

# Best of Four

Volume 6

## Student Voices

A Commonwealth College Publication

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**Best of Four** wishes to offer special thanks to **Dr. Sandra E. Gleason**, Associate Dean for Faculty and Research, Commonwealth College, for helping to bring this project to fruition. In addition, as in past years, we especially thank **Dr. Monica Gregory**, DAA of the Hazleton campus, for housing the publication.

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# Best of Four—Something Old, Something New

WELCOME to the sixth volume of *Best of Four*. That's right, we have been in business long enough to publish six volumes of the best student writing published in English 4 classes each fall, on the Hazleton Campus of Commonwealth College. Last year, and continuing this year, we've also been publishing work from students at other Commonwealth College locations. In the coming year, we will be making some major changes.

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*Best of Four* began as an endeavor among five faculty members on the Hazleton campus, all of whom believed it was important to publish the best work of undergraduate writers so that students could have a better sense of what it meant to have an audience. We knew that writers become better writers when they strive to publish their work. We also believed that it was important for new students to read what their peers were writing about. We firmly believed (and we still do) that a very real audience exists for our students, that what they have to say is important for people to know.

All along, it has been our intention to broaden the base of our writers from English 4 to include the work of students in English 15 and English 30. As of this writing, we will set forth to achieve this worthy ambition, with the full backing of the Associate Dean for Faculty and Research at the Commonwealth College, **Dr. Sandra Gleason**, who has graciously guaranteed our financing for the coming three years.

Our first goal is to spread the message so that all English faculty on the Commonwealth College are aware of this wonderful opportunity to enhance their composition course offerings, both with the publication itself as a set of readings and the reward of seeing their students' work appear in print.

This will necessitate several changes. The first is that the magazine will need a new name to more accurately reflect its mission. The second is that we now need representatives, to act as associate editors on all twelve Commonwealth Campuses. Coordinating such an effort will entail considerable effort and more than a little good will on the part of faculty at all locations. We feel certain that the rewards that will come from the development of this new publication will be significant enough to prompt faculty to, as they have so often in the past, donate their time and energy for this undertaking.

There will be more changes, and we will be bringing them to your attention this fall at the English Department's fall conference at University Park. We welcome your ideas and suggestions and look forward to hearing them as soon as possible.

# Transition Time: High School to College

**Alaina Watts**

THROUGHOUT high school, students are being prepared for the changes that college brings. For unprepared students the change can be very dramatic. Their grades may suffer and be lower than expected. Between the amount of homework, differences in teacher instruction, and the student body, some students may feel important changes in the switch.

Although high school is supposed to prepare students for college, a high school student can pass with only doing five to ten hours of homework a week. Most of this work is done from textbooks. If a reading assignment is not completed for a discussion, a student may be able to participate in the discussion without knowledge of the topic. This is not the case in college. Ten to twelve homework hours a week are required at the college level to do well. Unlike high school, most of this homework is reading. A normal college class usually requires at least one chapter a night. This reading is important for classroom discussions. Class discussions are similar to debates, and more knowledge is needed to participate. Essays are also more common in college, even though in high school they are assigned less often and for a higher point value.

High school teachers constantly remind students when assignments are due, or when tests will be. The teacher will give assignments daily and announce tests a few days ahead of time. Likewise, the teacher gives more time for projects and essays. Conversely, college professors expect students to complete assignments on time, without having to be constantly reminded. A syllabus that is handed out on the first day of class, contains all assignments and tests. This may be the only reminder the student has. A college professor usually gives less time for essays and other larger assignments.

Finally, when students enter high school, they are with the same people they went to grade school with. This means only seeing a few new faces. Throughout all four years of high school, they may only meet a small number of new students and usually know someone well in all of their classes, whereas college students are placed in an all new environments with all new faces. No matter what they do, there are always people to meet. There is a good chance of being in a class without knowing anybody.

In conclusion, there is much to be done to prepare for this drastic change. Doing a few more hours of homework, getting to know a new way of being instructed, and working on your people skills will help to make this switch less difficult. In order to be ready for what college brings, students should take notice of these differences and learn to work in a new situation.

## **Sentence Variety**

Notice the number of times, towards the end of the essay, that the writer repeats the structure "there is." This sort of repetition can be numbing to the reader. Can you suggest changes so that the message is conveyed without the repetition?

## **Homework**

At one point the author suggest that it is necessary to complete ten or twelve hours of homework each week in college. Does this seem appropriate to you? Do you know what the university's expectations are?

# An Objective View of Cheerleading

Erica Chinetski

IN OUR SOCIETY, people like to keep things uncomplicated and simple. Everything has to be in a certain order and place. We begin forming stereotypes, an idea that many people have about a thing or group and that may often be untrue or only partly true. One such stereotype is the image of a cheerleader. Usually, cheerleaders are stereotyped as blonde, glamorous, air-headed, and undisciplined, but in reality most are ordinary, hardworking, and intelligent girls.

