



THE SCRIBLERIAN

Spring 2014 Edition

Sponsored by the English Department and the Braithwaite Writing Center, the Scriblerian is a writing contest and on-line journal for students by students. Revived during Fall Semester 2004 after a two-year hiatus, the essay competition is organized each semester by Writing Center tutors for ENGL 1010 and 2010 students. Winning essays are published on-line on the English Department website and past winners were also published in the print textbook SUU Guide to English Composition 2010-2011. The Spring 2014 Scriblerian Contest was planned and supervised by Chair Jared Vanhille with the help of Heather Sundblom, Rebekah Tobler, Hannah Ouderkirk, Diana Reese, Chris Christiansen, John Iler, Emily Holmes, Gardner Stevenett, and Mckay West. A total of 23 essays were submitted for the contest.

Contents

Argumentative- English 1010.....	2
1st Place Winner: Lori Ransom, “College Students and Sleep Deprivation”	2
2 nd Place Winner: Kaylee Petersen, “Within the Written Word: the Value of Vampires”	5
Expressive- English 1010	8
1 st Place Winner: LoraLynn Jones, “No Pain, No Gain”	8
2 nd Place Winner: Aljosha S. Speth, “Home”	10
Argumentative- English 2010.....	11
1 st Place Winner: Lindsey Bracken, “Deforestation: More Than the Environment”	11
2 nd Place Winner: Ashton Jessup, “Ever Texting Never Moving”	18
Expressive- English 2010	21
1 st Place Winner: Sean Brandenburg, “The Not so Big Game”	21
2 nd Place Winner: Megan Wesko, “Owl Land”	24

Argumentative- English 1010

1st Place Winner: Lori Ransom, "College Students and Sleep Deprivation"
For Professor Joy Sterrantino

On a typical day at college, it is not unusual to see somewhat bleary-eyed students stumble into class in the morning toting a backpack, with an energy drink or coffee in hand. A few days ago I overheard a female student laughingly confess that she was drinking her third cup of coffee of the day, and it wasn't even 11 a.m. yet. It is not out of the ordinary for students to arrive at class sleep deprived and hope to compensate for it with a caffeine stimulant. Sleep deprivation is so common that probably every college student has experienced it, and some experience it on a weekly basis. If colleges provided more resources to raise awareness of the dangers of sleep deprivation, and helped students cope better with stress, they could be more successful in their studies.

In an article published by College Student Journal called "Relationship between Sleep Quality and Health Risk Behaviors in Undergraduate College Students," it states that 82% of students surveyed reported daytime sleepiness (Vail-Smith, Felts, and Becker). Another article published by College Student Journal titled "Revving and Staying Up: Energy Drink Use Associated With Anxiety and Sleep Quality In a College Sample" says, "Data from the 2008 National College Health Assessment Survey based on responses from 81,121 students, showed that stress and sleep problems were rated as 1 and 3 respectively in a list of top 10 impediments to academic performance" (Stasio).

As a student required to balance full-time school, part-time work, and family responsibilities, I can understand why students may feel that by necessity they have to miss sleep in order to keep up with studies and homework. Some students may feel that missing sleep is necessary if they want to have a social life outside of classes. Other students may dislike being tired, but don't really know how to solve the problem, or some may feel that it isn't a big deal.

While many students on campus may believe that sleep deprivation is just an annoying inconvenience that comes with studying at college, the consequences of not getting sufficient rest may be much longer reaching than they first appear. A number of studies have recently suggested that sleep deprivation is a serious issue, with significant health risks and personal complications. Some of the risks associated with sleep deprivation are an inability to concentrate, decreased mental function, and lower cognitive performance. The ability to plan, respond well to complexity, and make logical decisions are also impacted, causing students to be at risk for poor decision making. These problems in particular may negatively impact college students, causing a bad cycle as one problem fuels another.

In addition to the academic risks of sleep deprivation, students are also at risk for significant health problems. The incidence of obesity and diabetes are higher for individuals who are sleep deprived. An article published in December 2013 by the American Journal of Epidemiology states:

Among men and women who were not obese at baseline, participants who reported less than 5 hours of sleep had an approximately 40% higher chance of developing obesity than did those who reported 7-8 hours of sleep. The association between short sleep and excess weight gain was generally consistent across different categories of age, educational level, smoking status, baseline body mass index, and physical activity level. (Xiao)

There is also a correlation between sleep deprivation and an increased danger of traffic accidents and psychological problems. The instance of depressive symptoms also increases in correlation with lack of sleep. The National Sleep Foundation conducted a study that indicated that college freshmen are most at risk for sleep deprivation, so it is of particular importance that college freshmen receive help at the beginning of their schooling so that they can stay in college and be successful. In an article titled "Stress and Sleep Disturbances in Female College Students," researchers state that they found that first-year students were able to reduce depressive symptoms, along with improving sleep quality after undergoing a self-administered cognitive behavior program. They believe that a lot more research needs to be done in order to effectively help students manage their stress and sleep. These researchers also believe that colleges should make education in coping with stress, improving sleep hygiene, and their respective effects on health a mandatory part of the curriculum. (Lee) According to the National Sleep Foundation:

Poor sleep costs America billions of dollars each year and greatly compromises public safety and health. Possible solutions to the Nation's sleep problem may begin with promoting education and awareness of sleep disorders and their negative societal impact, research in sleep medicine, as well as public education about healthy sleep. The beginnings of these solutions lie in the hands of healthcare workers and educational institutions. (Wells and Vaughn)

Because sleep deprivation has such far reaching effects in all areas for college students, I think that in addition to teaching students about sleep management briefly during orientation, it would be helpful to offer mentoring for students to help manage their time and stress. Having it mandatory to take a class or obtain training in stress management and healthy coping habits might reduce the instances of negative habit-seeking in order to cope with stress and help students develop skills that can be of assistance to them over their entire lifetime. Posters might be used around campus during midterms and finals as reminders to students that study planning and sufficient sleep will help them far more than cramming and staying up all night. This preventative measures might assist students in staying in college long term if they are able to utilize coping skills and get sufficient sleep right from the start.

In conclusion, whether students recognize it or not, sleep plays a significant role in not only their success in college, but also for their health and well-being for a lifetime. Sleep should be considered an important part of schedule planning. Although many students feel that it isn't a big deal to skip sleep on a regular basis, getting more sleep would improve learning, health, and safety for everyone. With so many activities competing for time, awareness needs to be raised so that students more clearly understand how much sleep deprivation can impact their lives.

Colleges should consider providing more resources that help students cope better with stress and improve time management, so that they can sleep better. If institutions and health care providers work together to better educate individuals, offer support, and continue to research sleep deprivation, society can be greatly benefited with better health, greater well-being, improved education retention, and lower overall risks both physically and mentally.

