



# THE SCRIBLERIAN

2009 Fall Edition

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 an essay competition organized by Writing Center tutors for ENGL 1010 and 2010 students. The Fall 2009 Contest was planned and supervised by Chair Samantha Gay with the help of Annalee Banks, Lauren Coleman, Adell DeGraffenried, Landon Mitchell, and Amanda Utzman.

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## Argumentative- English 1010

1st Place Winner: Eric Smith, "The Fickleness of Justice in Dicken's *Little Dorrit*"

For Dr. Kurt Harris

Dennis Wholey writes, "Expecting the world to treat you fairly because you are a good person is a little like expecting a bull not to attack you because you are a vegetarian" (par 2). Justice, or rather a karmatic sense of justice, can't necessarily be controlled by our actions but they do influence how justice reacts. Sometimes justice acts to protect the oppressed, sometimes it attacks the fraudulent, and sometimes it shows indifference to people. For the most part, justice will seek out those who are in the wrong and those who are being exploited, and it will do its best to bring about reform; however, in some cases, justice does not step in at all. Justice is versatile, it changes over time; complete fairness cannot be entirely achieved for every human being. This is evident in Charles Dickens's *Little Dorrit*. The world Dickens creates is not a society where things happen coincidentally, but one where justice permeates throughout all the characters' lives. Although, to some of the characters' heartache, justice remains ambivalent, in other cases, justice has to intervene in the written community that is set up. It tears down the foundations of the psyche and the accomplishments of some, yet remains ambiguous to many other people's suffering. To the very lucky few, it gives wealth. In the novel, the lives that represent the effects of justice most are Mrs. Clennam, young John Chivery, and Amy Dorrit.

When looking into the gloomy existence of Mrs. Clennam, the effects of her actions are illustrated by the description that Dickens uses: "worn-out," "maimed," and "cripple[d];" she says of herself, "I have lost the use of my limbs...I know nothing of summer and winter, shut up here" (73-74). These phrases suggest her body is decrepit and dying, but if we look into her actions and how she treats other human beings (for example the controlling nature she uses over Jeremiah Flintwich or the cold manner in which she treats her supposed son, Arthur Clennam), the question becomes: is it old age or her heart that has caused this crippling? Is this justice being manifested? While old age may play a part in this wearing of the body, it seems that the greatest strain on Mrs. Clennam is from her conscience. Justice is entangling her in her own guilt and forcing a physical retribution upon her. She stays in her house for over twenty years to cover up the sin of her husband as well as her own sin. She cannot fully bear the fact that Arthur Clennam is not her son due to the "affairs" of her husband, making the transgression more potent to the religiously zealous woman. Her own sin of keeping Amy Dorrit and her family from receiving the inheritance that they rightfully deserve wears on her conscience. The guilt of her transgression pushes her to suppress the truth and also motivates her decision to hide in her house. This remorse is accentuated by her noticeable lack of hygiene described in *Little Dorrit*: "There was a smell of black dye in the airless room, which the fire had been drawing out of the crape and stuff of the widow's dress for fifteen months" (73). She not only starts to deteriorate in her home but starts to settle into her isolation. This is justice playing upon the mind of Mrs. Clennam to cause angst over these offenses. After all, how many people in the world wear the same clothes for fifteen months and stay in the same relative place for years on end?

However, this habitation is soon ruined upon the arrival of Arthur Clennam and Amy Dorrit. The constant reminder of the sin of Mr. Clennam begins to occur when Arthur comes back into Mrs. Clennam's life. She also hires Amy as a seamstress, which reminds her of her own wrongdoing of

keeping the Dorrit inheritance concealed. The increased companionship of both Arthur and Amy with Mrs. Clennam starts Mrs. Clennam's downfall. She is soon overcome with the grief of her transgression and the thought that justice will finally catch up to her. The events escalate to allow her a final redemption—she tells Amy the sins which she has kept hidden, but the demands of justice still require her absolute downfall: In one swift instant the old house was before them...another thundering sound, and it heaved, surged outward, opened asunder in fifty places, collapsed, and fell...there, Mrs. Clennam dropped upon the stones; and she never from that hour moved so much as a finger again, or had the power to speak one word. (827)

Mrs. Clennam's payment is not only her mortal body but also everything that she has worked for and tried to build; her house, which was old like herself, collapses and ruins everything that she put value in. Mrs. Clennam is dealt her demise by the hand of justice, even though she shows penance.

In contrast to Mrs. Clennam, in the life of young John Chivery, there seems to be a lack of fairness. He is always dealt the short stick, even in appearance: "Young John was small of stature, with rather weak legs...One of his eyes (perhaps the eye that used to peep through the keyhole) was also weak" (229). John starts off with an imperfect, malformed body. His appearance probably also affects how he interacts with his fellow man and most likely inspires his desire to stay within the boundaries of the Marshalsea Debtor's Prison. He fits in perfectly with the bunch of misfits in the prison and no one criticizes him. The prevalence of the Marshalsea overshadows young John Chivery, and it seems that his fate is the same as that of the place which surrounds him: a life full of disappointment. No matter how hard he works or whatever he does, he remains in the Marshalsea; he remains in his own personal prison. Even though he is from the jailer family and even though he is able to go in and out of town, the Marshalsea Prison consumes his happiness and his opportunity to grow. By the place in which he lives, he is locked in just like another prisoner.

However, John does have a glimmer of hope for happiness: Amy Dorrit. Glyn Hughes, the British novelist, describes John's feelings by stating: "young John waited upon him [William Dorrit]; and it was young John who explained that he did this not on the ground of the prisoner's merits, but because of the merits of another, of one who loved the prisoner [Amy]" (par 94). Amy gives John hope for a decent life, and in return, he desires Amy as a bride. This is his only chance to escape the dreary life of the Marshalsea. Unfortunately, Amy does not feel that kind of love for him, which crushes his dreams and all the aspirations he has had. This locks him in as a self-imprisoned inhabitant of the birdcage which he is in charge of. Justice does not step into John Chivery's life; it does not reward him, nor does it punish him. It simply ignores him. But why would justice leave him to his isolation? Is it that John is being punished for something? Or is it merely that this karmatic justice does not care about him? Young John Chivery's life is filled with inequality and hardships. He needs an intercessory hand, and he gets nothing. He gets passed over again and again. His misfortune increases as the novel goes on. His suffering does not awaken the hand of justice. It may see John's hard luck, but justice does not deem his trials worthy of intervention. After all, John is not at the bottom of the economic chain. He has an occupation. He has a future, however dim it may be. John's trials affect his subconscious; justice cannot rescue John from his own mind. John is plagued with physical and emotional ailments and not economic burdens or moral wrongs. Justice passes over the life of John, deciding that benefitting him would be unnecessary.

Though justice may be cruel or ignore those in need of it, sometimes the system of justice has an extremely beneficial effect. This is seen in the life of Amy Dorrit. At the beginning of *Little Dorrit*, Amy is

at the bottom of the social hierarchy, living in the Marshalsea Prison, but by the end of the novel she is extremely affluent and is able to find true love. How can such a dramatic change come about? One answer is the honesty and integrity of an honorable man. The change in Amy's life begins with the righteous intentions of Arthur Clennam. He aims to help the Dorrit family out of their current destitution by trying to rectify the deeds done by his mother in concealing the acknowledgment of the Dorrit fortune. Due to Arthur's help, the cruel fates that are placed on Amy Dorrit begin to change for the better. However, the amends made to the Dorrits are not always clear, as stated by Amy after she learns the secret sin of Mrs. Clennam: "'My mind is so hurried, and so sorry, and has so much to pity that it has not been able to follow all I have read'" (823). This revelation only happens after the guilt of Mrs. Clennam reaches an overbearing level, causing her to confess not only her sin, but her husband's as well, to Amy. Justice allows Amy to learn the truth, which had kept her in the dark and kept her from receiving an ample life.

