THE SCRIBLERIAN

Fall 2005 Edition

A publication sponsored by the English Department and the Braithwaite Writing Center, the Scriblerian is a publication for students by students. Revived last fall after a two-year hiatus, this on-line journal is the result of a competition organized by Writing Center tutors for ENGL 1010 and 2010 students. The Fall 2005 contest was planned and supervised by Chair Jessica Hollinger with the help of Sara Stork, Sarah LaRue, Nic Barney, and Sara Cleveland. Aiding the committee with the judging were Kodi Quarnberg and Sara Ferriola.

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Argumentative- English 1010

1st Place Winner: Aaron Timpson, "Archimedes: A Genius of Mathematics"

To be classified as a genius of mathematics, a person would have to discover and add a new concept to the world of mathematics, greatly simplify a previous concept, or have his or her ideas/proofs accepted and never proven wrong. Examples of such genius mathematicians are Pythagoras, Euclid, and Newton. In good company with these brilliant mathematicians, Archimedes discovered so many principles in the world of mathematics that his geometrical discoveries (circles, spheres, and cones) and inventions (pulleys and levers) laid the foundations for modern day mathematics and physics. Because of his accomplishments, Archimedes can be considered to be a genius of mathematics.

Today, it would be almost impossible for anyone to qualify as a genius of mathematics, but in the time of Archimedes discovering a new concept identified a mathematician. In his famous theorem, for example, Pythagoras asserted the relation of squares on the sides of a right triangle to one another. Euclid found the way area and lengths of sides related to any sided polygon. Discoveries can also come from the simplification of a previous concept or theorem. For example, Pythagoras derived his theorem from the knowledge he gained at Plato's Academy, which Euclid used to prove his polygonal geometry. Archimedes used Euclid's works to derive π, by the "method of exhaustion." As one commentator notes, "It was Archimedes who laid the foundations for what we know today as *integral calculus*, in his development of the 'method of exhaustion'" (Harding 2). Newton, recognizing the genius behind the "method of exhaustion," built upon the idea, and created calculus. Through calculus, Newton showed that Pythagoras, Euclid, and Archimedes were correct in their discoveries and have not yet been proven wrong.

Archimedes also used this method to calculate the area of a circle by using the area of polygons. "By continually increasing the number of sides [a polygon has as the polygon changes from a triangle, to a square, to a pentagon, etc.], he 'exhausted' the circle by reducing the area of the circle not covered by the polygon. He established that the area of the circle was exactly proportional to the square of its radius," a commentator explains, pointing out that Archimedes thus defined this constant of proportionality π (Harding 3). As soon as Archimedes had derived this constant, he began working on the geometry of three dimensional figures. He was "the first, in fact, to resolve the complicated geometry of circles, spheres, cones, conoids, spheroids, and spirals" (Frye 53).

Not only did Archimedes derive his constant of proportionality, but he used it to prove the volume calculations of some three dimensional figures (spheres, cones, etc.), which opened up an entirely new mathematical field, because his geometry was not confined to the two dimensional plain. Archimedes greatly expanded upon the knowledge he gained from Pythagoras's and Euclid's work, by opening up mathematics to a three dimensional plane. Even though he did not greatly simplify a previous concept of mathematics, he moved mathematics into the three dimensional world.

By developing and expanding his knowledge to a three dimensional plane, Archimedes has been titled as a physicist as well as a mathematician because of the many things he invented and the principles he discovered. Among these principles is that of the pulley, which is a circular device with a rope around it that is used to change the direction of force acting on an object; this change of direction allows the force being exerted on the rope to be focused on an object to pull it in a specific direction. Another principle is

that of the lever, which is a bar or piece of wood with one of its ends inserted under a heavy object with a force pushing down on the other end of the lever, against a pivot point, to move the object. Archimedes became the "first physicist to describe the principle of the lever" (Frye 54). He demonstrated these principles (pulley and lever) to the common people by attaching a boat to a pulley and lever system, and he pulled the boat onto the shore. It is from demonstrations like this that King Heiro II, of Syracuse, Sicily, noticed the discoveries Archimedes was making and called on him to construct a defense system for the city of Syracuse (Archimedes' home town) against the Romans. Archimedes used the principles of pulleys and levers to engineer and invent his machinery. One of these inventions is known to posterity as Achimedes' Crow," [which] sank not only ships but Roman morale as well. Known for their "iron hands," Archimedes' most fearsome weapons also utilized beams that could be swung out over the water. These arms, however, dropped hooks rather than stones. Controlled by an operator behind the walls, the grapple would clutch at the ship until it grasped the prow. Then, driven by heavy weights that forced down the other end of the beam, the claw would spring back up and yank the ship by the prow, practically standing it on its stern before letting loose and dropping it. Some ships fell on their sides. Many took on water. Others capsized. (Frye 54)

These weapons made it very difficult for Rome to attack the city from the water, which was their greatest battle tactic of the time. The Romans were forced to attack by land, but Archimedes invented other contraptions like the catapult, a device that is used to hurl big boulders across a distance, to keep the Roman army outside the city walls. Rome attempted to conquer the city many times, but Archimedes continued to show that he could withstand the Roman army by utilizing his inventions. From all of the mathematics used in his inventions, Archimedes completely intertwined mathematics and physics.

Even though many mathematicians today achieve their PhD in mathematics, only rarely can any of them can come up with their own undiscovered theorems as Archimedes did. If a modern-day mathematician were to discover something remarkably true, he or she would be classified as a genius. The main reason that men and women are not achieving such world changing discoveries in mathematics is because so many concepts have already been unveiled; in ancient days, there were so many concepts that were yet to be disclosed that mathematicians were painting on a clean canvas. Of course, such opportunity came with a challenge. Archimedes not only had to develop the geometry he did, he had to do so on the foundation of the work of only two other mathematicians-- Pythagoras and Euclid.

The world of mathematics has been greatly improved since the ancient days because of all the discoveries that Archimedes made throughout his life time. Not only did Archimedes discover so many true concepts and prove that they were true, but all of his work has led to furthering the over-all knowledge of mathematics that we have today. This is why Archimedes is known not only as a mathematician, but as a genius of mathematics.

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2nd Place Winner: Richard Brooksby, "Bias in Media"

We, the people, are responsible for the progress of the community and the nation. In order to help with this process, we are required to make decisions all the time that can help or hurt us. The most common of these decisions are political in nature. We have the right and privilege to elect to political office those who we think are most capable. We have the privilege to vote on the laws by which we will be governed. These decisions require information; the way in which we are informed about such critical decisions is through the news, magazines, newspapers, and other forms of journalism. These writings are not, however, the best ways of getting clear, unbiased facts on the subjects at hand. The people in the media have their own opinions, and those opinions manifest themselves in their reporting; consequently, a bias is caused that results in insufficient information. Because of the bias that exists among the media, we are forced to make important decisions based on inadequate information.

The media is the only way in which we receive our information about things that happen in the world around us, other than experiencing them first hand, but the media is not an impartial spectator. By receiving this information, we can make informed decisions and contribute to our community; however, we do not receive the facts and nothing but the facts. We receive what the media deems important, and we receive it how they want to present it. The media evaluates importance and presentation, to some measure, based on their personal beliefs. When taken as a whole, the general beliefs of journalists are one-sided. More than six times as many journalists call themselves liberal than conservative (Noyes 6). Due to this bias, we are not presented with an impartial view so as to make our own decisions. We are told what to think and believe because of a lack of ideas and options presented.