Works Cited

- Xiao,Qian, "A Large Prospective Investigation of Sleep Duration, Weight Change, and Obesity in the NIH-AARP Diet and Health Study Cohort" *American Journal of Epidemiology*," 178.11 (2013) 1600-1610 Academic Search Premier Web.14 Mar 2014
- Lee, Shih-Yu, et al. "Stress And Sleep Disturbances In Female College Students." *American Journal Of Health Behavior* 37.6 (2013): 851-858. CINAHL with Full Text. Web. 14 Mar. 2014.
- Vail-Smith, Karen, W. Michael Felts, and Craig Becker. "Relationship Between Sleep Quality And Health Risk Behaviors In Undergraduate College Students." *College Student Journal* 43.3 (2009): 924-930. Academic Search Premier. Web. 28 Feb. 2014
- Stasio, Michael J., et al. "Revving Up And Staying Up: Energy Drink Use Associated With Anxiety and Sleep Quality In A College Sample" 738-748. Academic Search Premier. Web. 28 Feb. 2014.
- Wells, Mary Ellen, and Bradley V. Vaughn. "Poor Sleep Challenging The Health Of A Nation." *Neurodiagnostic Journal* 52.3 (2012): 233-249. Academic Search Premier. Web. 28 Feb. 2014.
- Butcher, James. "Sleep Deprivation Impairs Memory Formation, Say Researchers." *Lancet* 356.9245 (2000): 1907. Academic Search Premier. Web. 28 Feb. 2014.

2nd Place Winner: Kaylee Petersen, "Within the Written Word: the Value of Vampires"
For Professor Joy Sterrantino

It is believed that stories were first shared to help communities survive; today, they are for our education and delight. Literature has been molded by grand protagonists like Odysseus, King Arthur, and Peter Pan, whereas today we have Edward Cullen, Daenerys Targaryen, and Klaus Mikaelson. Characters of the past are fading away and now the public is overcrowded with vampires, other magical beings, and high school drama; these succeed in current media, but it's evident that writers are lacking valuable skills seeing as there is little variation in ideas and they only survive on their quips. Today, society wants everything fast and easy but they should reopen and use the classics as a standard for reading and writing skills because such books keep our modern society from dumbing down, they present valid examples and analyses of human nature and are intellectually stimulating. "Most children and young adults demonstrate a surface understanding of a range of materials appropriate for their age. Only small percentages of children and young adults can reason effectively about what they are reading or writing" (Applebee, 5). The ability to read is important as ever, but the ability to understand and think critically about the written word is decreasing. The writing levels have dropped, spelling and grammar rules are disappearing, and the classics are losing their glimmer and are being left in the dusty bookshelves. It must be asked, whether or not the written word is an art form this world can afford to lose.

Contemporary art is all the mass seems to desire, which pushes the classics and originals into the shadowed corners. Inside libraries, there are all sorts of stories to explore such as Bram Stoker's world in Dracula as well as Stephanie Meyer's Twilight. Though the idea of vampires reign through both stories, they are distinctly different in style, time periods and characterization; just because the latter story is newer doesn't mean it should win over the former just because it's current and recent. Time should definitely progress man's creativity and nature, but it appears that mankind might be going downhill if modern books are all about lame quips and reused ideas instead of thought provoking lines and intrinsic values preserved in society.

There used to be definite levels of writing, different formats used according to their purpose, starting at the bottom with grocery lists, working through notes and blogs and closing at the top with published articles and dissertations. Nowadays those categories have merged into two levels: simple scribbles for a list of necessities, or of the academic standard where even the authors are often confusing themselves on their own sentences. Published writers are beginning to vary on these two lines, unable to find that fine balance once known so well. For example, when Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence, it was written in a script style of the time, using language everyone understood- even those who could not read. However when this famous document is shared with school kids as well as most adults, it becomes complicated, confusing, and sophisticated to a point that it's easily misunderstood. In the course of less than 300 years, humanity has come so far and yet are falling behind in the basic principles of the English language itself. The evolution of language is acknowledged and necessary, but today the English language has declined as much as it has advanced. This is a problem that affects everyone once they're old enough to start understanding the shapes and sounds of dialect.

Our advanced communication in society is a large part of what separates humanity from the animal kingdom, and it is only hurting everyone by dropping these standards. Mankind was on a roll for a long

time with works such as Homer's epic poems, and the Holy Bible, which lasted for several eras until the last half century or so- about the time that mankind began to be very distracted with evolving technology. By reading from assorted time periods, one can easily see the differences and declination of the written word. Bram Stoker wrote in his story *Dracula*, "He has allowed us to redeem one soul already, and we go out as the old knights of the Cross to redeem more. Like them we shall travel towards the sunrise. And like them, if we fall, we fall in good cause." Poetry is an art form that touches the soul and leaves a mark; this is something the populace used to find within the language of books. However, now the vast majority of the public read fast-paced and flimsy grounded stories like Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight* which include lines such as, "Do I dazzle you?" This latter book is filled of high-tension and hormonal-crazed moments that many readers experience pleasure reading; to write something that is enjoyed is a remarkable skill but those hasty pieces that construe such a story don't grip the soul compared to classics such as *Dracula*.

Individuals who compose for humankind should aspire to write not the basic action-filled and lusty novels, but should desire to create a story that will serve as a classic tale. The definition for 'classic' has varied through dictionaries and people's understanding, but bound together they create the idea of something that will last in the minds and hearts of those who experience it. A similar meaning claims that a classic novel is one that can be read over and over again, and something new is learned and experienced with each reading. The problem for *Twilight* is that the story holds no ground, asks for nothing, and binds the reader to an unreliable loyalty that usually flies out the window with the next big thing. The difference with *Dracula* is that it asks for the readers to understand, to experience, and to learn: to find the human nature of the characters, the lack and fill of humanity through the times, and to find faith not just in the book itself but in the reader's own life. A classic story isn't selfish, but it is an understanding that the reader will walk away with a piece of their heart lost, and another piece found.

Classic, characteristic and concrete in form- this is how stories should be written. The more a human can learn from a book, the more their personal character is formed. While programs have been formed to encourage children to pick up storybooks and read on their own, the desired results are still lacking. "It is time to ensure that these children get the good start they need" (Applebee, 28). It is supposed that one aid that's guiding good books out the window are the textbooks used for schooling. These large pamphlets are packed with quotes and tidbits of information- covering large spectrums of material but carrying little substance; these students are given a vague surface of words without solid structure. Such textbooks should not be used as often as they are today, used in a vast majority over the real books- what they're often telling the readers about- and giving limited facts without decent value. By the simple act of bringing in books to read for classes instead of textbooks, this will help lead students of all ages to a new respect and possibly even a love of books; they will be less likely to begrudge opening the pages of a book and excited to do more on their own. Once an acceptance of the written word has been found, there are new intellectual paths to be established and walked down. It is possible to bring back up the strong standards of reading, writing and reasoning, and it's about time action was taken to improve the writing and reading standards of today's youth. It's time classics are used as a standard for the written word, and the growing youth have better opportunities to read original works that are intellectually stimulating. Let not such a beautiful language be allowed to decline within this world, but let them rise once again into meaningful words of art.

Works Cited

Applebee, Arthur N., Langer, Judith A., and Mullis, Ina V.S. "Learning to Be Literate in America: Reading, Writing, and Reasoning. The Nation's Report Card." Eric.ed.gov National Assessment of Educational Progress, Princeton, NJ. 1987 March.

Meyer, Stephanie. *Twilight*. New York: Little, Brown and Co., 2005.

Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. 1897 New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.