Amy is finally allowed to fully enjoy all the aspects of life and to be free from the effect of the Marshalsea Prison. She was given the ultimate satisfaction of justice: true love. The most endearing example of this is the dialogue between Arthur and Amy, "'Does the charm want any words to be said?' asked Arthur... 'You can say (if you don't mind) I love you!' answered Little Dorrit" (857). Amy Dorrit is allowed not only to have justice in gaining her state of affluence and to be free from the emotional burden of the Marshalsea, but she is able to find love. Justice smiles on the fate of Amy Dorrit. Justice plays many roles in life. It sometimes entangles people in their own sins, or oftentimes it shows indifference. However, justice can also turn the misfortunes of some into blessings. In Charles Dickens's *Little Dorrit*, a world is created where the spectrum of justice is visible. There are many examples of the fickleness of justice, where it likes to intervene only in its favorite characters' lives. At times, it crashes down; sometimes it disregards. The essence of justice plays differently for every character in *Little Dorrit*. Mrs. Clennam appears to have it all working out, and then due to her transgressions, her prosperity is torn down right in front of her. Young John Chivery is dealt out hard luck and receives nothing. Amy Dorrit rises from the bottom class of London to the top of the social hierarchy. Justice is fickle in the novel. The characters are forced to play its charades and hope that it acts in their benefit.

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2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner: Alexane Gerard, "White Square in my Mind"

Withheld by student's request

## Expressive- English 1010

1<sup>st</sup> Place Winner: Joy Hardin, "Grandma's Love"

For Professor Ed McNicoll

It was Christmas Eve day. Our car was zooming down I-15. The top was piled high with presents. The back was crammed with suitcases and bags. We were going home for the holidays. The only sound in the car was The Grinch playing on our portable DVD player. With my husband, Chad, concentrating on the holiday traffic, and the kids engrossed in their movie, my mind was free to wander—to wander back to a time in my life when I was younger, back to my grandma. A tear slid down my cheek as I reflected back on my grandma and the love that left such an imprint on my life and has continued to touch the lives of my children. I was eight and in trouble again. Tears were leaking out of my eyes. I knew Grandma would take away the pain. The sight of her kind face, just a little above my own, softened with age and wrinkles, always made me feel better. I snuck up Grandma's rickety, wrought-iron steps and rapped on her door. Opening the door, she took one look at me and exclaimed, "Just who I wanted to see. I have been wanting to play a game of Yahtzee but I had no one to play with." She reached into her coat closet and pulled out a game of Yahtzee. The rattle of the dice soon drowned out all of my troubles. I never did get around to mentioning what had happened. Later that evening, Grandma came over to our house for dinner. When she arrived, she smiled hello. Two gaps in her bottom front teeth showed me that she had once again forgotten to put in her fake teeth. They were tucked away in her bra—"to keep them safe," she had once whispered to me.

"Time to eat," Mom hollered from the dining room. There was a stampede to the table. When we were all gathered around the table a hush spread across the room preparatory for the blessing. Grandma reached into her shirt and pulled out those teeth. My mom hid her face in embarrassment, as the room erupted in gales of laughter. To us children, it was totally cool that grandma would be so brazen.

I chuckled, drawing Chad's attention away from the road.

"What?" he asked me.

"Nothing," I replied. "Just some old memories."

"Are you okay?"

"Fine." I said. A smile crept across my face. "It's good to remember."

"Okay." With that, Chad's focus went back to the road and mine went back to my memories.

I was in the bathtub at Grandma's. My sister, Bonnie, and I had been invited for a sleep over. Grandma insisted that we take a bath before going to bed. Grandma's long fingernails dug into my scalp as she scrubbed my head good and clean. After rinsing out all the soap, Grandma handed me a washcloth to protect my eyes as she poured apple-cider vinegar over my hair. It was a sure cure for getting all the impurities and buildup out of my hair and to strip it clean. The odor seeped through the rag, stung my eyes and burned my nostrils. After Bonnie and I had both been bathed, we climbed into her hide-a-bed, anticipating what was to come. Sitting in her oversized plush, chair, Grandma began. "One day, Brer Fox and Brer Bear wuz sittin' 'round in de woods, talkin'." Sitting up, we listened; there could be no lying down to listen to the shenanigans of Brer Rabbit. No sir, we soaked it all in sitting up; we didn't want to miss a thing.

"Just one more," we cried out when she finished the story. After a few more stories, Grandma finally had had enough. With a kiss on the head, she told us goodnight, then turned out the lights. Grandma's snores soon rattled the whole house. Tossing and turning, we tried to get some sleep. Finally Bonnie could take no more. "Grandma, you're snoring too loud," Bonnie hollered. Grunting and snorting, she rolled over. Silence reigned just long enough for us to fall asleep. "Mom, I'm hungry." My daughter Michaela's complaint snapped me back to the present. We had been on the road for two hours and The Grinch's credits were playing. I searched around in the goodie-bag for a sandwich. Once she was satisfied, I went back to gazing out the window. My mind went back to a dinner. It was a different dinner than last time.

We had been invited to eat over to Grandma's. Her specialty was minestrone soup with salad. Not just any salad, but salad with shaved carrots in torn up lettuce. Not the bitter iceberg kind, but the sweet, green, leafy lettuce, topped with sliced tomatoes and green onions. Gingerbread cake with lemon pudding and ice cream always completed the ensemble. Grandma invited us over once a month to have her special dinner. I hurried over after school to help her make the cake. She pulled down her yellow ceramic mixing bowl—the one she got on her wedding day. It had leaves painted on the outside in golds and browns. The bowl had seen better days. It had a crack going down the center and chips on the rim. It was resilient though; it never leaked. I helped her beat in the eggs and scrape down the sides. The reward came at the end when I was able to lick the bowl clean. Mmmmm. Nothing could be better.

I glanced back to check on the children. All was quiet. I gazed around, recognizing the cheese factory as we passed through Beaver. Grandma and I had passed the cheese factory many times on trips back and forth from Cedar to Logan to visit her daughter, Aunt Joyce. Grandma was a notoriously bad driver; at times she would fall asleep at the wheel. At one point she turned up the off ramp when she was entering the freeway. Ever since then, I had become her designated driver. Grandma and I were singing along with Doris Day as I drove us up I-15 on another visit to Aunt Joyce, "Que Ser, Ser. Whatever will be, will be. The future's not ours to see. Que Ser, Ser. What will be, will be," we belted out. The song switched and Grandma began singing, "Everybody loves a lover." She couldn't sing worth a lick, but what she lacked in talent she sure made up for in enthusiasm. I joined in with her, "I'm a lover—Everybody loves me."

The car slowed down, and I recognize the SunShine truck stop in Summit. We were almost there; the trip had blurred by. "Wow. We're already here?" I murmured. It seemed like just a second ago it was this morning and I was eagerly packing our bags in anticipation of going home for Christmas. I was in the back bedroom; suitcases were sprawled everywhere. There were clothes strung half in and half out of bags; toiletry items were piled high on our pillows. The kid's gleaming presents were waiting patiently in the corner. I was happily singing carols as I tried to organize all the chaos. Our goal was to be on the road by eleven o'clock. It was still early when the phone rang. I answered it with a chipper "Merry Christmas." On the other end there was a somber reply, "Joy. It's Shanna. Grandma passed away last night."

No, no, no, my mind screamed. It can't be. Not today. I was going to be down there that afternoon. I was going to hold her small frame in my arms again. She couldn't be gone. I couldn't have missed her by a couple of hours. But I had. She was gone. I searched out my husband and bawled in his arms, releasing some of the pain, anger, and sorrow that had erupted inside. Instead of going home to Christmas, we were going home to Grandma's funeral.

Nearly eight years have passed since that memorable Christmas. Life goes on. As I walk through my home, a few objects catch my eye: adorning my counter is a yellow ceramic bowl, with leaves painted on the outside in golds and browns. A crack runs down its center and there are chips on the rim. A Doris Day movie rests in my DVD stand. A game of Yahtzee sits on the top shelf of the coat closet. I stop and pause, "Grandma are you here, checking up on us?" Then one of my children runs and grabs an old worn book out of the bottom of the bookshelf.

"Momma, will you read to us?"

I begin, "One day, Brer Fox and Brer Bear wuz sittin'

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner: Tayson Whittaker, "Throwing Partners"

Walking into my dimly lit apartment room, I stumbled as I kicked a pair of small objects. I flipped on the light switch and glanced down to see my track and field throwing shoes blocking the entrance. Moving them from their previous hurried placement, I began to ponder on everything these shoes had gone through. It had been nearly four years since I purchased these beautiful shoes online, and in that time they had seen many different places around the state. Three years of meets, hundreds of practice days, and plenty of time in the closet made me think how rugged they really should look, but upon close inspection, the shoes were well taken care of.