The bias of journalists is prevalent in the world around us. For example, Dan Rather is one of the better known liberal journalists. For over twenty years he has been reporting the news with a spin. In May of 2001, he made the statement with regard to Bill Clinton that "you can be an honest person and lie about any number of things." In February of 2002, he also said that "a big lie, or maybe several big lies over a lifetime, does not mean that [one is] an inherently dishonest person" ("Dan Rather's Outrageous Liberal Bias"). In reporting the news, Dan Rather clearly shows his favoritism towards liberal figures as opposed to conservative figures. The bias of reporters can be detrimental.

In addition to reporting, journalistic writings are not the best ways of getting clear unbiased facts on the subjects at hand. Fortunately, there are impartial forms of getting information about some subjects. All laws that are passed are written out, and there is a hard copy of the exact law. One can obtain a copy of this law, read it, and come to a conclusion based on what one believes. To find out about candidates or political parties, there are platform statements that are available about those running for office that one can also read. These platform statements, although written to favor the candidate, are the accepted and generally most reliable way to gather information about the subject. This is, however, a long and hard process. These laws and platform statements are written with a lot of lawyer terminology and may be confusing to the general public. They are often long with many loopholes. In order to read and understand these, one would have to take much more time than most have or are willing to give. Therefore, we, or more generally the media, pay someone else to do the research. This person can draw their own conclusions, which can also be interpreted by the media in the way that a given reporter believes.

When we receive information from the media, we cannot always trust this information to be complete and correct. Sometimes in the zeal of finding a great story or the pressure of meeting a deadline, journalists will publish or broadcast information that has not been confirmed and could be faulty. An example of that is the mounting evidence that CBS had broadcast four forged memos against President Bush's National Guard record. Bill Kristol, publisher of the *Weekly Standard*, is of the opinion that CBS did not take the necessary precautions to authenticate the memos before airing the story and now is not taking the necessary steps to try to prove their validity (Baker sec. 3). On May 13th, 2003, Dan Rather was reporting on President Bush's new tax cuts and said, "In a CBS News/ *New York Times* poll…less than half of the respondents thought the Bush tax cut would actually help the economy." What he failed to mention was that more than twice as many people said the tax cuts would help the economy (41%) rather than hurt the economy (19%) ("Dan Rather's Outrageous Liberal Bias"). The numbers were clearly in favor of the tax cut, but the way in which Dan Rather presented the information made it seem like the public was against it. Dan Rather decided what he wanted to say, and then he looked at the numbers and figured out a way to make them say what he wanted. We are left with nothing less than to question all information we receive as correct and complete. The only safe way we have is to listen to all and throw away everything that we cannot completely trust.

The aspect of mistrust is not necessarily prevalent in all facets of reporting. There are many subjects that can be reported. Some of these, such as the weather, local and national incidents, and sports, are not biased by a broadcaster's political views but require reporting only based on hard facts. It would be hard to report the local weather with a political spin. The subjects that require "hard reporting" are not, however, subjects over which we need to make a decision, more than whether to bring an umbrella or not. They are solely facts that we absorb and may remember.

Reporting that can be done with the bias of the journalist is, unfortunately, the reporting that we generally make decisions about. This causes us to make an uninformed or badly informed decision. In order to make a decision, one must see both sides of an argument and come to an educated choice on the matter. By only hearing the side for which the reporter is biased, you are short information which might have changed your mind. In the article "Not Necessarily the News," the Fox News senior editorial vice president, John Moody, is quoted as saying to his staff in an e-mail, "The tax cut passed last night by the Senate, though less than half what Bush originally proposed, contains some important victories for the administration. The D.C. crew will parse the bill and explain how it will fatten—marginally—your wallet" (Moody 20). From this statement it is clear that John Moody has chosen the side that he wishes to favor, and he then reports it with his personal bias. The listeners of the report receive a one sided view of those tax cuts and are left to decide if they agree or not based on the bias of Fox News. Because of the bias that exists among the media, we are forced to make important decisions based on inadequate information.

The media is the way in which we receive our information about the happenings in the world; however, because of the bias of the media, the media is not an impartial spectator. The media can not always be trusted to give us complete and correct information. As we have seen through the many examples on both sides of the spectrum, journalistic writings are not the best ways of getting clear unbiased facts on the subjects at hand. Although the bias of the media is not prevalent in all aspects of reporting, the reporting that can be done with the bias of the journalist is the reporting that we generally make decisions about. This causes the problem of forcing us to choose between two options with defective information.

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Expressive- English 1010

1st Place Winner: Kerstin Bolton, "Grandpa's Bullet"

I can remember the alarm clock going off at 6:00 a.m. and the headache I had from crying so long the night before. The instant I woke up, the tears started again, and every part of my body ached from sadness. I was getting ready to attend a funeral that afternoon. Not just any funeral, but the funeral of one of the greatest men I knew, my grandfather, my hero. The viewing the night before gave me just a hint of how hard Grandpa's funeral was going to be. It felt so final; today was the end of one of the best chapters in my life. In just one afternoon it was impossible to pay tribute to such an incredible man who had shaped and cared for me for 27 years. Little did I know, I would be given something special that day which would be a sweet reminder of my Grandpa and would deeply touch my heart.

The morning dragged on forever, even though there were so many things to do in preparation for Grandpa's funeral services. I remember walking around my grandma's house, laughing with my sister one minute and then crying with my mom the next. My emotions were in such an upheaval that I could not make sense of anything. I could hear when others in the house were talking to me, but I had to focus in on their faces in order to comprehend the words. At one point I found myself in Grandpa's closet hugging his clothes and sobbing. The sobs came so hard and so quick that I could not catch my breath. The scent of Grandpa's clothes took me back to when I was a little girl. My head spun with memories as I recalled always wanting to be with my Grandpa. Grandma would often pick me up from elementary school when my mom was at work. I would immediately run to Grandpa's workshop to give him a hug and tell him about my day at school. Grandpa would listen intently to what I had to say no matter how busy he was with his work. His attention and love always told me that I was important to him. I do not know when my head stopped spinning, but the reality of the day hit me hard again as I pulled my black dress from the closet. It was time to get dressed for my hero's funeral.

The time arrived for my husband and me to leave. As my husband, Dave, led me out of the house by my hand, the hot July sun blinded me. The inside of the car must have been 120 degrees, but it was like a warm blanket comforting me and giving me strength to face what was coming next. I was so glad to have Dave by my side. I needed his strength to help me through the day. Dave and I arrived at the church early for our private family prayer. As we walked into the room where my Grandpa was, I could feel my throat quickly close off and the hot tears instantly well up in my eyes again. I knew as I stared at my Grandpa resting so peacefully that this would be the last time I would ever be able to see him. Even though I knew his spirit was no longer with him, I was not ready for that reality. During our family prayer I could hear the sobs of my family in the close distance. What I heard most though was the selfish pleading in my mind, "No, please Grandpa, don't leave me. I'm not ready to say good-bye." Then somewhere in the middle of my thoughts, I heard my husband in a shaky, quivering voice say "Amen." That was it; just like that, in a split second, it was time to say my final good-bye to Grandpa. My body was shaking uncontrollably as the funeral director closed the lid to his casket, never to be opened again.

Once again memories flooded my mind like a tidal wave that would not break. I felt my heart physically ache as I realized that I would no longer be able to sit in Grandpa's boat with him at Kolob Reservoir and fish as we talked for hours. I cried as I remembered the joy in my Grandpa's eyes when he taught me

how to water ski. There were so many untouchable gifts with which he had blessed my life. Through the tears I smiled slightly inside for just a moment knowing that the night before I had given Grandpa a gift. I wrote a poem for him that I would read during his services, but I wanted him to be able to take a copy of it with him. I do not know why I felt impelled to leave a copy of the poem in his casket; I suppose it was just one last special moment between a granddaughter and her hero.