Expressive- English 1010

1st Place Winner: LoraLynn Jones, "No Pain, No Gain"

For Dr. Julia Simon

When I was 15 years old, I decided to run track, not just for the exercise, but for the social aspect of it as well. Little did I know then, I was going to learn a phrase that would change my life, for the good, forever.

It was a chilly, spring afternoon as a light rain moved in on my high school track practice. The coach decided after the team was done running sprints on the track, it would be a good idea to run five miles up the canyon from the small town I lived in. I was feeling tired and annoyed as I took off on the back road that would lead me up the canyon. The coach followed behind in his old Chevy pickup truck. The muscles in my legs were on fire and my lungs about to burst, when my coach yelled out a phrase from the window of his truck that changed my life. "No pain, No gain!" Easy for him to say, I thought to myself. But as I heard this phrase over and over during my practices, I came to find out, he was right. The pain I felt in practice paid off all the way to the Regional Track Finals and on to the State Finals, when my team won Region and took second in State.

I believe at quite a young age I was learning about this phrase without actually hearing it until my track coach instilled it in my mind during my teenage years. I was learning to apply this phrase at different times in my life, and not just physically. Having experienced "no pain, no gain" on an emotional level helped me to overcome the aftermath of perhaps one of the most painful experiences of my life.

My mother stepped out of my life when I was five years old, leaving my dad to raise my two older brothers and myself. Growing up I found it difficult watching all my friends interacting with their mothers. I yearned to have a relationship with my mother, but by her choice, she was not a part of my life while growing up. My father, who was a police officer, was busy but he tried to fill the role of mother when he could. He even showed up in his police uniform to my 5th grade maturation program at school that was for the girls and their mothers. All the mothers attending thought it was cute, I thought it was embarrassing! That was just one of many times I wished my mother was there for me. Even though she never came back, I never gave up the hope that one day I would get the chance to bond with her.

As I have grown older and have children of my own, and as I look back upon my childhood, I truly have been able to apply the powerful phrase of, "no pain, no gain". I have applied this throughout my life as I have faced many different challenges.

The experience of being pregnant and giving birth was the most joyful pain I have endured. My body took on the shape of a giant pear and during labor when I didn't think mentally or physically I could bear the pain anymore and I wanted to give up, into the world came the most beautiful little person I instantly fell in love with! The happiness and joy I felt erased any pain I had endured. It was such an amazing experience I decided to do it two more times.

I consider myself a devoted mom as I enjoy every day with my children. I can't imagine not being a part of their life and not giving them the love they so deserve. By experiencing such a painful childhood, I

have gained a secure and amazing relationship with my children. I made a decision a long time ago that I would be the mom to my children that I never had. I knew I would never give up on my children.

Not only have I gained from a painful childhood, my children have too. I have been there for them when they said their first word and took their first step. I have picked them up, wiped away tears and bandaged their knees when they crashed their bike when riding without training wheels for the first time. So basically I have been my children's nurse, chef, maid, chauffer, comforter, bank account, and so much more. But I have to say, it has been the most wonderful and rewarding responsibility I have had. As the years go by, my children experience the different stages of life and I'm right there with them giving them the love and support they need to succeed. I am their number one fan, always encouraging them to keep moving forward and to never give up.

I have passed, "no pain, no gain," on to my children, as they have struggled with different tests of life, in hopes they will be strengthened from within. My son, never before having wrestled, decided to try this sport during his first year in high school. He has had to work hard to condition and strengthen his body to be able to endure wrestling on a high school level. He practices at 6:00 a.m. until 7:30 a.m., goes to school until 2:30 p.m., and then practices again until 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. When he gets home there are chores to be done, then it is dinner, homework, and off to bed. It has been a challenge for my son to change his lifestyle in adjusting to wrestling, but he has remembered the phrase "no pain, no gain." My son has become a believer in this phrase as he has worked hard and it's now paying off as he maintains good grades and is pinning his opponent on the mat. Before he goes out on the mat at his matches, he finds me in the crowd and mouths the phrase "no pain, no gain." Even if he loses he knows he has gained. He didn't give up.

As I have passed on and witnessed the influence of this powerful phrase in my children's life, it continues to impact mine.

Last year I came down with an illness that limited my physical activity for a period of time. This proved to be a trial for me as I have always enjoyed doing activities that helped me to stay physically fit. When I was able to start physical activities again, I decided to start hiking on a daily basis. I began my hiking endeavor on a smaller, steep hill full of rocks, and since then I have challenged myself to hike steeper hills and mountain sides. The first day I began hiking, my legs were burning and my lungs felt as if they were on fire! When I felt that I couldn't take another breath of air or one more step forward, a familiar phrase came to mind, "no pain, no gain". The memory of my high school track coach yelling out this phrase when I didn't think I could run anymore and I wanted to give up, came flooding back and I pushed myself to keep going. Because I still repeat "no pain, no gain" in my mind when the terrain gets rough and steeper, I'm able to endure and press forward. The victory is mine when I reach the top, drink in the fresh air and let my legs feel the triumph of conquering new heights. I will not give up!

I love the words of William Ernest Henly, "I am the master of my fate. I am the captain of my soul." I have the power to decide what I will gain out of my challenges in life, molding the person I choose to become. With all the lessons learned in my life, big and small, good and bad, I have been able to learn from them and better myself. I have empowered myself by finding endurance to life's trials and tribulations by simply repeating and applying the solid phrase "no pain, no gain", which simply means to me, don't give up.

I believe in the power and strength to not give up that comes from the simple phrase "no pain, no gain."

2nd Place Winner: Aljosha S. Speth, "Home"
For Professor Jennifer Sorensen

"One never reaches home, but wherever friendly paths intersect the whole world looks like home for a time." (Hermann Hesse)

How should I describe this feeling? Previously you wish all the best and nod to one another wordless, thoughtless, for the last time. You neglect the thoughts that arise; you don't want to occupy yourself with something different, something more insignificant. But otherwise it is maybe easier that way?

Half an hour car ride in the direction of home and the feeling becomes worse. I feel him, back, between my blade-bones, there where lastly his hand amicably touched me. I'm not sure whether he is still behind me or whether he already flies away over my head. Anyway it is good to know that you are going in the same cardinal direction. Maybe he shares right now this thought and I'm searched for from above. Definitely! This imagination that he already started feels better, soon in Madrid, soon in Buenos Aires.

I'm not able to think much about him looking at my own plans. But these are still no excuses to let him go. Is it jealousy, which releases such a queasy feeling, such disaffection? Am I grudging of his targets and of his stories I will hear from him when we speak again, in which I don't play any active role? Or maybe I'm just grudging of his liberty to go on such a journey. "You can never return back home." Those were his last words... I would rather he said: "You will never return back home", instead of "can," because you can do everything, suppose you want to! Yes, this is such a profound statement. How much truth is hidden in it? Truth can be frightening. Maybe it is just fear, which lets me reflect so strongly. Namely the question is: "If you can't return home, why is that so?" Will the home be changed or will you be changed? Most would answer both! I'm not sure about this response, not yet. Suppose you will change through new thoughts, new ideas, which are provided from the new surroundings, the home will be the same. There could be new people who used to live there, but they also have to deal with their new events and surroundings like you with yours. I think if you sometimes return back home, you will not recognize it anymore...