It all started my sophomore year of high school. I joined the track team to hang out with friends, meet girls (since it is the only coed sport), and meet people from other schools. Little did I know I would fall in love with the sport in just a few weeks' time. I started out throwing the discus because after some research with other team mates it seemed like the easiest event to participate in requiring the least amount of work or embarrassment. I began at the bottom of the pack, fighting not to take last place and trying to compare myself to others in my grade so I didn't seem quite so terrible. At this time I had some remarkable throwing friends that taught me a lot of the basics. They were my idols at the time, throwing nearly 125 feet! It wasn't long before I decided a pair of new shiny shoes would help my throwing abilities like it had for them. Glancing over some websites, I ordered and had them delivered to my door in no time. I opened the box and found a beautiful pair of red and white, Nike rotational IV's. They had white laces, two straps and an extremely hard, yet glossy smooth bottom. These babies were my pride and joy for some time. Looking back on it, they really helped my confidence. Even though I wasn't yet the best discus thrower, I looked the part in these new doves.

Soon, I was in the ring testing them out. My first day was a disaster. I tried to throw the discus and spun too much or lost my balance since the soles were much smaller, smoother, and pointier than my other shoes. Lucky for me, I was born with a very strong desire of finishing strong and putting everything I've got into whatever I'm doing. Within a few weeks, I had beaten my best throw by ten feet. The shoes were just what I had needed, and in no time region track was our next meet. By this point, the shoes were broken in and ready for the opportunity to take me to state on a team that was destined for the state title. They did their best, but I fell a foot short of making the squad that would travel to BYU to compete for the title. Heartbroken, I threw them in the closet for a year and watched as the rest of the Richfield team came home with their 1st place trophy.

Next thing I knew, I was pulling my shoes out for the 2008 season. They were slightly dirty from lack of cleaning before storage so I cleaned them up and started to practice harder than ever. Unfortunately for me, I didn't have a coach for the discus or shot put so I battled the opponents alone. My friends had graduated and the coach that would attempt to help had never actually thrown discus and threw shot put one year placing low in the state. Despite how much he wanted to help, he didn't know how or what to do. The one thing I could insure I was doing, however, was putting in more time than any competitor. This was the time in my shoe's life where I wasn't sure how they would hold up to the condition by the end of the year. All in all, I improved more than I could have possibly imagined. From hoping to make state to missing second place by a foot was a good enough improvement for me in a year.

Coming home from the BYU track meet that year, I babied my shoes. They were and still are my pride and joy. I cleaned them thoroughly, then placed them in the closet in a very appropriate manner for a man's closest companion. You might describe this experience like I was tucking in my own baby. With tender care I closed the door for what I thought would be another year.

Mid-July rolled around and the shoes took perhaps their favorite practices ever. I grabbed them and took off to the BYU track camp for a week. It was at this time when my shoes and I became one. For the first time in our companionship, we were being coached by excellent coaches. Our knowledge of form and technique increased dramatically as well as our knowledge in the appropriate weight lifts for throwing. In those four days, I improved more than I usually did in one month of my own practices. This time, instead of putting them in the closet for good, I kept them handy and tried my hardest to practice with them off and on through fall and winter. I wanted nothing but perfection my senior year.

February rolled around and I began to practice daily without the team or coaches. Within no time, I was back to where I left off in the summer. Excited for the season, I pushed myself through an excruciating shoulder injury I had obtained in the football season. Hoping it couldn't stop me for good, I threw very little shot put because of the pressure it put on my injury. By the time the year was wrapping up, I was undefeated in the state of Utah for the event of discus. We were on top of the world. When I had started my sophomore year, I had a goal of throwing 130 feet by my senior year at state. At the time it seemed so hard I didn't dare tell anyone about my lofty goal. My senior year, I never threw below 142 at any meet, which made me feel like my goals had been more than exceeded.

State track finally rolled around in mid-May and I had never been more excited for anything. Not only was I ranked first in my best even of discus, but I had started to practice shot put again and threw a great toss at region to seed me first in that event as well. The pressure was on to perform and before I knew it, I was in the ring ready to throw. I was feeling more tension now than ever in my life. I had been coaching a friend to throw all year and the day before we came to the meet, he started to throw exceptionally well and was actually throwing a little farther than my throws for that particular day! If I had a bad day and he had a good day he could possibly beat me. I took my first throw and the numbers came up on the screen 148. A huge burden was lifted off my chest. I knew it would be an amazing day if any of my competitors could break 145 because no one in my division had done it this year except me. Watching my two closest competitors throw, I breathed with relief. Neither looked to be having an awesome day and I could tell the pressure was getting to them. My next throw I exploded. Feeling my shoes slip with force and my lungs let out a yell, I watched as my discus went farther than it had ever before. Excited, I stepped from the ring and waited for the numbers to be put up on the screen for all to see. Soon 159 came up on the screen. I had done it. I had beaten the 1A-5A marks! I had just secured my spot on the Western Conference National Utah team! I was in a dream state. I sat down and took off my shoes with shaking hands. We had done it. My shoes and I had set out with an immense goal and completed it.

The next day I laced them up for the last time as a high school student and won the shot put in them. Standing on the podium getting my medals, they announced that I had received the award of male outstanding field athlete of the meet for 1A-2A category. Later that day, the shoes took their last lap of the year, pounding along with all the other shoes from Richfield High School as we took our victory lap and claimed our state title.

## Argumentative- English 2010

1<sup>st</sup> Place Winner: Jordan Gullo, "Watching Values Face"

For Dr. Bryce Christensen

Stumbling into my home after an eventful day at work, I called out, "Hello family! I'm finally home!" Silence answered me. I continued around the corner into the front room to witness a scene far too often repeated. My little brother was sprawled out on the love seat, while his unwanted clothes and unopened books lay spread around him. My mom sat on the outer edge of the couch as if she were getting ready to stand, only to take newly washed shorts from the laundry pile, habitually fold them, and place them in the empty space behind her. My father reclined his lazy-boy chair, bag of pretzels in hand, and sighed with contentment. The lights were dim, and all their eyes were locked onto the latest Survivor episode displaying on our 50-inch plasma screen TV. The sound of my entrance to the room released them from their unified trance. My mom touched the pause button on the DVR, and finally welcomed me home. Interrupting my summary of the day, my brother snapped, "Come on sissy, we're trying to see who gets voted off!" Grinning with part of his last pretzel still rolling around in his mouth, my dad mumbled, "Yeah..." I rolled my eyes, and my mom tried to sympathize by telling me we would talk after the show concluded, before clarifying, "Oh, and after CSI." The television had won my families attention. The technology of television is useful and generally entertaining. Despite this, without rationed or proper use, traditional family values are being compromised by television consumption. Some of the consequences of excessive TV viewing include decreased family time, diminished parental influence, damage to the nuclear family structure, and a lack of needed communication.

Philo Farnsworth invented the television. The idea for it stemmed from the science fiction accounts that chose rotating mirrors that just were not fast enough to catch valid lighting for a moving image. Over months of pondering, Philo hypothesized that if he were to confine light in a jar, and transmit the light in individual lines of electron beams, then he could magnetically deflect the single lines. Together, those lines would produce a picture in motion. His first successful telecast was in 1927 (Landen). Initially it had a limited impact, but the United States and Western Europe were gradually introduced to TV after World War II. Near the end of the 1950's, one or more television channels were available to majority of the countries in the Western Hemisphere. By 1970 almost all households were equipped with at least one television set (Roberts). At present, in an average American household contains 2.24 TV's, and 250 billion hours per year are spent watching them (Herr).

Television undoubtedly has benefits. The world wide coverage of different various events can be brought to living rooms, health care offices, airports, phones, laptops, modes of transportation, and restaurants. There are channels provided specific media addressed to different preferences like history, cartoons, drama, movies, comedy, etc. Much of the output has the capacity educate lives, assuming viewers recognize the value of what they are watching. Telecasts of presidential elections, important emergency newscasts, and other digital meetings can be shown all around the world because of TV. Various other benefits include watching shows about different cultures, instant world and local news, and by enhancing desire to learn more about the world because of what is watched ("Good Things"). TV is good and should be watched, but to be effective it should create some kind of change.