There is a common stereotype that cheerleaders are ditzy and less intelligent than other people. Many individuals see a cheerleader and immediately assume the cheerleader is stupid. From my personal experience as a cheerleader, I can say this view is untrue. Throughout high school, I was constantly concerned with my grades, test scores, and class rank. I was involved in various clubs, held down a job, was a member of the National Honor Society for four years, and won two academic scholarships. Most cheerleaders are dedicated to excelling in school, not because of the 2.0 G.P.A. requirement, but because they plan to attend college in the future.

Stephanie Maxwell-Pierson, the 1992 Olympic gold medallist in women's rowing pairs, said, "People have expressed their surprise after discovering I had been a cheerleader—they think I should have done something more 'challenging.' I've said to them, 'Are you kidding? To be able to work in total synchronization with a group of individuals—it's irreplaceable' (Podhaj ski). Other people that feel cheerleading laid the foundation for mega-success are U.S. Senators Thad Cochran and Trent Lott and television mogul Aaron Spelling (Podhaj ski).

Another common stereotype of cheerleaders is that they are all blondes and have no mind of

their own. Yes, they all look alike because of identical uniforms, hairstyles, makeup, and shoes, but if one looks closely they are all different. Cheerleaders must present themselves in a professional manner because they have the crowd as their audience. In a squad of cheerleaders, the girls have different hair color, possess different sizes and shapes, and certainly possess individual personalities. For instance, I have brown hair, brown eyes, and am not a stick figure. As for common sense, cheerleaders may talk about hair, boys, clothes, and looks, but so do most women. A large number of cheerleaders care about their jobs, community service, clubs, school, and family life. "True, airheads are sometimes known to show up on a squad, but that is true with any organization and should not be a stereotype of all cheerleaders" (Alesha).

A cheerleader's life is not just fun and full of glamour; it takes much hard work and complete dedication. "Cheerleading is a sport and an art that is unique and representative of the most positive aspects of gymnastics, dance, and fitness. It encompasses all of these elements into one discipline" (Cheerleading Authority). A skilled cheerleader must be able to perform a difficult tumbling pass at a moment's notice and learn dance routines in synchronization with the rest of the squad. Also, this activity does not guarantee popularity, a boyfriend, or an awesome social life. The cheerleader's time is taken up in studying, practicing, and participating in other extracurricular activities.

In conclusion, cheerleaders are not stupid, glitzy, or undisciplined. They are smart, diligent, and ordinary girls striving to achieve leadership, sportsmanship, and teamwork. The stereotypical view of cheerleaders is inaccurate; cheerleading

is a positive, difficult, and rewarding activity.

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### MLA Style

English Departments follow the Modern Language Association's (MLA) format for arranging documentation. This essay uses MLA style for citing the three electronic sources used in the paper. Notice the order which the sources are printed in on the Works Cited page: why are they in this order? Also take note of the peculiar indentation: do you know what this format is called and how to create it on a computer?

Notice the mathematical symbols around the Web addresses in each of the bibliographical entries above.

### Persuasive Writing

The preceding essay is a highly persuasive essay in which the author attempts to convince her readers that cheerleaders should not be stereotyped. This style of writing is often referred to as "argumentative writing" because it presumes that a view in opposition to the one proposed already exists.

Within the essay, the writer cites three sources garnered from the Web in an attempt to help convince people of her view. How effective are these citations? Do you feel convinced? Have you changed your view about cheerleaders?

### Argument and College Writing

Argumentative writing is generally considered to be what "college writing" is. Much college writing is done in response to what someone else has written, and is done in order to propose an alternative view. It is assumed that each individual will in fact have a view that is different in some degree to all other individuals' views. Nevertheless, each writer will write in a mode that suggests her or his view is the most correct view.

At the college level, one never apologizes for possessing a view that differs from someone else's; one writes in as convincing (and thus convinced of) a manner as possible. Sometimes freshman students find this difficult to understand because it seems to diminish opposing viewpoints. On the contrary, one must simply be prepared to defend one's views with logic and facts.

# She's Come Undone

Jill Giosa

I LOVE TO READ. I have read hundreds of books by now, so to pick a favorite isn't easy. There is one book that stands out in my mind, which has left a big impression on me and, in a way, has changed the way I look at life. It showed me life through a different view, through someone else's eyes.

*She's Come Undone*, by Wally Lamb, is a book about a woman who had many problems growing up. She lived with her mother and grandmother, and was fatherless. As a young child, a friend of the family molested her. As she grew up, she became obese and was ridiculed and tortured by classmates all through school. From all the pressures of college, and hardships that her life brought her, she became mentally ill and was put into a mental institution.

As the story evolves, her health improves. She loses weight, survives an abusive marriage, and straightens out her life. The story ends with her life coming back together. She is now a middle-aged woman and finally finds true love and happiness after a difficult life.