Like I said, I can't judge yet. I have a huge respect for that. Not to be able to recognize his home feels like a loss. I don't want to lose, to forget something or somebody, and I don't want to be lost! Actually it depends of course on the person. You won't be forgotten by good, honest friends, also likewise I won't forget them. Now I'm relatively sure what this feeling is. It is the fear to lose this honest friendship.

Here at this point I don't want to imagine what my friends, which will stay, will think when I will leave them in about 3 months... For a long time, my two gorgeous sisters were the only reason, why I didn't try this step. But in my case, my home changed a long time ago and I hope, if I will sometime turn around, I will find it again.

"Ubi bene, ibi patria!" – There where it's beautiful, there is the homeland.

Argumentative- English 2010

1st Place Winner: Lindsey Bracken, "Deforestation: More Than the Environment"
For Professor Eric Morrow

At this precise moment, sturdy organisms are standing tall all over the world. These magnificent creatures selflessly provide oxygen, shade, food, lumber and shelter, while asking nothing in return. These organisms are called trees. They usually live in varying sized groups called forests and can be found in almost every region of the world. Because of their selfless, vulnerable nature, the tree population of the world is currently, and has been, facing a serious plight. That issue is called deforestation and it is running rampant in all forests, but has especially honed in on tropical forests in more recent times.

Deforestation is "...the removal of forest cover naturally or by human activities. It may occur abruptly when the forest is cleared for agricultural production, urban development or more gradually as a result of unsustainable logging practices. It as well includes removal of shrubs, lanes, grasses and other plants from tree covers" (Awe et al. 18). As one should be able to deduce from the definition, deforestation has multiple negative effects on the environment. These include "species extinctions, soil degradation, declining biological diversity, and the alterations in regional and global climates" (Mitten 549). Because of these results, deforestation has recently become a pressing issue for many scientists and environmentalists.

Besides the environmental aspect, deforestation has another less recognized dynamic. Deforestation "...has environmental consequences, which impinge directly on the lives of poor rural people" (Awe et al. 18). The predicament that these indigenous peoples, who rely on or live in the forest, are facing is completely connected to the ways deforestation is negatively affecting the environment. This isn't an issue about a small, isolated tribe of one hundred people. Instead, "...tropical forest areas...are home to more than 1.2 billion people..." (Meijaard et al. 1). These native forest-dwelling people are facing the eradication of their traditional homeland and are grappling with the negative consequences that result from it.

This problem facing the environment and the tropical rain forests' indigenous people is not something that has been occurring only in the modern age. For as long as people have needed wood for various reasons and space to grow crops, farm or build up towns and villages, deforestation has been present. The encroachment on the forest was primarily happening in Europe and the Middle East centuries ago. As humankind progressed and populations increased, the deforestation increased as well to keep up with the demand for wood and space. Once people began exploring and traveling to new places, deforestation popped up in those societies as well. Deforestation has only increased as humankind has moved into the current industrial age. With the end of most of the deforestation in North America in the 1920s, the focus has been switched to tropical rain forests such as the ones in Central and South America and Indonesia. These tropical locales were discovered to be rich in resources and so began in the mid-twentieth century the extensive amounts of deforestation that we see today.

While the causes of deforestation in the distant past were usually based on needs, the trend in this modern era has turned a very different direction. While the need for resources is still a large factor, now

the over-arching, main drive of deforestation is more often money. The battle to gain more money than other individuals, companies and countries rages on even if that means causing harm to the native peoples of the forests. For example, for multiple South American countries and the island of Borneo, the governments are in favor of the deforesting practices for the revenue it creates. Andrea Zhouri states that "...one can observe a shift from the discussion concerning rights of citizenship to a discussion about economic interests, in which indigenous territories are transformed into areas of capitalist exploitation with the consequent perpetuation of social, ethnic, and environmental injustice" (255). It is much less about people or needs and more about the money. The search for money in endeavors such as mining, logging and ranching is propelling the deforestation.

Money is contributing to the rush to mine for gold and other metals in many areas of the world including South America. This is driving uneducated, unskilled miners to head to the forests to look for gold. Large swaths of tropical rain forest are also being cut down to accommodate the companies' large mines. For example, the authors of "Gold Mining in the Peruvian Amazon: Global Prices, Deforestation, and Mercury Imports" write of the gold mining occurring in the Peruvian Amazon. "The price continues to set new records, rising to over \$1400/oz at the time of this article's publication. As a response, nonindustrial informal gold mining has risen in developing countries along with grave environmental and health consequences" (Swenson et al. 1). These unskilled, informal miners are looking for gold because it is a very profitable resource. The unskilled miners and moneyed mining companies combine to pillage the forests in search of gold for profit.

Besides mining, ranching is another important cause of deforestation. In some countries, "...forest clearance results more from pasture development. Cattle cooperatives, for example, are often launched by a handful of proprietors who have large landholdings and who want to supply beef for domestic use and for export to the pet and fast-food industries in developed nations" (Mitten 549). These people are looking to make use of the deforested land and earn money without thinking of the consequences for the environment or for the people. Richard Reed gives an example of this happening in Paraguay: "Soon the settlers began to fell the forest, creating fields for cotton, soybeans, and pasture....Where once the land had been home for game, it now provided for cattle. Herds often clogged the roads, competing with trucks hauling cotton to market and busses loaded with new colonists. Settlers fenced in the fields and cut lanes through the remaining forest to mark off portions that would be private property (off-limits to Indians)" (130). Although it is hard to fault people for wanting to have cultivated fields and cattle, ranching is another example of how the pursuit of money is driving the deforestation.

In addition to ranching, logging is also a cause of deforestation. This cause stems from both the need for wood and the revenue the companies make.

[T]he timber industry causes considerable tropical deforestation in some countries. As with the deforestation caused by pasture and cattle ranching, strong monetary incentives motivate the timber industry. But the problems go well beyond simply extracting trees and destroying forests. Even when loggers take only a few commercially valuable trees per acre and leave the soil system intact, devastating effects nevertheless may still occur. In merely building the roads to give access to the valuable trees, loggers may destroy large chunks of the forest canopy. Unfortunately, global demands help fuel the timber industry's continued destruction of the forests. (549)

In a world hungry for the products the timber industry provides, those companies are motivated to continue harvesting the trees because of the money people around the world are willing to pay.

These three causes—mining, ranching and logging—drive most of the deforestation of tropical rain forests and other forested regions and result in many negative consequences for the environment which, in turn, adversely affect the populations of the native people who rely on or live in the forest. There are numerous undesirable results affecting the indigenous people including poverty, disease, loss of the indigenous people's knowledge of the environment and perpetuation of forest degradation.

Poverty is one of the major negative consequences of deforestation. Indigenous people of any of the tropical forests in the world are considered poor because of their lack of material wealth and modern amenities; however, these native peoples have not only survived in the forest, but thrived. Because of their extensive knowledge about the forests where they reside, they have been able to sufficiently provide for themselves for centuries. When the forest—the center for the natives' way of life—is destroyed, they become the poorest of the poor in society. Lauren Mitten gives an example of the deforestation affecting the Mayan Indians of South America: "Extreme poverty and landlessness have forced them to work as sharecroppers and day laborers. Many live in the mountains where they now struggle to grow cash crops to pay for basic needs they used to be able to provide for themselves.... Their poverty and landlessness have forced them into rundown, squalid shanties in the cities" (549). Because the forest is unable to support them, the people have to turn to other sources to survive, and these other sources provide much less for them than the forest did. Anthropologist Richard Reed gives an example of the Guarani Indians of Paraguay: "Indian communities are destroyed by poverty and disease, and the members who remain join the legions of poor laborers who form the lowest class of the national society. In short, the Guarani lose their ability to survive as an independent ethnic group" (130). Similar to the Mayan Indians, the Guarani are poorer because of the deforestation and are becoming dependent on the people who developed their land. Poverty is a very serious consequence of deforestation that is negatively and drastically changing the lives of indigenous, forest-dwelling people.