As we walked behind Grandpa's casket draped with the American flag to the chapel, I was overwhelmed by the vast number of people who filled every pew to pay respects to him. I remember walking to the front of the chapel, feeling hands gently taking mine as I slowly passed by the pews as if the unknown faces were telling me in their own way that they understood how I was feeling. It was not until all six of the grandchildren stood to sing "I Am a Child of God" that I was able to put faces on those who had helped usher me to the front of the room. I felt peace as the six of us grandchildren stood arm-in-arm singing for our Grandpa. When I stood to recite the poem I had written for my hero, I silently prayed that these simple words would somehow be enough to pay tribute to the man who had loved and cared for me unconditionally. My hands and voice were shaking as I tried to read. When I looked up I could almost see Grandpa at the back of the chapel smiling at me as if to tell me that I could get through this. I only wish this comfort had lasted through the rest of the services.

After the funeral services, my Grandpa's family and friends went to the cemetery for the graveside services. Once again, my husband was a pillar of strength. As he drove me to the cemetery, no words were spoken, but through the pain of my loss, I could feel Dave's hand firmly but gently holding mine. Slowly stepping out of the car I again felt the piercing pain of the hot July sun beat down on my tear-stained face. The smell of the fresh-cut lawn in the heat nauseated me. I felt things begin to whirl around me as I watched the pallbearers pull my Grandpa's casket from the hearse. My family and I gathered under the tent as my Grandpa's grave was surrounded by the flowers from his services filling the air with a bitter-sweet fragrance.

As the graveside services began, I had no idea the magnitude of the meaning of the American flag carefully draped over Grandpa's casket. My Grandpa fought in both World War II and the Korean War. He was buried with full military honors which were presented by the American Legion Post 90. My heart wept inside as I saw the full military dressed gentlemen of Post 90 march forward and salute my Grandpa's casket. Silence filled the air as they paid their respects to my Grandpa for his service to our country. My body trembled as a soldier from Post 90 stepped forward and played "Taps" on his bugle. It was almost as if the song from the bugle was carrying my sorrow through the air. Not having ever witnessed a military funeral, the thing that happened next not only took my breath away, but also cut through me like a knife. The seven soldiers stepped forward, raised their guns, and simultaneously fired them in the air. Bang! Then again, Bang! And again, Bang! Each shot fired pierced right through to my soul. I sobbed uncontrollably, losing my breath and strength with each tear. My eyes burned as I watched the soldiers surround Grandpa's casket. Their white-gloved hands lifted the flag and folded it with perfect precision. In absolute silence, a single soldier then stepped toward my grandma, saluted her, and gently placed the flag into her trembling hands. My heart broke as I heard Grandma barely whisper "Thank you" as she tenderly stroked the white stars on the flag. Never in my life have I ever felt so much sorrow and pride welled together into one emotion. Later that day, after the services were over and each family member found comfort and solitude in their own way, I was given the most wonderful gift. My grandma lovingly gathered all of the grandchildren around the kitchen table. She handed each of us two shells from the bullets that were fired in the 21-gun salute during Grandpa's

services. I sat there in silence and held those two symbols of Grandpa's service to our country tightly in my hand with an echo from each set of shots fired ringing in my ears. The empty shell cases might be insignificant to someone looking from the outside in, but to me they became a gentle reminder of the love my Grandpa had for his country and for his family. I am ashamed to say that I never even had a glimpse of what his service to our country meant while he was alive. I carried one of those empty brass cases in my wallet for well over four years. Each time I reached into my wallet, it would bring me back to a different memory from my childhood. The most important memory I had was that of a very special and unbreakable bond between a granddaughter and her hero.

2nd Place Winner: Tierney Smith

Withheld by student's request

Honorable Mention: Felesha Cairo, "There's More to Me Than Just Fat"

"Who's that girl over there? You know, the pleasantly plump, outgoing, Hispanic, beauty over there? Is that Felesha Cairo?" Yes, that's me. I'm the fat girl in class. Is that such a bad thing? Not for me. There's more to me than just fat. Take a look. When you first see me, you think, "Dang, she's fat." But when you sit down at your desk and class drives on, you find yourself looking at me again…then again …then again. You begin to notice my sun-kissed skin and the golden flecks in my dark brown sugar hair that seems endless in tangles of curls. You take note of my soft smile and rosy cheeks. After being lost in my forest green eyes, you find yourself thinking, "She's really not that bad. In fact, she's really not that fat … more like pleasantly plump." After realizing that I wear no make-up, you come to the conclusion that I'm naturally beautiful and perfect just the way I am. Being plump is just what people see me as from the outside. As humans, we make assumptions by first impressions. It's when people stop and really look at others that they start to see the true beauty of them. Every human being is a work of art, each with his/her own colors, shapes, curves, and movement.
One of my colors comes from being Cuban. My grandfather was Cuban but died when my father was still a toddler. I have an appreciation for the Cuban culture,e even though I know little about it. Cuban music has had an effect on me. Yerba Buena is one of the Cuban bands that make the blood in my veins start to pump. The beat of the music enters my ears to penetrate my body and dictate the movements in my chest, his, arms, legs, and feet. When you're lost in the rhythm of the music, all else falls away and size doesn't matter anymore. You can just be you.

Behind every piece of artwork is a story. The home and environment that I was raised in plays a significant role in shaping me. Coming from a "broken" home has helped shape me to be the woman I am today. As a little girl growing up in San Diego, I was exposed to "life outside the box." Drugs, alcohol, and infidelity within marriage constantly surrounded me in my own home. My mother was the strong one in our family. She couldn't keep me away from the fumes of drugs when my father would use them in front of me. Nor could she cover my ears when he would be drunk and yell and argue with her. However, she did protect me from ever taking up the habits of my father. When she finally built up the courage to leave him, I had just turned twelve. We moved to Utah, and I had to become the strong one in and for the family. Taking care of my five year-old brother while my mother went to work caused me to become a mother at 12 years old. Having to raise my brother was a hard task for a 12-year-old, but through this challenge, I gained a close and binding relationship with my brother that can't be broken. This chapter of my life caused me to grow up much faster than most kids my age, but has helped me gain the knowledge and experience that helps me to be a real woman in these modern days.

Having a "pleasantly plump" figure is sometimes a roadblock for other people who can't look past it. When people finally do see past the outer me, they see a confident, outgoing, outspoken, and independent girl. I spent many years of my life being shy. Being plump gave me a sense of insecurity since I looked "so different" from other people. This, in turn, made me aware of the way I looked compared with the outer appearances of the other people around me. I had many friends from all different social classes, but I could never bring myself to say "hello" to the new kid in school. That would have been too outside of my shell to deal with. After moving to Utah in the seventh grade when my parents separated and spending my entire junior high school years with my head down, I decided it was time for a change. I popped my own bubble. Since that life-changing moment, I have made friends more easily and have a more positive outlook on life.

Having a more positive outlook on life has empowered me to accept the way I look and even scheme to make my body help me achieve my pursuit of becoming an actress on Broadway. In acting, body shapes can help portray a type of character. For example, a skinny person that walks hunched-over and shuffles can easily be the "nerd" or "brains" of the show like Steve Urkle from the television show *Family Matters*. "Fat" people are generally associated with the comical character of the show. This is the character that I want to play--the chunky, stumpy, funny, but-oh-so-adorable character that you can't help but laugh at and fall in love with like the character of Sister Mary Patrick in the movie *Sister Act*. Using the shape, curves, and movement of my pleasantly plump body can help me as an actress obtain these roles and play the characters I want. In theatre, we call this a character choice.