Philo had expected the function of TV would be mostly educational. He envisioned people learning about each other, artistic displays of Shakespeare, and short views of history, all to help people's intellect and enrich lives (Goldstein). Though few in number, there are still channels that give attention to that form of enrichment. However, with changing times the screen has become increasingly filled with violence, sexual content, and negativity in the news. At least one of these have appeared in eighty-four percent of television shows since 2001 ("Television's Impact"). Once Farnsworth realized that the subjects filling the screen were a low percent of what he dreamed, he restricted the television from being viewed within his own household and claimed, "I have created a monster, a way for people to waste a lot of their lives" (Goldstein). While the consequences of his invention are not as severe as other vices such as gambling or cigarettes it has impacted family values. Farnsworth never intended his breakthrough to jeopardize the values of the family.

A traditional, or nuclear, family is defined as a social unit made of parents and the children they raise. Values are the foundation for how the family, specifically the children, learn, grow, and function in the world, and these values are derived and strengthened from the amount of time they spend, or do not spend together (Duffy).

In the most successful families, the amount of time is only as important as the quality of the moments. Time spent "together" in front of a TV can defeat the purpose of being together. A 2007 study found when a group of four to six year olds were asked which they would rather prefer, to either spend time with their fathers or watch TV, over half of the children chose television (Herr). Memories of time as a family can recall laughter, accomplishment, struggle aided by support, and learning. Such growing moments have a far more lasting and greater value than mere entertainment.

Most people claim that there is just not enough time in the day to get everything done, which seems to include a lack of time for their family relations. Though 49 percent of TV owners claim they watch too much TV, the average American parent will spend only 3.5 meaningful minutes of time with their child per day (Herr). Meaningful, in this case, means that parents use the opportunity to reinstate the lessons of growth, answer questions, and listen.

Throughout the length of a typical day, where do the other 836.5 minutes go? For a parent, maybe 420 are sacrificed for work, and a grade-school student a possible 360 minutes are given to a classroom. Work and education time hold a strong priority, but average working adults still watch more than 240 minutes of television a day, totaling 28 hours of TV time a week, or 2 months out of year. As for the student, about 900 hours are spent in school during a typical year, but a usual child will accumulate 1500 hours of TV at the same time (Herr). These figures imply there is always enough time in the day. However, most people fail to realize that on most occasions the time they spend placed in front of a TV is wasteful, unproductive, and potentially damaging to the family.

Also, it is highly unlikely that those 3.5 minutes of parental guidance will have greater impact than what the TV portrays about the world. On average, by the time a child is done with elementary school, he/she will have witnessed 8,000 or more murders on screen. As well, they see over 20,000 30-second commercials a year (Herr).

With violence, sexual propaganda, and materialistic values found in both entertainment and advertisement, one can only hope that children do not believe the fictional world of sitcoms and commercials to be a reality. Additionally, fictional and inaccurate portrayals of parents and children can

have a damaging impact on the real interactions of those who view them. This hope is relevant because television is simply inescapable within our current culture. People tend to depend on TV for everything including news, education, culture, sports, music, and especially entertainment (Media Awareness Network).

I was privileged to interview Dr. Michael Morgan, a communications professor at the University of Massachusetts and an author of many articles on the subject of family values and television. He caught my initial attention by stating in one of his research papers, "...on more than one occasion fictional television has been cited as a major contributory influence to the apparent destruction of the nuclear family" (Morgan, "Television") From this statement in his article, I asked him if he thought that the TV babysitter is influencing the children themselves to act differently. Michael declared, "The more people watch TV, the more they see the real world in the terms that TV portrays it" (Morgan).

Morgan is not the only person to believe this. In 2007 there were over 4,000 studies being done on the effects television has on children, and 79 percent of Americans believed that TV's visuals precipitated real life mayhem (Herr). Researchers have said that due to a constant viewing of violence and other improper acts, children can have an increased fear of the real world, be numb to the results of violent acts, and have indeed intensified aggressive behavior ("Television's Impact"). Proper parental influence is needed because of the power of visual interpretation.

As standards for entertainment have changed we can not ignore the historical change in TV families and standards. There are distinct differences in the portrayal of the family in the past compared to the acceptable family of today. These differences, or deviances, have affected family structure.

Sociology teaches that deviance refers to behaviors or attitudes against cultures norms. The deviance in TV families started after the 1950's. Social movements such as the Gay Women Movement, or the National Organization for women filled the media throughout the 60's and 70's. This gave the world new views on individualistic women, and led to acceptance of the gay community. All of these changes in society gave entertainment stations new stories to tell ("Deviance").

Television networks kept up with the times by changing the structure away from 1950's fictional but idealized families, like the Cleaver family in *Leave it to Beaver*. This family was nuclear and heterosexual. Also, they demonstrated traditional gender roles, where the man was the sole provider and woman was the homemaker. In the post-war era, most people aspired to have this type of family. Slowly, more diverse structures of the family were represented on TV as a result of the changes in society ("Deviance").

One particular series, *Sex and the City*, depicts the lives of four educated women. Their lives are focused on struggles with men, and the deviant nature comes from being single, and over thirty years old. Rising in number since 1996, single parent homes make up forty four percent of American households, and thirty three percent of births were to unmarried moms ("Deviance"). Even Dr. Morgan found throughout his research, "television viewing had a significant negative effect on so-called 'traditional family values' regarding single-parenthood" (Morgan). These new family structures were more widely accepted because of movements within society being shown fictionally on TV, but in no way is it the main cause for why parents choose or do not choose single parenthood. This is supported by another thought of Dr. Morgan, "The single-parent family fits TV's need for 'interesting' dramatic contexts/formats, and this ends up normalizing non-traditional families. On one hand, that's a good thing. But as we argue, the

single-parent family of TV is not the single-parent family of reality, and this may be damaging to actual people" (Morgan). Probably one of the most important family values affected by television is communication. While paying attention to the screen, the process of conveying messages and creating a shared understanding cannot be done. In the same interview with Dr. Morgan, I asked him if he believed that television impedes the communication of the family, which is specifically related to his research. He responded:

[Because] the vast majority of time family members spent together was with television... Most family communication revolved around television. Even if they weren't explicitly talking, television was the context within which most family communication took place...But now, there is less and less co-viewing, with family members all watching in their separate rooms. This impedes family communication...but it also reduces the amount of conflict there used to be over television. Television is now more of a symptom of a lack of family communication. In the old days, television was the main thing they talked about; now it's not clear that they talk at all. (Morgan)

I found this important because Morgan has highlighted how communication has decreased because of the access to multiple televisions. Within my own home, there are seven TV's for a family of four. Sometimes my family and I can be home at the same time, and not know it.

Addictions like alcohol and drugs have long been known to cause damage to families. TV can also be addictive. "Millions of Americans are so hooked on television that they fit the criteria for substance abuse as defined in the official psychiatric manual," according to Rutgers University psychologist, and TV-Free America board member Robert Kubey. Like all addictions, it is necessary to recognize when there is one present. The fact that TV can be classified as a substance abuse based on the five dependency signs, should be a warning that there is a limit (Herr).

Like others affected by family members being hooked to TV, I lived with an addict. My mom does not recognize her limit. Those five dependency signs are evident within her lifestyle. For example, she tends to use the TV as a sedative, to get away from the real world. Often she will lose self-control and not realize how much time she spends in front of the TV, resulting in an angry outlook for letting herself. Yet, nothing stops her from watching all of her shows every week. Without her fill, she feels unhappy or stressed. Stats do show that at least forty nine percent of Americans know they watch too much, yet the numbers have not decreased (Herr). Whenever my mother was glued to the TV, I felt distant from her. Others in the same position understand how hard it can be to express feelings to someone who lives in their own reality show.

There are more long-term benefits outside of the television world. Families need to be engaged socially together, and with others, in order to use and harvest the values to make them a better person. Such things as outside activities, board games, discussions, road-trips, service projects, and family dinner can help strengthen time together without the TV.

In conclusion, there are positive and useful things that come from the television. However, excessive TV can diminish some of the important values like needed family time, parental influence, nuclear family structure, and communication. To get the best out of these values, moderation of TV is needed. In no way is it necessary to tear away the very foundation of traditional family values.