Similar to poverty, the subjection of the people to diseases is another result of forest development that is harmful to the inhabitants of tropical forests around the world. Indigenous peoples who live in and rely on forests have been relatively secluded from outsiders for many years. The bodies of these people have not needed to build up immunity to diseases against which those in the western world have built up immunity. Once outsiders penetrate the forest and come in contact with the natives, the forest dwellers are very susceptible to disease. An example of this is the Yanomami Indians who live in the Amazon. "Since gold was first found in Roraima [a Brazilian state] in 1987, there has been a flood of thousands of garimpeiros (gold diggers) into the Yanomamis' territory. The "contact" with garimpeiros has been a complete disaster for the Yanomamis. There has been a severe decline in their population due to the establishment of new diseases—such as the flu and malaria..." (Zhou 259-260). In addition to contagious diseases and because of the deforestation, they are susceptible to other diseases as well such as "...malnutrition and other related diseases" (Zhou 260) as well as other diseases resulting from pollution such as mercury poisoning that is a byproduct of the gold mining. Diseases are a very severe and devastating consequence of deforestation.

In addition to disease, deforestation also results in the loss of vast knowledge of the forest that the native people have acquired. "Investigations by ethnobotanists and anthropologists have revealed that indigenous people have been manipulating natural vegetation for several millennia, often in what are

widely perceived in the west as 'pristine' forests" (Donovan and Puri 1). Tropical forests have been inhabited by people for thousands of years, and during that time they have come to know precisely how to live in the forest without extinguishing any one particular resource. For example, the Kayapo Indians of the Amazon are hunter-gatherer-horticulturalists. They have discovered how to not over-hunt, over-gather or over-garden. The application knowledge lets the forest replenish itself and allows the Indians to continue living there (Turner). With the deforestation that is occurring, the indigenous peoples are being forced to change their subsistence strategies. Because their culture and way of life revolve around the subsistence strategies within the forests, once the forests are depleted, the knowledge of the resources of the forest and sustainable development practices will not be passed down to younger generations and the world will lose that knowledge. The loss of the important knowledge of the forest's resources is an unfortunate and negative consequence of forest development.

As well as losing the indigenous people's knowledge, another serious result of deforestation is the perpetuation of forest degradation. Once individuals or companies begin deforesting an area, it begins a chain reaction that perpetuates both the environmental and social problems associated with deforestation. Philip Fearnside states: "Infrastructure development unleashes an insidious chain of investment and profiteering that can be expected to destroy more forest.... Logging roads...precede and accompany highways, opening up frontiers for investing timber profits in soybean plantations and cattle ranches. Timber extraction increases the forest's flammability, leading to understory fires that set in motion a vicious cycle of tree mortality, increasing fuel loads, reentry of fire, and eventually total destruction of the forest" (682). While the forests of the world have not reached the point of ultimate forest destruction, they are experiencing this cycle. An example of this concept is that as deforestation began to occur in the territory of the Guarani of the Amazon, they had to change their main subsistence strategy from hunting and gathering to agriculture. However, the forest could not support the Guarani's farming. The nutrients in the soil quickly became depleted which required the Guarani to clear new plots and the process continued (Reed). This same problem affected the non-indigenous settlers who came to grow crops on the newly cleared forest land. This negative perpetuation of development and destruction will continue to negatively affect the environment and the indigenous people until either the complete destruction of the forests or something is done to curb the deforestation.

To combat this environmental and social dilemma, the approach must be multi-pronged. There needs to be more media coverage in both the first and third world countries about the causes and effects of deforestation. The media could be a very powerful tool for spreading information. If people were aware, perhaps they could focus their resources and time to make changes. It's important that there are laws passed in first world and third world countries that make it advantageous for people to become involved in helping to reduce deforestation. There must be financial advantages in the form of tax breaks for reforestation and there should be penalties for exporting and importing non-renewable forest products. Having these financial benefits and repercussions along with the raised awareness from the media coverage, should help gain the support of organizations, companies, politicians and other important people to then work on solving the deforestation issue with their resources and influence. This proposed approach would be the best solution because a one part solution wouldn't be effective; the influence of people of importance would make it unpopular to negatively impact the environment and would help create more effective laws and regulation methods; the influential people and organizations could provide the money and resources to fight or reverse the deforestation.

This proposed solution would be most effective because a one-part solution simply would not be effective. The problem of deforestation and the effects it has on the native forest peoples and environment are too complex to be solved with one thing such as only making laws or only reforestation. For example, efforts in Brazil to implement deforestation regulation methods have not been particularly successful. "The first major effort to repress deforestation was in 1989 under the Our Nature (Nossa Natureza) program. Since then a series of crackdowns has been unsuccessful. Clearing rates in the region seem to rise and fall independent of these programs" (Fearnside 684). The regulation methods could not solve or handle every aspect of the issue. Another example can be found with the idea of only reforestation. It takes "about 25 years for reforestation to render it ready for reuse" (Turner 387-388). This means that implementing only reforestation couldn't keep up with the companies who answer the high demands of people wanting forest resources. A one part solution wouldn't be practical.

In addition to a one-part solution not being realistic, the proposed solution is the best way to go about resolving the issue because the organizations, companies and politicians could provide the influence to assist in fixing the problem. With the support of important people or organizations behind a movement, much can be accomplished. These individuals have the influence to make it unpopular to deforest and to lobby and create laws to make it more difficult to deforest. For example, the Penan, a group of indigenous people of the tropical island of Borneo, have been facing deforestation by extensive logging and by development of plantations backed by the government of Sarawak, Malaysia. The Penan have struggled to fight the government by themselves. While they do have some groups taking note of the Penan's plight, if this group of people had more influential organizations and people behind their cause, the government would be pressured to stop its current practices of backing the deforestation because it would be unpopular for them to continue to endorse deforestation. A successful example is the Kayapo Indians of the Brazilian Amazon. They have faced deforestation problems since the 1960s. After trying to reason with the government themselves and not being very successful, this ethnic group took it upon themselves to gain attention through violence, protesting and the media. This rewarded them with the influence of "...important organizations, scientific specialists, and politicians..." (Turner 400). These people helped influence the government to recognize the Kayapo Indians' rights to their land and create better, more beneficial laws.

Another aspect that makes this solution path the most effective is that the influential people would have the money and resources to fight and reverse the deforestation. The situation lends itself well to the phrase: "It's not what you know, it's who you know." In this case, it is who you know who also has money. Money is a very powerful motivator in today's world and it can be the catalyst for change. With money in the hands of the powerful who are on the side of the indigenous people, processes such as reforestation and educating about sustainable development could take place (Reed). It takes money to get the trees and man-power to augment the tropical forest's natural reforestation and it would also require money to begin a system to teach settlers and possibly even companies about the environmental benefits and especially teach the social benefits of sustainable development.