No matter how many rewards I seek to realize from my size, being a plump actress will always be an issue to some people-- especially those from my Mexican/American/Cuban background. Hispanics, as well as many other nationalities, disgrace women who are overweight, or "gorditas" as they call them. "If you are a gordita, how will you ever find a husband?" asks my Mexican Grandmother and darling friend who is still stuck in her traditional ways. "Aye, Felesha, I pray to God that you marry a rich, white man that will take care of you for the rest of your life. *Pero,* first, you have to lose weight--you are too fat." When this idea is repeated to me every time she sees and/or visits with me, I can't help but laugh at my little Grandma and her Spanish accent.

Possessing the ability to laugh at myself and accept the way I am is all a part of learning to love myself, despite the "imperfections" I might think I have. But, then again, maybe there really are no "imperfections," for everyone is a beautiful work of art, each with his/her own colors, shapes, curves, and movements. Those who know me use other words to describe me. Those words include "fun," "loving," "weird," "emotional," and "so-out-there." Hence, no one word or category defines me. I'm just me, Felesha Eva Cairo. I'm the fat girl in class, but there's more to me than just fat. Take a look.

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Argumentative- English 2010

1st Place Winner: Zane Felix, "Southern Utah Facing Change"

Imagine that you are offered a new higher-paying job as an assistant principal in another city. You tell the boss that you are working for that you are quitting, and then you leave to look for housing in your new area. Imagine your heartbreak when you find that even with a new higher-paying job, you won't be able to afford housing in the new area. You won't be able to accept the new job offer after all. Stories like this are becoming more common in Southern Utah.

What is the driving factor behind these problems? Recently, Southern Utah has been experiencing a housing price boom. Last year real estate prices in Cedar City alone rose 23.2% according to Justin Ragona who has been a realtor for three years. St. George was higher with a whopping 28.34% rise in prices (Anderton). Housing prices continue to rise at an accelerated pace. Some people are adamantly opposed to the rapid rise of prices, while others are strictly for it. But with prices skyrocketing as they are, who can afford to buy a house? The rapid increase of property values isn't good. It is altering the dynamics of Southern Utah by negatively affecting people in certain categories: the young and the old, families with one middle-class income, and providers of important services in the community.

Why is there a housing price boom in Southern Utah? There are four main causes: low interest rates, fewer building materials, an influx of people with lots of money, and the attractiveness of Southern Utah as a place to live. Low interest rates contribute because they allow people to borrow more money and buy more expensive houses. This causes builders to build more and better homes that are more costly, since houses are selling so well. As a result, it is harder to get building materials. Another contributing factor in the scarcity of building materials is that America is sending lots of building materials to help the citizens of Iraq rebuild. The scarcity of building materials causes them to cost more. The third factor in the rapidly rising prices is that people from places like California and Nevada, where housing prices are even higher, sell their houses for very large amounts of money and then purchase homes in communities where prices are lower. The fact that they can afford to pay more for housing contributes to rising prices for everyone else. The fourth major reason is tied to the third. Because Southern Utah is an attractive place to live, people are choosing to buy homes here. Here they can enjoy four seasons, clean air and water, a safe community, a university, many social functions, a small town atmosphere, and so forth. Currently there is less supply than there is demand in the Southern Utah housing market, driving prices up even higher (Englestead).

The quickly rising real estate prices are adversely affecting both the young and the old. People just starting to live on their own, including newlyweds, cannot afford to buy a house in the community. Even though housing prices are rapidly rising, wages are either slowly rising or they are not rising at all. The average house on the market now costs around $200,000. This is a problem because newlyweds cannot get a loan for that much money making it impossible to buy a house unless they have some other source of money (Ragona). According to Ron Englestead who has been a realtor for 24 years, young adults who were raised here will not be able to afford to buy a house here unless they have a really high-paying job. This means that young people will either have to rent, or they will have to leave the area and go somewhere else where they can afford housing. Renting is not so bad, but it is only a temporary solution. If they wish to raise a family, they are going to need a more permanent solution and more

space. If a lot of young couples leave the community in order to be able to buy homes, there will be fewer young families in the area, which would cause the community to be imbalanced. There are some programs set up that help people afford housing. Some people believe that this solution is good enough (Page). The problem is that these programs require a lot of waiting and can only help a small number of people (Weaver).

It is not just the young that are affected but the elderly as well. The fact that the majority of elderly people already own a home does not spare them from suffering. Since property taxes are based on the value of their houses, the amount they must pay in property taxes continues to increase. This is a problem, because most elderly people are on a fixed income. If their property taxes are constantly and significantly rising, eventually they will not have enough money to pay property taxes, let alone survive. In other states, some people have already been forced out of their homes because of this problem. The elderly people in this community may be next. Some people may contend that there will not be fewer elderly people; there will just be different elderly people. Elderly people who built this community and gave it a strong foundation will eventually be forced to leave it if the trend continues in its present manner. Who has the right to do that to them?

Another category of people that is adversely affected are those families with only one middle-class income. Englestead states that it is hard for a person with a middle-class wage to buy a home. If a family with only one middle-class income wants to buy a home, then they will definitely either need to go somewhere else or have both parents working. It would change the dynamics of the community to have so many families with two working parents. Without the mother at home, raising children will be different. Children will spend less time with their parents causing them to be affected more and more by other influences such as schools, the community, and television. This could prove to be bad, since children could learn different or lower morals. The examples of how to live, which are shown on television and in other places, would be more present to them than the examples of their parents. It would also mean that it would be easier for children to get into trouble because they would have more unsupervised time. Parents and children would have a harder time forming strong relationships and families, since they would spend less time together. All of these things would change the community to an extent. On the other hand, going somewhere else means uprooting the children from their friends and the atmosphere to which they have become adjusted.

Some people believe that it will not be necessary for people to move elsewhere or to have many families with both parents working. They say that the current influx of people and residential boom will bring commercial and industrial booms, and thus higher wages. This would make it so that middle class workers could once again afford housing (Page). There is truth to this argument, but so far “most people coming into Cedar City now are generating no new money. They are on a fixed income” (Englestead). The majority of the people coming in are not working-class people, but retired people. We may, however, yet see a large amount of new jobs created.

Rapidly rising property values are also negatively affecting people who provide important services in the community, such as policemen, teachers, nurses, and road and water department workers. This, in turn, will change the community. With real estate prices rising as they are, it is becoming constantly harder for people in these professions to afford housing in this area. They may soon be forced to relocate or change their jobs, causing the number of people working in these professions to drop. The consequences of lower numbers of people working in these areas can easily be seen. With fewer

policemen to enforce the law, crime rates will rise. Policemen will be spread too thin. With fewer teachers around, the students will not learn as well. There will be more students in classes, and there will not be enough teachers for all of them. This will make it harder to have one on one learning moments. With fewer nurses around, hospitals will be more disorganized. Doctors will have to take on more responsibility, and thus be busier and harder to reach. The demand of doctors will be even greater, causing prices for health care to rise even more. The quality of health care will decrease and some people may not even be able to receive it at all. If there are fewer road workers, then it will take them longer to keep the city's streets orderly and in working order. The quality of streets will begin to decrease, and the city will lose some of its beauty, making it a less desirable place. And finally with fewer workers in the water department, it will be harder to manage the community's water and keep it in a clean and healthy state. As can be seen, these are vital services to the community and something needs to be done if we intend to keep them in proper order.