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2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner: Jeremy Christiansen, "Environmental Science and the Green Revolution"  
For Dr. Bryce Christensen

As Americans come to the close of the first decade of the new millennium, many have jumped on a bandwagon headed for the Emerald City. Five years ago if one had said, "I'm going green," those around may have wanted to help the poor person to the bathroom. While even only a few years earlier than that, those who were environmentally conscious and paid any attention to scientific research regarding our eco-systems seemed to either be the scientists themselves or hale only from the northwest, wear Birkenstocks, and eat amazing quantities of granola. That image has morphed, however, to the clean-cut twenty-something-year-old that wears Gap and drives a Toyota hybrid. It seems that suddenly everyone has become environmentally aware. You cannot not open a major newspaper nor turn on the television for an hour without seeing that every company suddenly is conscious of its "footprint" and wants you to know about it. To any observer of our culture it must be obvious that recycling, energy conservation, and other environmentally friendly practices have in recent years come out of the subculture category and have begun to dominate the main stream. Although these trends may, at the moment, be only shallow attempts at an effective application of the science, the impact of years of environmental research is at last beginning to strike a chord with the average Joe.

Mankind has always had some interest in its environment, for its members must live in it each and every day for the duration of their lives. Although many events took place previously in the evolution of the environmental sciences and their postulates, one that is of heightened importance to us is the birth of the theory of global warming, this being one of the most influential theories in environmental science. In the first half of the 19th century French mathematician Jean Baptiste Joseph Fourier made certain calculations which showed that the earth's temperature was increasing (Global Warming Newspaper Archive). He had argued that the earth's own atmosphere was trapping the sun's radiation and reflecting it back towards the earth, thus increasing its temperature. Scientists later on in that same time period coined the phrase the "green house effect." While this theory held for a number of years, many scientists later decided on a different theory that attributed climate change to the earth's orbital patterns. It merits attention that the theory itself while certainly impacting the scientific community, did not appear to reach the average Joe nor affect his life nor his habits at that time. Famous authors like Whitman and Thoreau, worried about the social effects of the industrialization of America and by some are considered precursors to environmentalism (Taylor). Their writings certainly had an effect in their time; however, they did not seem to sway the mainstream of America to all go live in the forest.

Flash forward to the 1960's and 70's and we see a tidal wave of legislation and lawmaking in defense of the environment. Activists and politicians alike began implementing laws and regulations that were based on scientific research about the green house effect, pollution, and other areas of environmental science in a way that would impact every day citizens (Zanetti). Businesses now had to meet certain regulations in order to carry out their practices. There appears to have been a chasm between big businesses and environmental science (the latter seemingly stifling the prior). That chasm may have kept the mainstream from fully accepting environmental science and its implications. During the seventies and eighties Americans saw the emergence of subcultures that strived for a harmony between human life and our planet. Groups like Greenpeace, however, often conjure up images of bearded agitators cutting through the billowing waves yelling at tanker ships or whalers: not exactly what mainstream America wants to do. In the 1998 blockbuster Armageddon, the sea fairing scientists/activists are seen protesting against off shore oil rigs as Bruce Willis drives golf balls off his rig at their boat and mocks

them: A very symbolic scene representative of the cultural canyon between Big Business and the Mainstream on the one side, and implementation of environmental science on the other.

Throughout the late nineties into the new millennium our nation hit a peak of non-eco friendly behavior. The influence of the sport utility vehicle later known as the SUV swept through the soccer mom community like wild fire. America played environmental rebel in 2001 when President George W. Bush refused to sign the Kyoto Protocol on global climate change and our nation became the only nation to oppose the agreement. It looked as though mainstream America really didn't care much about conservation, the theories about pollution, and global warming. After the events of September 11th, however, Americans saw abrupt changes in their economy which eventually caused them to reevaluate. One of the changes that hit home the most was soaring gasoline prices. Jeremy Peters, journalist for the New York Times, put it well when he said that "since 2004, when the number of light truck sales, which include pickup trucks and S.U.V.'s, peaked at 55.7 percent of vehicle sales in the United States, the American love affair with large vehicles has cooled" (Peters). While Peters was correct that it had cooled, it has now frozen over. The application of environmental science was poised to swoop in and heal the wounds of post-lavish-living America. The hybrid car, for example, became a sought after commodity rather than an oddity in the automobile industry. The SUV evolved into "the crossover" and the mommy-driven monster trucks of yesteryear have gone the way of the dodo with their drivers and manufacturers now considered irresponsible. According to some America's purchasing habits have begun to shift, and "green" products are on more peoples wish lists than before (Environmental Leader). It may be that Americans' fascination with all things green at this moment is simply a fascination with the green things (money) that they don't have a lot of but can save as they start to use these new green things (products of environmental science) of which they used to make fun. This, however, does not change the fact that we are becoming aware and taking steps (although perhaps small ones) towards fixing some of the problems scientists argue that we have created.

While the true-blue (or should we say green?) died-in-the-wool readers and appliers of environmental research and science may scoff at the mainstream now posing as eco-friendly, they should see it as positive step in the direction that has been wanted since Thoreau decided he didn't like all the smoke stacks and Fourier felt like it was getting hotter. Never in America's history have we been so aware of our impact on the environment nor been so willing to make changes that will lesson that impact. Although most Americans probably don't know what the word "organic" really means or the threat to shellfish caused by the acidification of open oceans by heightened CO2 levels, we have come to grips with the facts that many scientists have been arguing for years: what we do and how we live does in fact affect the planet upon which we do and live and that we may have a more enjoyable future by taking some precautions.

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## Expressive- English 2010

1<sup>st</sup> Place Winner: Gwen Knight, "My Battle with Risk"

For Professor Toa Tawa

I would not describe myself as a risk-taker. I would never jump from an airplane with only a parachute. I am not brave enough. I would feel no sense of exhilaration or freedom as I soared, unfettered, in the great expanse of sky while patiently waiting until just the right moment to pull the rip cord of the chute. Instead, I would be tense with worry that the chute would malfunction, refuse to open, and I would plunge to an untimely death. I am not a gambler, either. I would not find enjoyment in rolling dice for hours in a smoke-filled casino in Las Vegas or betting on the ponies. The thrill of winning would not be my focus. My thoughts would be centered on losing my grocery money. Despite my long and stable history of avoiding risk, I abandoned the security of fourteen years of tenure in my government job as a Court Clerk; seduced by my desire to find increased happiness and self-fulfillment. This resulted in a battle where I gambled with who I had become to discover who I could possibly be.

I did not start this conflict intentionally. It began quite innocently and arose from necessity. I decided to get an additional job to pay for our youngest son's wedding. I know the cash outlay required for this occasion isn't nearly as astronomical for a son as it is a daughter, but there is still the groom's portion (or more accurately, the groom's parents portion) of the wedding announcements and flowers, and most importantly the rehearsal dinner—that at \$20.00 a plate can really add up. After raising eleven children, our savings account was pretty much drained and the credit cards maxed out, so I got a job as a cashier after work and on the weekends at the neighborhood grocery store. I shopped at this particular market every week. I knew the cereal was on aisle 11 and the location of the restrooms. I felt right at home.

Cashiering is not easy. It involves standing on your feet for long periods of time, while asking the same question over and over..."Did you find everything you were shopping for today?" Most critically, it requires the ability to accurately count money. I pride myself on my honesty and accountability, so, at the end of the shift when I counted the till, my face would get hot, my palms sweaty and I would feel sick to my stomach until I learned I was only 3 cents short. One Saturday afternoon after completing my sweaty, nauseating ordeal, I noticed a flyer posted to the bulletin board announcing that there was a part-time position open in the deli. I ripped the flyer from the bulletin board and high-tailed it over to the deli at light speed. The manager was there, a thin, perky, rather glamorous looking woman and within minutes we had negotiated a deal resulting in a dollar an hour raise.

I was pretty excited to wear the deli uniform: black pants (which are naturally slimming), a white shirt with the store's logo, a burgundy apron, also with the store's logo, and a black chef's beret (I knew I would look fabulous in that hat). I reported for duty the next evening. I was immediately introduced to dangerous equipment; the slicer and the fryer. My introduction included cleaning them. I quickly learned that the slicer must be unplugged and that it came apart more easily than I could put it back together. The grease had to be drained from the fryer prior to cleaning. If its parts were not perfectly aligned, the grease would miss the bucket and the floor would soon become a slippery slide. Fortunately, I am a quick learner, and by the end of my first week, I could put the slicer back together with my eyes closed, and perfectly align all the fryer parts.