While changing the current attitudes of deforestation has many benefits, continuing on the same path also has benefits that are appealing to some indigenous people. Deforestation and development benefit the indigenous people by giving them resources they did not previously have. It provides modern products and conveniences that they could not access before. For example, a study was conducted to assess the attitude of the Penan's toward the deforestation and development occurring on Borneo. Many Penans were in favor of the development that improved their housing and provided education for

their children, paved roads, electricity and more adequate health services (Selvadurai et al. 75). These things would make life easier; however, in the long run, it would be more beneficial to the environment and people to stop the deforestation and development. It is definitely more beneficial to keep the forests pristine for the sake of the environment, such as air and water quality, carbon sequestration, global warming, biodiversity, etc. The environment then directly impacts the native people. If indigenous people want development, they can go somewhere that has the modern amenities. The individuals who are against development and deforestation should be able to stay in the place their people have lived for many years. The short term benefits do not outweigh the long term benefits for this issue.

Besides making an argument for the short term benefits of deforestation, others might make the argument that there are many more important or more serious problems currently plaguing the world. The earth is dealing with dilemmas such as: nuclear weapon threats, natural disasters, countries in turmoil, cancer and other incurable diseases, and many others that could be considered more important than deforestation. While this is a valid argument, deforestation and the detriment to the people who rely on the forest are a serious global issues. Even if one is not impressed with maintaining the tropical forests of the world, the way of life and human rights of the people who live in those tropical forests are an important issue.

In conclusion, deforestation is an issue that has been around for centuries and has gradually increased in magnitude. Although it has not been a focus of deforestation studies until recently, the indigenous people who live in the forests are negatively impacted by the environmental destruction. They are suffering from poverty, disease, a loss of their knowledge of the environment, and the perpetuation of environmental degradation that is destroying their culture and way of life. “[I]ndigenous forest-dwelling peoples are not just a passive part of the problem, but an active part of the solution...forest peoples, no matter how apparently primitive, remote, or numerically insignificant, can become potent combatants and allies in the struggle to avert ecological disaster” (Turner 400). Through gaining the support of people and organizations in positions of power, the land of native people around the world can become reforested and protected and the rest of humankind can enjoy the benefits of tropical forests as well.

Works Cited

- Awe, F., et al. "Impact of Deforestation on the Economic Activities of People in Okun Area of Kogi State, Nigeria." *Continental Journal Of Agricultural Economics* 6.1 (2012): 17-22. Academic Search Premier. Web. 14 Nov. 2013.
- Donovan, D.G., and R. K. Puri. "Learning From Traditional Knowledge of Non-Timber Forest Products: Penan Benalui and the Autecology of *Aquilaria* in Indonesian Borneo." *Ecology & Society* 9.3 (2004): 1. Academic Search Premier. Web. 14 Nov. 2013.
- Fearnside, Philip M. "Deforestation In Brazilian Amazonia: History, Rates, And Consequences." *Conservation Biology* 19.3 (2005): 680-688. Academic Search Premier. Web. 13 Nov. 2013.
- Meijaard, Erik, et al. "People's Perceptions About the Importance of Forests on Borneo." *Plos ONE* 8.9 (2013): 1-14. Academic Search Premier. Web. 8 Nov. 2013.

Mitten, Lauren. "The Human Cost of Deforestation." *Peace Review* 9.4 (1997): 549. Academic Search Premier. Web. 1 Nov. 2013.

Reed, Richard K. "Forest Development the Indian Way." *Conformity and Conflict: Readings in Cultural Anthropology*. Ed. James Spradley and David W. McCurdy. 13th ed. Upper Saddle River: Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2009. 124-134. Print.

Selvadurai, Sivapalan, et al. "Penan Natives' Discourse For and Against Development." *Asian Social Science* 9.8 (2013): 72-78. Academic Search Premier. Web. 1 Nov. 2013.

Swenson, Jennifer J., et al. "Gold Mining in the Peruvian Amazon: Global Prices, Deforestation, and Mercury Imports." *Plos ONE* 6.4 (2011): 1-7. Academic Search Premier. Web. 14 Nov. 2013.

2nd Place Winner: Ashton Jessup, "Ever Texting Never Moving"
For Professor Jennifer Sorensen

In the last decade, texting, for better or for worse, has spread like wild-fire revolutionizing the world of communication. It's no surprise that young people are most proficient, but even the older generation is beginning to feel its effects. Text messaging is the suspect of many social issues but its effects on society are just beginning to be understood. One question worth contemplation is as follows: does the number of texts sent in a day somehow adversely affect the efficiency of the average person, student, or worker? In this analysis, various studies exploring the negative effects of excessive texting, and specifically texting during class among college students are examined. Looking at the larger implications of these studies, it becomes apparent, that the negative effects of texting extremes are not limited to college students but are also extended to individuals, workers, and society as a whole.

Not surprisingly, texting while driving is related to numerous avoidable tragedies. But one aspect that is not so widely understood is what effect the frequency of texting in class can have on academic success. Texting has become very commonplace; texting while in class has become a social norm that is difficult to reverse. It becomes especially tempting to text in class when the information being shared is perceived as much less interesting as something that is going on in a friend's life. Many people assume that it makes little difference whether they text in class or not. For this issue, a careful analysis of a paper by Sylvia E. McDonald called "The Effects and Predictor Value of In-Class Texting Behavior on Final Course Grades" is very enlightening. This study looks at the factors contributing to the likelihood of a freshman college student to excel academically. She pulls from other sources that state that ACT/SAT test scores, GPA, and class attendance are the largest factors in predicting if a student will succeed. Sylvia McDonald expands this understanding in her study of a number of classes at a university, each with different "in class phone policies", who she surveyed at time of course completion to ascertain knowledge on final grades and "in class texting habits". As a result, she concluded that "The more a student participated in in-class texting behavior, the lower their final grade" (McDonald 39). The results were sufficient to calculate a predictor value of 22% for the factor of texting in class causing decreased likelihood of success in the classroom.

From this study, it becomes evident, that texting in class plays a significant factor in achieving lower grades. It is interesting to note that, not only did it have a negative effect on grades, but was also a big enough factor, that it could be used to partially predict the success of students. This trend of trying to multitask while performing other tasks also correlates to the workplace. If a student is willing to text during class, he or she will, likely, not think twice about texting during work. When this trend increases, the declining productivity of the employee and place of employment, like grades, is imminent. From this study, it becomes clear, that the distraction of texting while performing other tasks plays a significant factor in the decrease of other achievements, such as, but not limited to, GPA.