Some people believe that the higher property taxes will help these groups of people to afford the cost of living here. However, only part of the property taxes is used in the above fields, and they do not necessarily go towards the wages of the people who work in these fields. It would be helpful to these people if they did, though.

In conclusion, it is a good thing that more people are moving into the area, but it is a bad thing for the community that large numbers of the current residents may be forced to go somewhere else because of rapidly rising real estate prices. In order for both new people to come into the area and current residents to stay if they desire, a solution that would help the three categories of affected people is needed. Recruiting companies that can provide high paying jobs will benefit young people and middle class families. With these jobs, they could afford housing. Putting a cap on property taxes for the elderly will decrease their financial burden and allow them to live here. Finally, using money that has recently been brought into the community through higher property taxes, people who provide important services could receive wage increases. This would allow for them to afford housing as well. Helping these categories of people in these ways would allow the community to flourish, benefiting all of its residents.

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2nd Place Winner: Joshua Pettit, "Physics, Adaption, Evolution"

The motor bike that I was riding weighs close to four hundred pounds, and street bikes with street tires do not have a lot of traction on dirt trails. The bike is fast and has a lot of torque. I was on a dirt road and had just been challenged to a race by a couple of guys who were riding 2001 Banshees. A Banshee is a two-stroke four-wheeler with more than an ample amount of power. The race was about 15 miles long as the crow flies. Could I win? My bike reaches maximum acceleration at 130 miles an hour. A Banshee reaches maximum acceleration at about ninety MPH (unless modified). In the back of my mind, I was thinking, "Is this a test of skill, and knowledge of physics, or just plain stupid?"

As a person who contemplates the forces of nature on a daily basis, I have come to understand the laws of physics quite well. I believe that understanding physics makes me a better motorbike rider and vehicle operator in general. I am led to believe through my observations that all living beings, from microorganisms to manatees, use physics unconsciously in their everyday lives. And evolution would be impossible if the ability to contemplate, at some level of consciousness, the physics of an environment were not a part of every living organism's genetic code.

Because street tires have very little traction on the dirt, I would have to go very slowly on some of the turns unless I could figure a way to position my bike so that I could use the power of the engine to get more traction. This would be a very dangerous maneuver. If I had the bike pointed in the wrong direction by just a couple of degrees, I would go off the road when I dropped the clutch and gave it full throttle. The back tire could also slide out from underneath the bike if I did not have the bike straight up and down. This would be a test of skill vs. speed and traction. I was betting that with my knowledge of physics, I could calculate the speed and angles that I would need to hit the corners with the fastest speeds possible.

I already knew that I could make this bike fly, so the jumps on the way were no real challenge. The first half of the race was full of short straight-aways and U-shaped corners. I was behind the Banshees until the first long stretch of road opened up. I pulled back on the throttle and cycled through the gears. I had enough time to get to fourth gear, which is about 110 MPH, and then to use my engine to slow me back down. I got to sixty MPH, hit a cattle guard, and jumped my bike about fifty feet; right when I slammed back onto the ground, I realized there was a ninety degree corner directly in front of me. I stepped on the back brake and leaned my bike into a skid. As soon as the tire broke free and started sliding, I used the gas to help straighten the bike into the direction that I wanted to go. I gave the bike full throttle and leaned forward to keep the front end down; at the same time, I used my feet to push on the pegs, an action which directed more force onto the back tire for extra traction. I executed the maneuver perfectly and only had to slow down to 35 MPH. The guy behind me was not so lucky; he ran into my back tire and knocked me over.

I always used to imagine what I would do if I had to lay my bike on its side so that I would not lose my leg. I always thought that I would jump off the pegs, land on the side of my bike, and "surf" it until it stopped, and that is exactly what I did. As soon as I was on the side of my bike, I saw him fly over me and land in a river bed. He could have avoided all this had he known of Newton's first law of motion, which states that an object at rest tends to stay at rest and an object in motion tends to stay in motion with the same speed and in the same direction, unless acted upon by an opposing force.

The guy on the Banshee did not realize that he should have taken the corner wider to give himself more time to apply the brake and engine, which are the opposing forces. Once the tire breaks free of the ground and starts to slide, there is less resistance to the bike. The bike will slide in the same direction whether or not you turn the wheel. This is the reason I had my bike pointed in the direction I wanted to go and gave a lot of spinning power to the back wheel: It provided an opposite force, which allowed the bike to go toward the desired direction. I proved that knowing some simple physics could save my life when I was faced with a dangerous situation.

Humans use physics every day, and most do not even know it. Every time we drive a car, we try to keep a certain distance behind a car because we are taught that it does take time to slow down a heavy object when it is traveling at a certain velocity. Subconsciously, people understand Newton's second law of motion. The law states that the acceleration of an object is dependent upon two variables--the net-force acting upon the object and the mass of the object. People understand that if something big is moving fast toward them, it is going to hurt if it hits them.

The better a person is at observing and applying the laws of physics consciously, rather than unconsciously, the more control he/she will have at operating a vehicle in the manner needed at the right time to avoid serious accidents. For example, when I am driving, I am always aware of every side of the vehicle. I am constantly applying three second rule they taught us in Drivers' Ed. I look in my rearview mirror and know exactly how far the person is behind me. I know that if I have to stop fast, the guy behind me will seriously injure or kill me because he is too close.

A couple of years ago, I had to stop at a red light on Bluff Street in St. George, Utah. The speed limit there is 45 miles an hour, but I know that at about 700 South, the average speed that everybody really goes is about 55 - 60 mph. I looked in my rearview mirror and saw the guy behind me was in a late 70's Ford LTD (a pile of steel) coming right at me; the guy obviously had no idea the light was red. I knew he was doing at least the speed limit and was already to close to stop without hitting me. I knew that no one was coming in the cross traffic so I applied full power to the engine and sped across the street. The guy had enough time to realize that my tires were spinning and slam on the brake. I knew that the force of his car hitting me while I was moving in the same direction would be less than if he hit me when standing still. I also knew that it would give him more time to react on the brake, which would lessen the impact force even more. This one of many times I escaped death by knowing how to "soften" the blow. His car missed my back bumper by a foot at the most. Fortunately, nobody was hurt.

I have a friend who lives in Southern Utah. He was riding a bullet bike at 140 MPH on the freeway and came up behind a semi truck; he waited until he was about ten feet from the back then tried to go around it. The wind that was generated from the displacement of air, caused by the truck, rippled out just like water. The guy had no idea this would happen. His speed, times the density of the air that was displaced from the truck, and multiplied by their velocities, equaled a force opposite his direction and a very negative reaction. The Bernoulli Effect states that the pressure is lower in a moving fluid/gas than in a stationary fluid/gas. The force of wind created in the instant he came around the truck lifted the bike straight into the air. He tried to hold onto the handle bar and inadvertently gave the bike more throttle, which spun the bike backward even more and threw him onto his back. He slid on his back for the length of three football fields.
After three hours of material extraction surgery, he picked gravel rocks out of his back for two years.

Had he ever been told about the Bernoulli Effect, he would have understood such a stunt is a lose/lose situation.

The most practical example of the Bernoulli Effect is in the action of an airfoil. The shape of an airplane wing is such that air flowing over the top of the wing must travel faster than the air flowing under the wing so there is less pressure on the top than on the bottom, resulting in lift. An Indianapolis 500 race car uses a wing to displace the lift of the front by using the wind that goes across the top to force the car down. Someone who is racing motor cross or jumping motor bikes needs to know how fast and in what direction the wind is blowing because when in the air the bike has less resistance and is blown off course.