The evening shift also involved taking out the garbage and washing dishes, tasks I excelled at thanks to the chores my mother gave me as a child. I am an outstanding worker, also thanks to my mother, so by the end of my shift the deli was squeaky clean.

After mastering the cleaning, I was taught the fine art of slicing meat and cheese. The numbers on the slicer indicated the thickness of the product; the higher the number, the thinner the slice. This was simple compared to eye-balling the difference between the fifty plus varieties of meat and cheese. If a customer requested ham, the interrogation would begin. "Would you like honey, smoked, black forest, sweet sliced, chopped, or maple?" Then the customer would respond "What's the difference?" I would launch into the explanations and finally, after several taste tests, the customer would make a decision. Then came the next question, "How much would you like?" The customer would respond and yet another question would follow, "What thickness would you like?" The slicing would commence and the customer who was now obviously tired of talking would nod after the first slice was cut and presented to him with, you guessed it, another question... "Is this thickness okay?" After the ham was packaged and weighed (operation of the scale was another lesson), came the final question involving up-sell. "May I get you some cheese to go with your ham, or how about some of our freshly made potato salad?"

Scooping salad into the various-sized containers required practice. One had to be a contortionist, reaching over the crab salad to the coleslaw in the far corner of the case and then, having secured a sufficient portion in the large plastic spoon, maneuvering said coleslaw past the three-bean salad located directly behind it. Avoiding spills that would result in the unsatisfactory intermingling of salad, required true acrobatic talent; the type of skill that would qualify one to run away and join the circus.

Despite the bending and stretching and never ending questions, I loved waiting on the customers. Maybe it was because they were more pleasant than the customers I worked with as a Court Clerk. They were only ordering food, not being threatened with a law-suit. No worries

about telling them to have a nice day. They were just making a turkey sandwich for dinner, not reporting to jail by 6:00 p.m.

Next, I learned to use the fryer. I had mastered cleaning it, so what could be so difficult about frying corn dogs, tater babies and chicken? Forgetting to turn on the timer. Undercooked or over-cooked food is not acceptable. I quickly learned the art of calibrating and using the thermometers. Of course, you don't need to temp burned chicken, you can tell from the blackened skin that is garbage can fodder. I soon had crisscrossed burns on my forearms from the fryer basket and could cook a pretty tasty corn dog. I was sufficiently trained.

I showed up three nights a week and on Saturday and some Sundays for five months. The wedding passed and the financial obligation satisfied; however I liked having a little extra money, so I continued working. I felt like a kid playing "grocery store." I would slice meat, ask all the right questions, fry the chicken, and then clean it all up. I guess it was fun because it was something different from the daily grind of fourteen years. Did I mention I liked wearing the hat?

By the time one reaches middle-age, one pretty much knows who he or she is; but being honest with one's self about this reality can be difficult. For example, when I look in the mirror I see myself as young and vibrant; an attractive blonde with a winning smile; intelligent and witty. If I dare to linger at the mirror and look more closely, I discover that I am not so young. I can see wrinkles around my eyes and

frown lines on my forehead (probably from over-scrutinizing all those potentially risky situations that I have so carefully avoided). I also see a double chin, somewhat saggy bosoms, and a roll of flesh where my waistline used to be. I realize that I am not so intelligent or I wouldn't have needed to be working two jobs. I would have already been independently wealthy. Likewise, if I were witty, I would probably have my own talk show and my winning smile would regularly appear on the cover of magazines like Ladies Home Journal and Good Housekeeping.

Since I am committed to lingering at the mirror and indulging in honest self reflection, I need to divulge that in addition to not being a risk taker, I have another personality wrinkle. I am a people pleaser. I need to feel that I am liked by everyone; that I am in complete harmony with all creatures of the universe. Realistically, I know that it is impossible to please everyone, but I ignore reality and keep trying anyway. I am not sure why I have such a desire to make everyone happy. Maybe it is because I am an only child. I am sure there is some psychological study somewhere about only children and how having no siblings can cause them to be dysfunctional. Perhaps I lacked nurture as a child (my mother would strongly disagree), or I have some issue with my self esteem. Whatever the reason, this desire for positive attention would contribute to the decision I was about to make.

One afternoon in May, all of the store employees were summoned to a meeting to learn that the structure of management was changing and the Deli Manager was being promoted to an Assistant Store Leader. A crazy thought began forming in my mind. Should I apply for her soon to be vacated job?

I wasn't having a mental breakdown, at least not at this point in time. This idea to become a food guru was not a new one for me. I had thought and verbalized about this before. I was a good cook, very creative and loved entertaining. More than once I had discussed with my family the possibility of opening a catering business. One reason that I had not pursued this notion was that I really didn't want to spend money opening a business that might not be a success resulting in a substantial financial loss; re: I am not a risk-taker. At one time, I had even strayed from my normally cautious behavior and had placed a call to an individual who was selling her ice cream store. Fortunately, the store had already been sold and I returned to my logical, stable self. Becoming the Deli Manager would allow me the opportunity of pursuing my desire to try my hand at this career with the financial backing of a corporation. Besides, I was a bored with my job; fourteen years of sitting at a computer, my view of life blocked by the walls of files stacked not so neatly on my desk.

I was not only bored, I did not feel in harmony with my co-worker universe. You see, I was in middle management at the Court which meant that the happiness of many individuals rested on my shoulders, or so I thought. I needed to please those above me by ensuring the work was completed in the manner which they dictated and I needed to please those I supervised by helping them complete their work in the manner which was dictated from above. Those being supervised did not always feel that the dictator's demands were fair and reasonable.

I had worked with many of these individuals for lots of years. I tried to keep morale high; I remembered their birthdays, planned office parties, and sincerely complemented them on a daily basis. I made an effort to set a good example by completing an equal share of work and I thanked them endlessly for their efforts. I was continually filling the huge candy dish on my desk with candy bars for their consumption; but nothing I did seem to endear me to them. The same walls of files that surrounded me surrounded them also. There would never be enough complements, thank-yous or chocolate to free

them from this drudgery. I knew their unhappiness was not my fault; but that knowledge did not make me feel better. I was not meeting their emotional needs and they were not meeting mine.

I was getting an emotional boost at the deli, however. When I arrived for my part-time job each day, I was greeted with genuine affection. My co-workers seemed to find me entertaining while we were slicing, scooping, and mopping. I was a new and fresh face; interested in what they had to tell me about themselves. They, in turn, were eager to learn about me, hanging on to my every word. I felt like a celebrity.

As is my custom, I discussed changing careers with my husband and with his acquiescence, I submitted my application. The interview went well and I was offered the position. Acceptance of the job would result in a pay increase and I would not have to continue to work two jobs. Also, there was my need for emotional fulfillment to be considered. The change seemed inevitable. Ignoring the little nagging voice in the back of my head which kept whispering, "this is too risky," I embraced the opportunity. I had a vision of what I could create. I imagined myself, looking striking in my uniform, moving confidently from customer to customer, welcoming them to the perfectly clean, perfectly stocked deli; inviting them to enjoy the perfectly prepared food being provided by my perfectly happy employees. I later learned the stark reality; to achieve my pictured level of perfection would require exceptionally long, hard hours of excruciating work resulting in physical and emotional exhaustion.

My battle began in May. I was determined to be the victor, to find the joy and personal growth which had eluded me for too long. I soon realized that working part time had not prepared me for the myriad of responsibilities that I was about to undertake. I met briefly with the former manager and began frantically writing notes concerning my duties. I was responsible for hiring, training, and scheduling employees, reviewing each week's specials and then ordering all of the product, stocking the Deli's cases and shelves, planning breakfast and lunch menus, preparing food, which included catering, doing quarterly inventories, managing the food court, and maintaining the food temperature log, constantly cleaning: the list went on and on. I wasn't "playing" store any longer, I was "living and breathing" store.

If I were to expound on every one of the harrowing aspects of the role of a deli manager, providing all the gory details, I could write a novel that would rival the thickness of Tolstoy's War and Peace, but since I am only writing an essay, I will focus on only one area of the battle which resulted in my eventual retreat: food preparation!