If a simple web search is conducted to ascertain the average number of texts sent by individuals age 18-24, the results vary anywhere from 40-100(+) sent and received per day. While it is hard to estimate an exact number, it is obvious that a large number of texts are sent and received daily, which also correlates to a large amount of time spent texting and not doing other things; from a time perspective, it is clear that more texting equals less time spent focusing on a specific subject and therefore less

retention of new information. A study conducted by Brittany Harman and Toru Sato called "Cell Phone Use and Grade Point Average among Undergraduate University Students" found conclusive results of frequent texting on undergraduate students' grades. The conclusion was, "The more an individual text messages, the lower his or her GPA is likely to be" (548). Texting not only ineffective due to its multitasking nature, but is also a large time commitment. This paper about texting's effect on grades doesn't relate to distractions in class, but rather the time commitment of texting. The article continues,

Not being constantly preoccupied with a cell phone allows the individual to have more time to reflect on information presented to him or her throughout the day, and make meaningful associations between what they are learning and their own experiences, and participate in more advanced communication with others about academic material than what is typically communicated through text messages. (Harman-Sato 547)

In contrast to the results found about texting, phone calls were also investigated in the study, but "No correlations were observed between... the number of phone calls made, received, or the number of people an individual called" (548). It is interesting to note that the frequency of texting affected academic performance but the amount of time spent on calls did not. The reason for this is likely due to the nature of texting, which breaks up simple activities into larger and more scattered blocks of time.

The implication that texting while performing other activities results in a large amount of wasted time is supported by a study conducted by Amanda Gingerich and Tara Lineweaver. In their paper "OMG! Texting in Class = U Fail :(Empirical Evidence that Text Messaging during Class Disrupts Comprehension" they asked two groups to read a research article then take a quiz afterwards. One group was asked to text a prescribed message before reading, while the other group was asked to text the message while reading the article, therefore simulating the time commitment of texting. Not only were the scores of the "texting-while reading" group lower, but another observation was that "After 15 minutes, 70% of the "text-first" group had started the quiz compared to only 40% of the "text-while reading" group" (45). From these results it can be deduced that excessive texting equates to decreased comprehension and more wasted time for undergraduate students, which is no doubt also true for other ages of students and individuals alike.

While texting may seem like a harmless activity that requires little time, the time can add up, if an individual is not careful, and result in decreased productivity of students and individuals alike. Regardless of all the other technological distractions afforded by a cellular phone, especially smartphones, it is irrefutable that excessive texting can diminish personal achievements whether academic, personal, or corporate and, moreover, result in the norm of "ever texting, never moving".

Works Cited

- Gingerich, Amanda C. Lineweaver, Tara T. "OMG! Texting in Class = U Fail :(Empirical Evidence That Text Messaging During Class Disrupts Comprehension." *Teaching of Psychology* 41.1 (2014): 44-51. Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection. Web. 6 Mar. 2014.
- Harman, Brittany A., and Toru Sato. "Cell Phone Use and Grade Point Average among Undergraduate University Students." *College Student Journal* 45.3 (2011): 544-549. Academic Search Premier. Web. 6 Mar. 2014.

McDonald, Sylvia E. "The Effects and Predictor Value of In-Class Texting Behavior on Final Course Grades." *College Student Journal* 47.1 (2013): 34-40. Academic Search Premier. Web. 6 Mar. 2014.

Expressive- English 2010

1st Place Winner: Sean Brandenburg, “The Not so Big Game”

For Professor Patricia Eagan

I have never liked football. To be honest, I’ve just never liked sports in general. Basketball, baseball, tennis, badminton, soccer, or anything involving physical activity and a ball of some kind; none of them really have any kind of appeal to me. I’ve never really been able to take sports seriously at any point in my life. I could never understand why there’s so much hype behind big games like the Super Bowl, or how people could get so worked up whenever their favorite team lost. Conversely, I’ve never cared even remotely for high school football games. I don’t care if they are supposed to represent our school, all they do is butt heads and throw around an inflated patch of plastic and rubber. I’ve always had more interest in stories and movies than physical activities. Just entertainment in general, stuff like video games and music, or plays and books; I was always more invested in that than any sport.

This did not exactly change when I got into Student Council in my senior year of high school. Sure, I was representing senior class and by proxy the school by being elected to that position, but I still didn’t care at all about the sporting events. There wasn’t any point to it. I had joined to actually voice the unpopular opinions of other people like me, who despised the fact that sports got every single bit of attention, yet the arts hardly had anything to them. The language classes were always skimmed at every event. There were hardly any art galleries or shows where you couldn’t catch someone trying to physically touch a gorgeous clay pot that someone had slaved over a hot kiln to make. I wanted to show the Student Council that there were other voices that weren’t the all-powerful, high and mighty, clean-cut, holier-than-thou popular students. Someone had to speak up for some of the little guys, and I wanted to bring that to their attention.

Yet whenever I tried to tell that to my fellow council members, they would always laugh it off and say I had to go to all the home games anyways. It was my “obligation” as a member of student council. Of course, being the cheeky little bugger that I am, I put it off until the very last home game, where our precious Snow Canyon Warriors would square off against Dixie High School’s team.

It must have been easy to tell just how excited about this I was, because the rest of the council actually called in one of the faculty advisors to tell me that I had to go.

“It’s required to show your school spirit, and as a member of student council, it’s your responsibility,” he’d told me. “You need to show up.”

Needless to say, I wasn’t very ecstatic about the whole ordeal. Unfortunately, it was technically what I had signed up for. So when Friday night came around, I had to throw on semi-presentable attire and walk straight to the high school’s football field. There was a line in front of me the size of a line for the bumper cars at a carnival, and the air already reeked of sweat and stale sports drinks. Summer was still very much present, making itself known with every passing minute. By the time I had reached the front of the line, I was already exhausted and irritated with everything about the idea of high school football.

As per my usual luck, by the time I had paid for my ticket and stumbled over to the bleachers, the Senior Class President had finally spotted me, and wandered over to give me a rather cheerful greeting, the

same kind that a kindergarten teacher gives their students before they make them read a scientific textbook. That look was given to me right before she started pestering me about how I hadn't worn my Student Council jacket, and that I was a few minutes late compared to everyone else. I told her about the ungodly long amount of time I spent waiting in that splendidly odorous line, and she responded with what I still consider to be the most irritating response I have ever gotten in my high school student government career:

"You had to pay? Didn't you know that student council gets in free to our home games?"

didn't talk to her for the rest of the event. Instead, I trudged my way to a free corner in the bleachers, and grumped about as I waited for the football game to begin. All I can say is that it was unnecessarily boring. None of my friends had decided to go to the game that night, and everyone else I saw there I either didn't care for, or simply didn't recognize. I wasn't smart enough to bring a book, and my iPod had long since drained its battery on the walk over. It was thanks to that unlikely set of circumstances that I had to actually pay attention to either the game, or what was going on around me.

It was the single most boring experience of my life.

I wish that were an exaggeration! I could not find even an ounce of excitement in me as I watched the two teams charge recklessly into each other with clumsy tackles, then throw a ball, then run around like headless chickens, then kick the ball, then line themselves up, and repeat the process over and over again. There was nothing stimulating to it. Even the audience's cheering and groans did nothing to urge me into feeling anything for the sport. I'll admit, I smiled maybe once or twice when I saw one of the players whom I held a grudge toward get sacked, but otherwise I may as well have been being lectured on the semantics of watching paint dry

That really took me by surprise. I'm usually someone who can keep themselves entertained pretty well. I mean, I study theater, I can always think up a good story to expand on, or I can just daydream the day away. But right there at that game? I felt absolutely nothing. So I latched onto that thought process and tried to work out why that was. Obviously, there was something to the game that everyone liked in some way. Why couldn't I find any entertainment in this? It wasn't exactly rocket science, or Grade-A entertainment, but even then I should have been able to keep myself from being this bored.