Not only humans, but every living animal applies physics unconsciously, every day in their natural life. Lions and other animals of prey calculate their prey's speed and trajectory of their turns in a run to gain a tactical advantage. One day I was sitting on a cliff that overlooks the southern mountains of Kolob Canyon in Southern Utah. I started dreaming that I was a bird that could disappear high into the sky, roll over to warm my belly by the sun, point my nose to the ground, tuck my wings back, and, at the right moment, swoosh right across the top of the grass and in and out of the trees. Just then I looked down and found a hawk feather; I started to think about birds. Birds are constantly in tune with the thermodynamics of air. Their brains use natural phenomena related to physics and electromagnetism. They have a sensor in them that tells them when the earth has experienced an electromagnetic storm from the sun that will cause great winds. They can also sense the direction north electromagnetically (Johnson). This is how they know when and how early they must leave to fly south for the winter and what direction south is.

Do birds sit around and contemplate the dynamics of wind? Do they understand what the Bernoulli Effect is? Not the word, but the meaning. Do they think when soaring towards a mouse at 150 miles per hour that they need to adjust their wings at a certain moment, or do they just do it? Do they ever think "What would happen if I held out until..." or "What can I do differently?"

Evolution is the closest word that I can find that explains the need to understand physics. When an organism experiences extreme conditions, it analyzes the physical conditions of its surroundings and adapts to the situation. If the organism cannot adapt, it will die. Humans have genetic traits that have evolved due to their environments; for example, on the islands of Southeast Asia, the children have started to adapt to seeing under water, because they swim underwater to catch their food, and have done so for generations (*Science News*). Human genes are influenced by many factors, including factors in the environment (Berger). The eye has to figure out how to see clearly in its given environment and has made a genetic trait, stored this trait in the chromosomes, and improved that trait throughout generations of use. In areas of the world where raising cattle has for generations been unknown or unpracticed, people are more likely to be lactose intolerant. However, people who come from cattle farming communities and who have been drinking milk for a couple hundred years have developed an enzyme that breaks down the lactose. For us to evolve off this rock, we need to understand the physics of earth, space, and quite possibly the physical effects created from a multi-dimensional universe. Understanding the physics involved in our daily lives is the first step into the vast oceans of answers, endless question, and wonder.

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Expressive- English 2010

1st Place Winner: Ben Fellmeth, "Fire"

As a child and young adult, I was deeply involved in science, mostly in the area of pyrotechnics, which, in definition, or at least in my definition, is the creation and governing of fire and explosive devices. Involved also in this field is the study of the varied human reactions when exposed to the operation of such devices. To many, fire can be enjoyable, dangerous, or even frightening. For me, fire produces all these emotions and much, much more.

I was introduced to fire at a very young age, and unlike most children, was encouraged to explore its possibilities. I remember my elder brother calling my name from our backyard on a cool summer evening. In the garage I was scrambling to find something, *anything* that could help us in our little experiment. "It's going out, it's going out!" he cried repeatedly with desperation in his voice. I dug, searched, and prayed that I would find it in time, and as though inspired from heaven, spotted it in the corner, just behind the lawn mower. There it was, beautiful, beaming, and bright red. Luckily, Dad had filled up the gas can that morning, so it was still mostly full. Although I was only seven years old and a little over 50 pounds in weight, the excitement of the event filled my little body with energy beyond its natural strength, and I carried the five-gallon gas can out into the backyard with relative ease.

Walter, my brother, was still calling my name and barking commands to come quicker. When I approached him, I found him to be dancing around a small pile of plastic and wooden toys that we had gathered together and ignited. I saw in his eyes something that I will always remember, something that I have seen countless times since. It was as though there was a fire within his eyes, a look of pure delight and satisfaction. He came over to me and ripped the gas can from my hands. The flames erupted as he poured the gasoline over the fire. I begged him to let me take a turn pouring. We both yelled and screamed with delight as the flames roared dangerously close to the side of our house. There was a strange smell emanating from the fire. It was that of melting plastic, burning wood, and what I later found out to be the strange aroma of singed human hair.

To this day, I'm not sure exactly how our neighbor, Mrs. Carol, discovered us in our experiment. Perhaps it was the black smoke that rose from behind our house, or maybe it was our prepubescent screams of glee that alerted her to our presence. At any rate, she did not find our little fire to be as amusing as Walter and I did. In fact, she wasn't amused at all. Her reaction to the fire was similar to ours only in intensity. We raged with joy. She raged with worry for our well being, as any gentle, kind hearted, elderly women would. My dad would later rage as well but not out of concern for our safety.

As I grew, my fascination with the flammable increased. In scouts we were instructed on how to ignite a fire by striking two stones together. I tried, and after five minutes of boredom and what looked like the beginning of a rather large blister, I abandoned my efforts and went to retrieve my "*special canteen*" from the tent. The other scouts continued in their efforts to ignite their fires using the stones. When I returned, what I saw before me was saddening. It was a group of young boys wasting valuable time and energy trying to make fire using a method that I had proven to be futile only minutes before. Even our steadfast scouting leader was frustrated in his attempts to ignite the little pile of pine needles that lay

before him. Then there was me and my little canteen full of gasoline. After all, scouts are supposed to be prepared at all times. I went to my pile of pine needles and soaked it with the gas.

I decided to give the stones one more chance. Surprisingly, the fire ignited with relative ease on my second attempt. In fact, it lit with so much intensity, that I was taken back a little by the initial flame. Never have I gained popularity so fast in my entire life. The other scouts raced to my aid, and after realizing that I was still alive, praised me for my genius. Some of them were jealous, but most were happy and eager to ignite their own fires using the same method. My scout leader, much like Mrs. Carol, was not impressed with my fire, but with love, assured me that my eyebrows would grow back in time. One observation I made on this and on previous occasions is that the age of a person and their reaction to fire have a strong correlation; the older a person gets, the less intrigued by fire they become. I, however, was an exception to this rule.

In my seventeenth year, my desire to experiment with fire had grown into a healthy obsession. The internet was full of information which enabled me to exploit fire to its full potential. On one occasion, I decided to experiment with something called a cocktail bomb, one of the world's simplest explosive devices. A cocktail bomb consists of a simple glass bottle filled with gas with a rag running from the inside of the bottle to the outside through a small hole in the lid. To detonate the bomb, one must simply light the rag on fire and then throw the bottle. When the bottle shatters, a small explosion occurs as the rising fumes from the gas ignite simultaneously.

On this occasion, I was staying in the mountains of Southeast Utah with a friend. Near his house, were a series of old, abandoned mine shafts reaching thousands of feet below the ground. I saw an opportunity to use a simple cocktail bomb to create a very large explosion. I figured that if we could throw the glass bottle at a higher velocity, the explosion would somehow be amplified. We decided that gravity, combined with the half mile drop the mine provided, would allow us to reach our desired velocity. After filling up our two gallon glass jar with gasoline, we drove to the mines where we would conduct our experiment.

At this particular mine, there were two separate mine shafts surrounded by a chain link fence. One of them was designed to transport men, and the other served to transport the mined resources. The two shafts were about twenty feet apart from each other. As I stared down the larger of the two mines, my heart began to race. There were about six of us there that night, and we were as giddy as a bunch of twelve year old girls at a Backstreet Boys concert.

