when I can press it into a shape of a ball. If it keeps the ball shape, long enough that I can throw it at my sister, it is a good consistency. And if it sticks onto the back of her shirt, it is a perfect consistency. Through my sister's sacrifice, I discovered how much I use science in daily life.

A couple months ago, it rained quite hard, and I decided it was a perfect opportunity to go "mudding." Mudding consists of taking a four-wheel drive vehicle and bulldozing through large mud puddles. Few activities are more exciting than looking out of a clear window for the purpose of watching Southern

Utah red mud splashing all over the car. In my experiences, I have discovered mud needs to be the ideal consistency to be enjoyable.

For example, one day I was particularly daring and experimental so I took my 1987 Land Cruiser out after it had rained. Driving on a slick road for some time, I came upon a large pond-sized puddle. It should have been obvious that a puddle large enough to look as big as a lake should not be driven through, but I succumbed to peer pressure and soon found myself stuck in the wrong kind of mud. It was sticky enough that it enveloped my tires.

Rocking back and forth, I finally gave up. I sat for a moment in the seat clutching the steering wheel. I contemplated the consistency of the mud and realized that obviously there was too much water. It did not occur to me from my previous experiments I should have known this was going to happen. There was too much water and not enough dirt. I had just driven into mud soup! Realizing the mistake, I was quite upset with myself. I thought I knew mud well, but I obviously did not. Luckily, two girls, who were also experimenting with the mud in a dune buggy and an enormous diesel truck, witnessed it all. They noticed my big problem, analyzed the situation for a while, then pulled their vehicle over. She then got out, waded to my Land Cruiser and tied a rope to the front bumper. Then she went back to the truck started the engine. The truck gave its best effort but the rope did not. The only movement was the sudden snap of her rope. Not only did we have a broken rope, but now we had two short ropes, which meant she would have to move her car closer to mine, moving her even closer to the extremely wet, deep mud. Again, she tied the rope, doubling it, and pulled. We still did not move. We actually moved a step back in the process. The diesel's wheels were now spinning and throwing too wet mud everywhere. "Too much water," I thought again, sighing. "Something like mud is simple, why did it have so many complicating factors?"

Suddenly, I remembered my rope in the back of my car, pulled it out, rolled up my pant legs, and jumped into the depths of the mud. When finally hitting the bottom of the water, I realized what a fool I was. I was standing in a couple feet of water plus at least 6 inches of mud. You would think this was the end of my "experiment," but it was not. This was not ideal for my mudding escapade. Luckily, my rope was much longer than hers, allowing her dune buggy to be in shallower mud. After a couple tugs and pulls, she finally was able to pull my Land Cruiser free. Wasting no time, I geared up the Cruiser and headed towards the road.

I started driving out only to find myself sliding down the side of the hill. From afar, the mud looked solid, but looks can be deceiving. Once again, I hit too mud that was too wet, but this time instead of my driving through it, it was doing the driving for me. The next few seconds were terrifying! Gravity also wanted to be part of the experiment. Fortunately, gravity released its hold just in time and my car came to a stop. I was able to drive safely out to the road, while silently vowing never to go in a puddle unless I walked through them first.

Now some might not think of my experiences with mud as science. I gathered empirical data through scientific experimentation, used trial and error, and found that mud should be the right consistency to bring happy results. I also learned that wide mud tires distribute the weight more efficiently. I never thought that mud would have had so many complicated factors. Too much and too little of water played a big part. My simple experiences with mud were fun, and sometimes frightening. However, they were all scientific.