I tried listening and watching the people around me. I wanted to know just what they were seeing that I wasn't.

"Excuse me," I asked a guy sitting in front of me, "do you know if this game is entertaining or not?"

"What are you talking about?" he replied, giving me a look that clearly stated he thought I was a moron and should shut up and let him enjoy his game.

I waved it off, and went back to puzzling over the entire ordeal. The football field was nothing special in itself. Indeed, it was the stereotypical metal bleachers, tall lights, and fake plastic grass that made up every other high school's field. The refreshments were more expensive than what you could pick up in a convenience store, and the players were anything but skilled.

So what was it? Why didn't I feel any satisfaction watching this?

Around that time, I started to think about how much I would've rather been watching a movie at home. There was supposed to be a premier of *Shawshank Redemption* on one of the channels, and I wondered why I enjoyed watching that more than sports, or even participating in them. I mean, I was actually right there, seeing the action firsthand, rather than sitting on a couch somewhere with a bowl of popcorn and staring at a small screen.

Then it really just smacked me in the face right there: I wasn't being challenged. Well, not in the way I felt was worth being challenged over. To me, this was all just a game. There wasn't any deeper meaning to it than that. There were no scenarios that made me wonder about anything other than my own boredom, no characters or story to the situation that I was attached to. The act of watching something as repetitive as football, and at a place as bland as the football field was just that: repetitive. There was really no variety to it other than the teams, the coaches, and the plays. With a book, you can get so much more variety. Characters, time periods, lessons that are taught, villains, word choice. There's just so much variety to it that even if you read it once, if it's good enough and captivating enough, you'll read it again.

Sports are a strictly one time only event, and even then, the important parts can be predicted. You know one team is going to lose, and the other is going to win. There are going to be injuries of some sort, someone is going to need the referee to come in, etc. With stories, though, it can go anywhere. It doesn't have to be just one or the other, it can be both, or ambiguous, or even none at all. I realized that while at the game.

So why didn't anyone else at the game think like that? Well, the more I thought about it, the more I began to think about the fact that I didn't care. Sports would never be my thing. I could respect the people who did like it, sure, but it was never meant for me.

This also gave me a good peace of mind. Because right after I had that realization, I got up from my seat, and walked out just as nonchalantly as possible. The Senior Class President saw this, and tried to convince me to stay, bringing up the same speech the faculty advisor had given me before.

I still remember my exact words to her. I ended up quoting *South Park*, a TV show that I knew she didn't watch, but hated anyways. Looking back on it now, I guess it was my own poetic way of telling her that even if I hated something, I could at least give it a try. If I didn't like it, I could just get up and walk away. Much like the character of Cartman from the aforementioned TV show.

"Screw you guys, I'm going home."

2nd Place Winner: Megan Wesko, "Owl Land"

For Dr. James Aton

A great horned owl sits high atop a quaking aspen tree. Its eyes are a rich reddish brown ringed in black, like that of the shadow cast by the early morning sun's glare on the green saltgrass flats. The half-acre aspen grove extends, its roots connected as one beneath the ground, to the edge of an embankment that holds the turquoise waters of a fifty-meter-long reservoir. Red Angus cows of a nearby farm come to wet their cud-filled mouths. The owl sits. With its mottled coat of pale browns, washed-out grays and dark streaks, it waits for the day to begin, for it is in the nearby fields of alfalfa and clover that the owl goes to feast with ease. It rotates its head, once, twice, in an eerie sight of torsion and alertness. The sun, a true glutton for brightness, rises higher in the morning sky with each passing moment. With a single bow to its feet and a ballerina-like grand plié of its legs, the owl pushes off a branch, wings wide and flapping, in a fluid feat of gravity-defying grace.

With the great horned owl's exit, enters a group of northern ravens. The ravens soar above the aspen grove, shy yet conspicuous, with sleek black coats, letting their guttural croaks and complex intelligence echo for miles. The swaying thorny-branches and muted yellow fruit of the Russian olive tree seem the perfect place for the ravens to perch and scavenge. Introduced as an ornamental from Eurasia, this tree has now become an invasive species, choking out natural species and hoarding water supplies. The ravens, however, use it to their advantage, peering out over the reservoir and searching for their next meal.

The oval-shaped reservoir is surrounded by a lush and varied landscape of softstem bulrush, rabbit foot grass, Kentucky blue grass, box elder, willow, tamarisk and smooth scouring rush. As one steps closer to the edge of the reservoir, a startled jump from a bullfrog can be detected by the erratic shaking of nearby broad-leaved cattails. With five-foot-long, narrow, blade-like, sharp green leaves, it seems unnatural that a brown, furry cylinder could rest successfully upon such a fragile, thin-looking stem. It is in the sea-green waters with tropical island hues that the bullfrog, with its yellowish-brown neoprene-like skin, dives beneath the water's surface to escape a predator's threat.

A fleet of young large-mouth bass floats lifelessly adrift in the gentle swaying of their aqueous home. It isn't until the head of a mallard duck submerges into the water that the large-mouth bass swim ferociously away. A group of mallards buoyantly rest their water-slick feathered bodies on the water's surface. The male mallard's jade-colored head and neck looks as soft as velvet. He glides effortlessly across the water with his prominent yellow bill and grey body. His female counterpart is heavily mottled with brown feathers and a pale orange bill. After a single rush of wind, the ducks startle. A group of ten splashes up and out of the water, airborne for only a few moments before returning to a spot closer to the edge of the reservoir in a short crescendo of flight.

At the edge of the water the most regal and mysterious of birds, the great blue heron, stands in perfect stillness. Its yellow bill juts out from a small white head with beady, fierce eyes and a black feather plume. Its body is blue-grey with a long and curved thin neck that seems almost as long and narrow as its dark, lanky legs. In the same instant one catches sight of the great blue heron, that its wide wingspan and elegant body can be seen circling above the quaking aspen grove, before it disappears once more.

The wide expanse of aspen trees provides a welcomed and unusual shade in a landscape of desert valley and farmland. The late afternoon sun glimmers through the treetops, creating god-like sunrays that beam through the openings of a network of limbs and branches. The soft and peaceful light lands on the leaves of a big sagebush and the pale purple petals of the desert star flower. A well-trodden path through the blanket of saltgrass covers the ground below the aspen grove, where a young mule deer and its mother can be seen. Their white muzzles graze while their short black tipped tails stick up in the air. The mother, with a body of reddish brown fur, lifts up her head with oversized ears and stands still while listening for a possible threat. The fawn mimics her actions and waits for her muzzle to return to the saltgrass once again before it does the same.

As the sun's rays weaken and a salmon colored sky touches all that it lands upon, one notices six bird's nests three feet wide composed of various branches and twigs scattered among the aspen trees, a magical sight indeed! In these nests, perched high above the ground, the great horned owls rest and bear their young. With the sun a mere memory, and a dewy purple-pink twilight settling among the tall and scattered trees, one great horned owl glides into its nest. It isn't long before another owl comes to perch in its barricade of branches. Another comes. Another. Another. As night begins to fall, the day comes to an end, in owl land.