I consider myself a courageous person, but having a two gallon jug of gasoline in my hands with a flaming rag protruding out of the lid, was a little disconcerting. I held the jar over what I thought was the middle of the shaft and released. The flaming rag lit the shaft as it plummeted towards the bottom. It seemed like an eternity before the jar finally hit the bottom. We expected to hear a huge explosion and see the flames rise part way up the tunnel, but what we experienced was far from it. When the jar hit the bottom, there was a quick flash of light followed by a roar that would rival a jet engine. My friends and I quickly gathered around the shaft and listened as the roar came nearer. It was coming, and it was coming fast. After a few seconds of confusion, wondering where the fire had gone and what the noise was, we were all suddenly lifted off the ground and sent hurling away from the entrance of the mine by winds that must have exceeded 100 mph.

My eyes were stinging when I finally got up and looked around. Some of my friends were laughing, some were silent, and some were moaning, not out of pain, but of terror. I was one of the former. Explosions never scared me. After all, I was a teenager, hence immortal.

After the laughs and the cries ceased, my scientific nature set in; satisfaction was turned to curiosity. Using my vast knowledge and experience with explosives, I formed a hypothesis explaining the phenomenon that we had just witnessed. The reason I believe the bomb produced only a small burst of light, is that there was not a sufficient amount of oxygen in the bottom of the mine as to allow the gasoline to combust entirely. When the gas combusted, it created a vacuum effect as it sucked oxygen from the many underground tunnels, causing extremely high speed winds to come racing up the mine shaft. This hypothesis was never tested, for I had not the time or know how to perform the tests required. I did, however, make other useful observations on this occasion. I learned that fire, as well as being dangerous, is also very unpredictable when exposed to different variables, and that people's reactions can be equally unpredictable.

In my life, as shown in just a few short stories, I have seen fire produce many types of reactions, both good and bad, all of them providing me with much satisfaction. Fire is a magnificent force, and I encourage all to disregard their parents' warning not to play with matches and to experience the wonder and excitement that comes when you make fire a part of your own life.

2nd Place Winner: Jennifer Johnson, "Emotions: A Collage"

I always like Saturdays best,
The weekend is finally here.
There's time for drawing with smelly markers
And tea parties outside
Where I invite all my brothers' G.I. Joes even though they don't know.
We chase the ice cream truck man with our bicycles
And have lots of water gun fun,
But it makes me mad when my brothers gang up on me
And get my pink dress Mommy bought me all wet
Even though I know I shouldn't wear it
Until church on Sunday.
We watch Ninja Turtles when we wake up
And Mommy makes chocolate-chip pancakes and applesauce,
And if we're really, really good, maybe even a vanilla cake
With super-duper extra frosting on top.
But we don't get to eat it until dinner
And that's even after Mommy sees our icky greens are gone
So I just stuff mine in my sock and feed them to my kitty later
Who's a fatso and eats anything, even my broccoli and beans one time.
I eat ice cream
And play Nintendo
And there's no school
And no meanie teachers that won't let me bring Twinkies for lunch
And no homework in my bad cursive
And no smelly boys who pull my hair
Except my brothers.
But then Daddy punishes them
And Mommy brushes my hair before tucking me into bed.

Pure Relief

My writing is like the buildup to a doctor's shot. Faced with an unappealing appointment of pain, a paper to write, a task of creativity, I find myself beginning to panic, as if my brain has been ripped of ideas and left to face the world blank. I stress over it right up until that moment when the needle punctures skin, when creative thoughts suddenly burst forth and flow out through my pen. And that's when I realize that it wasn't so bad after all, this shot, this search for ideas, because all there is now is relief, the peace after the storm, the band-aid over the wound. It was no big deal, after all. I'm free—free to write, free to inspiration, free to relief, free to leave—and it's nice, this clarity I suddenly have of the beautiful world now relinquished of shots and needles and needle-wielding doctors.

Bitter Delight

Before I write anything, I have to speak it out in my head. Think of it as when you're practicing that "insanely cool" first-time conversation you tell yourself you're going to have with that cute boy sitting next to you in Chem class—it's very similar. You do it over and over and over again, maybe sometimes in front of a mirror, and maybe sometimes while daydreaming in Sociology since you're convinced that you already have enough problems of your own without trying to learn about everyone else's. Only, it seems as though you can never get that conversation down right, so you just blow it off and decide to improvise the whole thing when the big day comes. Which of course ends up turning out horrible—you squeaking, and mumbling incoherently, and turning redder than a balloon while he looks at you like you're from Pluto or something, much less even Venus or Mars.

Anyway, as far as my writing process goes, my date's with my notebook. And for some reason, I think he's a lot more judgmental. The annoying booger stares up at me mockingly, laughing because we're both obviously still blank. And worse yet, I feel so darn uninspired since he's so darn unappealing. I mean, it's not like I'm looking at blonde hair, blue eyes, and 180 pounds of pure muscle. Nope, I get a sharp metal spine that keeps poking my arm every time I take a break from doodling with my pencil. What is this, capital punishment or something? I can almost hear my notebook shouting, "Write, woman, write…or face the wrath of the almighty non-paper cut method of torture." *Poke! Poke!* And then there's those blue lines that go on again and again all the way down the page, giving you the unpleasant sensation of realizing just how much you *haven't* written yet. Let's not even mention the fact that he goes on for another 149 blue-lined pages of blankness.

"Enough already!" I tell him. "I get the point, you piece of no-good property!" Sometimes we sound less like dates and more like an old, bickering couple. Which, technically, I guess we are. I hate him because he hurts my brain. He hates me because I walk all over him (I mean literally—on those days when the ideas just aren't flowing). "If you're not more careful, one day I just might divorce you and marry a keyboard." This threat always gets him quiet. He hates technology. Something about costs and production and his own extinction. I don't claim to understand it. Because, hey, I could always use him for toilet paper—that hasn't been updated since its invention.

And so with these comforting thoughts, I begin to write.

It seems like all the time I've wasted thus far—the pencil nibbling, the doodling, the agonizing, the bickering—it's all built up to a crescendo and comes sweeping out at once…and I've got it. A simple idea builds up into my mind and quickly I touch pencil to paper. Everything just starts flowing smoothly then, like waves on a warm summer day back home in California. I write. And the more I write the more the paper crinkles, as if he's trying to distract me from my process and pay attention to him. But I'm oblivious to blue lines now. It's as if my words are flowing right off the paper, which—if I'm not careful—in some cases they are.

"Take that, you puggered-brained pipsqueak!" I say, stabbing my notebook a few times for good measure. (Actually, I'm just dotting the *i*'s in my name and elsewhere, but sometimes I like to think I'm exacting revenge).

My work is done, the writing complete. But I can't help thinking I really need to work on my relationship issues.

Lasting Sorrow

I'm not good at expressing my feelings. I don't know the right way to say "I love you," or "You're making me cry," or even "I hope you die tomorrow."

But, of course, I didn't want her to die. I wanted the opposite: I wished she could go on living a healthy, happy life. After all, she was my grandma; all little girls want happy things with a cherry on top for their grandmas. But I didn't have any cherries (in fact, my grandma and I hated cherries). So that left one option: to accept that she had come to the end of her road, and me to mine—her physically and me verbally. She had cancer and was dying. I was fighting an emotional rollercoaster of feelings for the first time. I had never had anyone I loved die before. Sure, there was the news that would occasionally come down the family grapevine that the distant great-great aunt or second cousin half-removed had croaked. But I didn't *know* them. You can't truly love someone you don't know, even if they are family.