My typical day would begin with the preparation of coffee. This was relatively easy and involved putting the appropriate amount of the appropriate type in the appropriate pot and pushing the "brew" button. Since "Starbucks" was located on the west end of town, and my deli is in the center of our city, in close proximity to government offices, customers working nearby needing their morning "cup of Joe" began appearing as early as 6:00 a.m. It is a universal truth that coffee, or the lack thereof, can influence a person's behavior, so I soon learned to have it ready on time and to keep the pots filled to the brim to accommodate the stimulant seeking crowd.

While the coffee was brewing, I began preparing breakfast, which was pretty much home-made. It involved mixing and baking buttermilk biscuits, frying sausage and bacon, slicing ham and cheese and scrambling eggs, resulting in breakfast burritos and breakfast sandwiches. Bubbling gravy was prepared to accompany the biscuits. The fryers were turned on and chicken tenders and tater babies joined the other breakfast items in the hot case. By this time, my employees would start arriving for their shifts.

We would begin making sandwiches, chef salads, and deviled eggs for the multi-taskers who would "grab and go"; eventually eating breakfast in their cars on the way to work or lunch at their desks while compiling a report that their supervisors needed "yesterday."

Whole chickens with a variety of appetizing names like Mesquite, Sweet Barbeque and Lemon Pepper were placed in the convection oven so as to be perfectly roasted by 11:00 a.m. Preparing the salads was the next order of business. Some of the salads came readymade in large containers; others had to be prepared from a kit, and still others were made from fresh ingredients collected from around the store and combined by following the "secret" recipes filed alphabetically in the deli's recipe binder. The salads were transferred to their freshly washed yellow bowls, garnished, and carefully arranged in the previously mentioned salad case; the one so small that it was only accessible by an acrobat.

With coffee brewing, breakfast in the hot case, "grab and go" completed, chickens in the oven and freshly made salads, I would nervously glance at the clock; nine o'clock a.m. The day was just beginning and I was already exhausted. I had jumped out of the plane and was free-falling fast.

The rest of the day continued at the same frantic pace. There was chicken to be fried, and fried and fried. Lunch entrees replaced breakfast in the hot case; mashed potatoes, macaroni and cheese, and more gravy. The afternoon continued in a frenzied blur of breading chicken, preparing more salads, roasting more of those specialty chickens and transitioning lunch to dinner.

This fever pitch routine could become even more complicated by catering orders. Orders for vegetable, fruit, and meat and cheese trays were periodically received. These were usually spaced sufficiently so as to not to cause me to panic. However, after I had been the manager for approximately three weeks, I received a call late one evening which nearly caused my heart to stop.

As the manager, I worked a variety of hours which included both opening and closing shifts and weekends and holidays. This was a challenge for me because in my previous government job I had worked 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, enjoying an additional fourteen Holidays per year as well. On this particular day I was closing the deli, when the phone rang 15 minutes prior to closing.

"This is Bill with the BLM (Bureau of Land Management). We've got a fire raging on Beaver Mountain, and I need 150 fire lunches by 6:00 a.m. tomorrow morning."

I had previously been warned concerning fire lunches, but just as the gambler, who continues to pump quarters into a slot machine until his credit is maxed out does not comprehend that he has a problem, I had refused to believe that preparing a few little sack lunches could impact my life. Being successful as the Deli Manager required that the deli contribute to the store's profits, so I immediately responded that they would be ready and hung up the phone. I had maxed out my credit. I had to take action.

I quickly realized that in order to keep playing on this particular evening, I would need to develop a plan—immediately. I frantically phoned some of my employees and promising them overtime pay, convinced them to report for duty.

Not waiting for them to appear, I gulped down a Coke (straight up, not diet) for energy and began circling the store retrieving brown paper sacks, French bread, juice boxes, individual packages of chips, tomatoes, lettuce, apples, and candy bars. By this time, my staff had arrived and I politely (because

being nice matters to me) began barking orders just as I imagine the crew chief does when he is trying to get his fire under control.

"You, slice the meat and cheese for the sandwiches! You, there, wash the fresh produce and slice the tomatoes. I'll count and set up the brown bags. We don't have much time! Let's focus!"

My orders were obeyed; the sandwiches were created and wrapped. With the precision of a "bucket brigade," we placed a sandwich, drink, apple, candy bar, bag of chips, napkin and mayonnaise and mustard packet (in that order) in the sack. The sacks were painstakingly packed into boxes and hauled into the walk-in refrigerator ready for pickup at the appointed time which was now only few hours away. My clean deli was now as destroyed as the lands ravaged by the fire. Clean up began.

This scene was repeated on a regular basis throughout the summer. I was relieved when the autumn approached. Perhaps the catering would cool down like the fall weather. But just as the progression of the seasons, catering follows a pattern also: Thanksgiving followed by Christmas, followed by New Year's Eve!

During the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, the deli offered hot and cold complete turkey dinners as well as the standard variety of deli trays. Cheese balls were also a popular commodity during these days of merriment. Knowing how much product to order was like playing roulette. I would pick a number and spin the wheel, hoping my guess was a winner. I had become a gambler of sorts.

I managed to keep winning during November and December, due in fact to my organizational skills and ability to make lists; however there was one occasional that I thought I might have to "fold." We received a catering order for five hundred baked potatoes, ten turkeys and ten hams. This order presented a variety of challenges including baking the hams, turkeys, and potatoes and then keeping them hot. We only had one convection oven with 5 racks and a two-burner hot-plate. We could sometimes use the bakery oven, but of course we had to work around the baking of cookies, bread, rolls, etc.

I began formulating a plan. Needless to say the logistics of this large order began to consume my thoughts. This wasn't the first time that I had made a foolish bet. I had filled a 500 piece fried chicken order once during the summer, and had collected the jackpot. I knew I could do it again, but not without some trepidation.

In the next few days that followed, I did not sleep well. Frozen turkeys and whole hams grew arms and legs and were chasing me around the deli, refusing to enter the oven. I would search for hours for aluminum foil to wrap the potatoes and a headless man wearing a store apron would tell me that there was no such thing as aluminum foil and then would laugh wickedly (quite a feat without a head). The oven timer buzzer would then ring insistently, transforming itself into my alarm clock and I would wake up. I would nervously realize that I had only been dreaming.

My plan came together despite all of my trauma, thanks to the availability of the bakery oven, and the ingenious use of 12 picnic coolers which make good warming ovens when their lids were shut tightly after having been loaded with hot baked potatoes. Every Thursday, the managers of the different departments of the store met together and were given their numbers for the week. These were computed with the following equation: Sales minus purchases minus labor equals profit. This is known as the "retail game." Each day, often reluctantly, I showed up to play and by the end of each week my

gain was positive. In nine months, I had become a full-fledged gambler, and I was winning! I was pulling the rip cord and my chute was opening. I had conquered my fear of taking a risk!

Even though I had been winning the retail game, I soon realized that I was losing the popularity contest. This group of individuals was more diverse than my previous co-workers and most of them were part-time employees. Four of them were University students working their way through school; two were retired from the catering business and were just working so as not to be bored and two were full-time moms forced to return to the workplace because of financial necessity. My full-time employees consisted of three individuals who had made a career of food preparation and now I could be the obstacle standing in the way of their advancing careers. I was keenly aware of all of their various motivations. Prior to becoming Deli Manager, I had been the object of their affection and I was determined to remain so.

I immediately implemented my nurturing behaviors to ensure that I would continue to be well-liked, maybe even revered, as leader of my army of employees. I celebrated their birthdays with balloons and treats. I adjusted their schedules to allow them the time off they requested, repeatedly thanked them for their efforts and did more than my share of the workload. I listened intently to their stories of too much homework, unrequited love, unruly children, and impending financial disaster, but my status had changed. No matter how patient I was when hormones were raging, I was their boss, their authority figure and they all felt they could do a better job managing the deli than I could. I continued to like them anyway.

I may have conquered the food prep battle, but I was not going to win my emotional war. I was not happy. I saw who I could become, and I was not too pleased. I was exhausted from pushing the "brew button," from wrestling with the salad case, from fighting fires. My appearance had become haggard. I longed to free my hair of the chef's beret and return to my professional appearance, tired of food stains on my apron. I despised the crisscrossed burns on my forearms and smelling like fried chicken. I no longer wished to become a food guru, I wanted to return to what I was, a Court Clerk, with a secure job, working regular hours; enjoying my weekends and fourteen yearly holidays. I recognized that while it is important to genuinely be concerned about others, people are ultimately responsible for their own happiness, myself included.