I knew my grandma. She was like a second mother in raising me. Some things we did together—like eating my first ice cream cone or teaching me how to ride a bicycle—just can't be forgotten. But how do you express all the gratitude and love you've accumulated through sixteen years of living for a person who's standing on the brink of life? How do you express yourself when you feel you just can't get the words out? Tears, yes. But words?

So I wrote a letter. A simple letter, really. It didn't say "Thank you for being there for me every day of my life to guide me mentally and emotionally." And it didn't say, "I appreciate all the devotion you gave to helping me grow up to be the person I am today." It didn't even say "I love you."

But it did talk about the day we sat under the sun and watched the waves beat down on the sandy shore, as the wind whistled overhead and the seagulls danced in front of the backdrop of the soft clouds. And it told of the time she surprised me when she picked me up from the first nightmarish day of ninth-grade. We drove to Disneyland and spent the afternoon sipping root beer floats and chuckling at the looks on out-of-staters' faces as they experienced for the first time the "happiest place on earth." It talked about the day we decided to make a cake for my little brother. We spent hours messing up the kitchen and agonizing over the toppings. In the end we agreed that the only way to go was with strawberries, for there is no sweeter fruit in the world than an ice-cold strawberry on a hot day. The letter also mentioned the summer we rowed to Catalina Island and biked around the bay on one of those two-person bicycles. It had been my first time riding one and turned out extremely fun, even if I did scrape a knee. My grandma had told me that "to scrape one knee meant that you only had 999 more injuries left to go and that, looking on the bright side of things, it put me farther ahead on completing the human casualty list than some other people." I guess her list is complete now.

Even though I couldn't tell her to her face how much she meant to me, I gave her the letter. And she knew. You don't go through life experiencing that much love and not know what someone means to you. Saying "I love you" meant nothing in comparison to remembering the times we had shared together. She read my letter and knew what I wanted to say.

Two days later, she died. I like to think she passed away happily, perhaps chewing on a strawberry.

Undeserved Peace

It's early. I'm tired. But I've got homework to do and I know I better start now. The room is stuffy. The bed is tempting. I know I need to get outside before this madness overtakes me.

I am now strolling through campus on this early Sunday morning, looking for a suitable place to get my work done. I carry stress and that work on my back, and yet…nothing seems able to break the serene temperament that has suddenly taken over my body. I notice things that weren't there days before. Or perhaps they were, but how can you notice the gently blowing trees whispering in the frosty air all around (or the nearby stream's water slowly trickling its life away down the white rocks? Or the leaves fiercely holding on to their last shade of green before the storm of winter?) when you're frantically running to get to your classes on time? Or the tiny beads of water upon each single blade of grass when you're watching that cute boy stroll by? Or the first rays of sunlight peeking through the morning mist when all you care about is breakfast? The earth, wet dirt under my feet—how could the mud smell so fresh and look so clean? This peace and serenity floating over the empty campus is surreal, and yet never more real have I felt in my surroundings.

This is how it must have been, before civilized living and metal contraptions sprang up to control the land. Yet even the old buildings of the school seem right, in place, united with the trees and life all around as one. Looking to my right, I see above the depths of a black, limitless window a bird's nest resting comfortably; the inhabitant returns my gaze in curious silence. And there, next to a wooden bench, a herd of black ants march to their own tune, happily steering themselves toward a scrap of turkey left over from some student's club sandwich.

The town is asleep, and yet I am not envious. I didn't expect to encounter this quiet land when I started out today—this warmth of outer peace on a chilly morning, this inner peace within me now—but I greedily suck it in like a dehydrated survivor. It's funny how, when I think about it, it was here all along.

Surprising Clarity (based on a poem by Billy Collins)

> *…It might interest you to know,*
> *Speaking of the plentiful imagery of the world,*
> *that I am the sound of the cat scratching at the door.*
>
> *I also happen to be the wild grass growing in the yard,*
> *the first rays of light upon your bedside,*
> *and the loose thread dangling from a shirt.*
>
> *I am also the untouched beads in the drawer*
> *and the picture that fades with dust…*

Obtuse Loneliness

I go to the park at dawn. It is cold. There are no kids. I run to the swing and get on. Is it fun? No. I want a girl or boy to play with. So I go home. The park was not fun.

I went to the park again one gloomy day at dawn. It was chilly outside. There was no one there that early in the morning. But I was an early bird, and thus wanted to start out the day with some fun. Running to the swing, I merrily jumped on. It wasn't very fun. I wanted some company—

somebody to pass the time with. But there was no one. Soon I got bored and decided to go home. Was the park fun? No. So I never went again.

Formal Analysis

In writing this project, I was trying to express all the emotions that can make up my life. I arranged my sections as each being a different emotion as specified by its title. I also started with the happier, lighter pieces and moved towards the more solemn and serious pieces. I originally thought to do the opposite and end with the happier and funnier pieces, but then decided that it distracted from the dramatic impact of my sadder and more serious pieces if I ended the project with humor. Therefore, the order ended up as it appears, though, in terms of my personality and outlook on life, I think that humor and happiness always follow great sorrow and seriousness no matter where and in what situation.

Lastly, in terms of organization, I went from simple to complex and back to simple in order to somewhat illustrate the cycle of life—youth, aging, death, then youth again. This means that I started with the "Simple Giggles" piece. The class requirements for this piece specified that I describe what I like best in a child's voice or from a child's memory. I then followed this assignment with the brief "Pure Relief" piece, which required that I describe my writing to a simile and give explanation of why I chose that particular simile. I ended what I dub the "happiness section" with the humorous piece about my writing process ("Bitter Delight"). Then I entered my "serious section" and moved towards the very solemn and complex "Lasting Sorrow" piece, which required that I answer the theoretical question "Why write?" with an example from my own life. I followed this with the stimulating "Undeserved Peace." The requirements for this piece were to describe a walk I took recently and do so in a first-person voice, in order to see how first-person can sometimes be advantageously over third-person when one is describing emotions and surroundings. Next I moved towards the simpler Billy Collin's litany piece ("Surprising Clarity"). In this piece, I was to use a portion of the writing structure of Billy Collin's litany and add in my own metaphors that pertain to me. I ended my collage with the childlike piece "Obtuse Loneliness." This piece involved comparing simple writing to more complex writing. Therefore, the first paragraph is written using only words that have one syllable, whereas in the second paragraph there are no requirements except for that I must describe the same event as in the first paragraph.

I believe that there is no one emotion that can define a single situation (emotions are so interconnected and interdependent among each other), but here in my project it is ironic that I tried to label each piece as so. Therefore, though each piece is defined by its title and leading emotion, each section revolves around a series of emotions, often in contradiction to each other. For example, in the second piece of my project, my story is about relief and the happiness that comes from such relief, but much of it describes extreme anxiety because you can't have relief without some form of anxiety. In my fourth piece, entitled "Lasting Sorrow," I wanted the primary emotion to be the sadness that revolves around death, but much of the writing is filled with happy memories and positive thoughts about life. So, in other words—the sorrow of death and the happiness of life's memories are intertwined and almost indistinguishable. One can get joy from remembering happy memories, but at the same time one might experience sorrow at losing the person to whom they connected those memories to.

Though for this assignment we could write in either first-person or third-person, I found it interesting (and only realized after I completed this project) that all my pieces were written in first person. I think that this is the perspective I feel most comfortable writing in because I tend to find my written voice is either overly dramatic or purposefully sarcastic. Because of this, I oftentimes like to use either short,

concise sentences or long, strung out run-ons to get this effect across, and much of this can be found in these pieces. It was also much easier to write about emotions in first person. By talking about life, I wanted to do it from my perspective, and emotionally, first person works to the greatest advantage.