It was at this point that I knew I must surrender. A clerical position opened and I was welcomed back to the Court system. I fried my last chicken, tearfully bid farewell to my employees, and hung up my apron. My battle had been bittersweet. I was both winner and loser. I had been successful at learning a new career and had overcome my fear of taking a risk. I felt that I was unsuccessful because I had failed to find the increased happiness or self-fulfillment that I had been seeking. I did learn, however, that you cannot care for others if you do not care for yourself. I still believe strongly that it is unwise to trade long term happiness for a momentary thrill, but, on the other hand, how can we know what makes us truly happy unless we take the risk of exploring what makes us unhappy? I still have no desire to parachute from a plane and the only activity I enjoy at a casino is dining at the buffet; however, because of this experience I will continue to risk change in further pursuit of personal discovery.

Kudos to the food gurus of the world who find joy in preparing and serving food; if not for them, I would starve.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner: Shawn Domgaard, "Lessons by Gravity"

For Dr. Bryce Christensen

Many are the scars of our youth. For some it is mental or emotional, but all tend to have some physical symbol of misfortune that befell them earlier in life. The forces of gravity and friction are difficult to overcome when learning to walk and run, but those forces are magnified when trying to overcome them with a skateboard. Most parents look at a skateboard as a fast-track ticket to the hospital, and with good reason, since thousands go to the hospital each year for skateboard related accidents. Yet they fail to see how this "toy" can create meaningful learning experiences, even if it is accompanied by a few scrapes and bruises. Who hasn't enjoyed the slippery thrills of conquering friction? Or sought the feeling of weightlessness, defeating that constant foe of gravity? With a basic knowledge of these forces, math, and physics, I have implemented the scientific method in having meaningful learning experiences outside of the classroom, and have proven that it can be worth the risk to learn.

My wonder and awe of the sport of skateboarding started at a young age. I was constantly searching for a show where I could see people use seven layers of plywood, some cast iron axles called "trucks," and four bearings set in four separate plastic cylinders, all hooked together and stood upon to exhibit some of the most amazing skills ever performed by man. Yet, before the days of YouTube and the internet itself (at least in my house) I was adequately deprived of what the sport had to offer. My only window of connectivity was a video game with some highlight reels and once in a blue moon a contest would be on television. I would watch them go on ramps made specifically for the vehicle, transporting them upward and down, sideways and in full circles. There were wrecks and they were plenty, but that never seemed to stop the invincible athletes. At first I was impressed by the surreality of it all, but as I grew older and came to learn more of physics and geometry, I became engrossed in the fact that these were real people doing real things. I marveled at the fact that they were using angles and momentum, not only natural skill as I thought before. While beginning to understand the patterns in the way they moved their bodies to keep speed and agility, I began to think upon the idea that I might be able to accomplish such feats if I were to imitate them.

Leaning on my years of watching and studying how to maneuver this piece of wood, I began experimenting. With my house being located in Gusher, Utah, a town of 200 people, having only a ten-by-twenty cement patio, and being surrounded by about 2000 acres of hayfields, I didn't have a very sufficient "lab," but it was all that was available. I would spend hours skating in circles, in an endless attempt to satiate my desire to become better. The more I would try the things I saw the pros do the more I realized how hard it actually was to duplicate, especially without the ramps. So I expanded my field of study.

I moved up to Logan, Utah for a while after I had graduated from high school. There I found a skate park: a laboratory with all the controls and variables of a pro. Embarrassed by my lack of skill, I went there when I knew no one else would go, namely when it was raining. I started down a ramp and felt the exhilaration of the wind and rain hitting my face as I smoothly rolled across the concrete. A smile touched my lips as I began to round corners and go up and down the angular plane. I would veer right then left, shifting my weight in just the right way to stay balanced. I stopped and sighed in relief at my success. Feeling more confident, I went to a higher ramp and decided to go down it. Picking up speed I

proceeded up then down the next slope, but my board started to go behind me as my weight shifted wrong. The lack of friction caused by the rain made the pull extra easy as my left leg swung forward and my right foot behind me with the board. My knee slightly popped as the pressure from gravity continued to pull me down toward the earth, considering my appendages had nowhere to gain traction to stop the movement. I learned firsthand Newton's law that an object in motion will stay in motion unless acted upon by an outside force. I also learned that there were other precautions needed when skating over a frictionless surface. With a swollen joint and a somber face from an experiment gone awry, I vowed to not give up, only to change my research slightly.

Deciding that I didn't want to be the tricky, air flying skateboarder, I retired my old skateboard and bought a long board. A long board is somewhat bigger than a standard skateboard and can range anywhere from three and a half to five feet in length. The wheels are also bigger so as to give more surface area to handle larger obstacles and compensate for the faster speed. All in all the long board is made to go down hills. The object is to "carve" or turn left then right in a rounded zigzag motion in order to avoid the oscillation of the wheels at such high speeds, sometimes referred to as "speed wobble." I had also studied these movements for a time before trying it in my new classroom, this time in a town called Roosevelt. I had tried riding it on smaller hills and a little on flat ground in order to get the feel for this new medium of transportation and learning.

While working construction, I had often travelled on a road that was about a 15-20% grade for half a mile. This seemed ideal to try my new and improved skateboard on. I longed for the chance to try it, and every day we passed over it I would visualize in my mind how this run could turn out in success. My opportunity came one day in the form of a road closed sign. Construction on the road had been anticipated but work had not begun yet. This would give me freedom from oncoming traffic that might interrupt my procedure. Not wanting to miss my chance, I went first thing after work to try it out. I parked my car at the bottom of the hill and hiked to the top, scoping out where I would turn and where any variables might impede. As I reached the summit I looked down with a gulp as I realized how steep the angle of the hill looked from this perspective. Yet, I had already made up my mind and was set on accomplishing my task.

As I started down the hill I realized my rate of acceleration was increasing faster than I had previously calculated, making it more difficult to carve down the hill as planned. Forgetting about my compensation to stop oscillation, I performed an impromptu experiment to see how well I could go in one lane of traffic instead of taking up both; if I was going to consistently ride, I couldn't always plan for there to be a sign to save me from traffic; therefore I needed to practice for such circumstances. Going about 30 mph, my previously determined theory took effect. My axles began to bounce and throw my ankles and feet into a teetering battle over gravity to keep me on the board. Eventually I realized that I wasn't going to win that battle and that failure was imminent. I had a new choice to make: how to get off this mini rocket of doom without hurting myself! After quick deliberation, I decided that the course of running it out would be my safest bet. I jumped off and compensated for the speed by bending my knee and extending my foot far in front of me. I took my first stride and began to think I could get out of the mess I had created, but then my second stride was misplaced and I found friction playing a different role than my previous experience. As my foot hit the blurry pavement, the rocks and gravel imbedded into the asphalt used my body mass, times the acceleration of gravity, to equal an overcompensation of my balance, sending me head first down the hill. Not having any protective gear to conserve my body against the incoming road, I learned how effectively asphalt can chew through denim jeans, work boots,

a cotton jacket, and not to mention human flesh. Saving my head from impact with my hands, I superman slid for approximately 20 feet. With the adrenaline pumping through my veins I jumped up quickly and grabbed my board which had flipped over from my deployment. I then hobbled back to my car and looked at the damage done. There were pieces of gravel imbedded into my palms and phalanges with a bluish, purple tint to the inside of my blood covered knuckles. My pants were torn in two places with blood coming from both as well as a giant gash across the inside of my abdomen where my jacket had torn exposing my skin to the slide. Not too bad—it could be worse. Was it such a bad price to pay? I had learned about nature! I learned that she was more powerful than I, and that try as I might, I will never be better than her. Respect was acquired, and I was not going to assume so foolishly the next time.

My long board still gets the miles put on it, but on a slower more controlled plane. I continue to learn new things from it every time I ride it. And though I may be safe and respectful toward gravity and friction, they still give me the memoirs of the time they won in the form of scar tissue. Those symbols will stay with me till the day I die, so how can a parent deprive their child of such respect and knowledge? Once we learn about gravity and friction, they come to be a constant benefit as we harness that energy under a contained, safe environment. It is worth the risk to learn.