This book has shown me that life is not always easy, especially for some people. It is what we make of it, and only we can make it better. The author told the story through a woman's eyes very well, even though he is a man without these experiences. I recommend this book because it may teach someone a life lesson.

## Speaking in Generalities

This essay is a review of a book, which the author of the essay wants to recommend to us. We are told at the end of the essay that the life might teach us a "life lesson."

As a reader, what would you like to have the author of the essay tell you about the book?

If you go to movies, what might you learn about a movie before you see it that will make you want to see it?

## How to Use This Publication

Some editorial changes have been made in the essays that appear in the magazine to make the work correspond with standards expected of college students; however, we have left a considerable amount of the content in its original format. Faculty have expressed a desire to use the essays as examples for teaching editing, proofreading, and so forth. In other words, there may be some "mistakes" in the writing that could have been improved with further editing. We leave this to the individual instructors and to their students.

## Decisions for the Futrue

**Joseph M. Schifano**

MANY SPECIAL INTERESTS have grown on me over my eighteen years of life. I have developed a love for running, following my favorite sports teams through their seasons, hanging out with friends, and having a good time. But one special interest has stood above the rest, and I have never forgotten about it, the environment.

I have felt a special bond with the environment from a young age and have done my part to protect it. In 1998 I took part in the Lackawanna River 2020 program. Its ultimate goals were to rid the river of debris and educate the population of Northeastern Pennsylvania about our major river's importance to our future, essentially to allow our grandchildren the same access to a clean river that we've had. I have also taken part in the Nay Aug Park Restoration project in 1997 and maintained an Adopt a Highway section in Moosic with the store I worked for.

My love for the environment has also led me to become a member of the National Organization of the Sierra Club. According to *Sierra Club 1892-1998*, this organization has grown extensively since its founding in 1892 (NP). It was formed by a band of men and women led by conservative John Muir, who was interested in preserving the "wild" places still on Earth against globalization (*Sierra Club 1892-1998*). They knew that they alone couldn't accomplish much but hoped as a group they could become an instrumental movement (*Sierra Club 1892-1998*).

Both the Sierra Club and leaders from around the world must form compromises that would benefit the health of its citizens. The outcome of our current election could deter-

mine whether or not we have a clean environment for future generations to come.

The Sierra Club faces stiff opposition from certain politicians and corporations across the globe. One has to look no further than the current situation we are in. Al Gore and George W. Bush have "night and day" environmental plans. Al Gore has been backed by the Sierra Club for presidency in 2000 (NP) (*Sierra Club Voter Guide: Presidential Election*). In "Is Arctic Oil the Answer?" Peter Behr writes that the biggest issue pertaining to the environment between these two candidates is what we should do in Alaska on the Arctic National Refuge Plain (19). George W. Bush has stated he would allow oil companies access to this area for drilling if elected president (Behr 19).

Bush believes it's the nation's next biggest oil find and will enable the United States to stop depending so much on foreign imports from the Middle East (Behr 19). Al Gore strictly opposes this move, saying, "Any oil finds here will be scattered and only marginally help the nation's energy crisis" (Behr 19). He vows, if elected president, to continue to keep this plain off limits to oil companies (Behr 19).

If George W. Bush is elected president, one can almost guarantee he and his running mate, Dick Cheney, will be on the first plane heading to Anchorage. George W. Bush will just be another in the row of politicians who continue to destroy our environment for their own advancement and betterment of society. They will once again overlook the possible negative effects and outcomes this may cause for future generations. Al Gore, meanwhile, has said that if he is elected to the presidency of

the United States, “The Arctic Plain will be spared from the greedy hands of oil companies. We need not shatter the tranquility of this irreplaceable North American habitat” (Behr 19).

Oil is not the only natural resource that is being depleted, so is wilderness. Karen Jettmar, who works as a backwoods guide based in Anchorage, has lived in Alaska for 27 years (Behr 19). She tells a story of how she has stood alone on the plain, looking across it towards the Brooks Mountain Range. “There isn’t a human within fifty miles around, and the landscape is just so big and amazing,” she states (Behr 19). With so much of Alaska’s coast already cleared for oil development, why can’t this one piece be saved?

I believe that if Al Gore is elected president of the United States, America will become a safer and cleaner country. The question of making a quick dollar or destroying one of the last tranquil spots on earth is at stake in this election. Finding more oil is not the solution to our energy problems. We have a semi-clean environment as we speak, but it’s getting worse as the days go by. We must ask ourselves the question: “Do we want a clean environment for our grandchildren and their grandchildren?” It’s time for the people to stand up to our elected officials and challenge them into making the right decisions that pertain to our environment. Hopefully Al Gore will be elected to the presidency, and our environmental worries can be put to sleep.

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## Rewards Beyond Products

**Kari Barnett**

SOMETHING THAT CAUSES a sore back, rough, dirty hands, aching knees, and tender feet may not sound all that inviting, nor do the countless hours spent creating these things. All that and what do you get? A bushel of tomatoes, a few dozen cucumbers, a couple of heads of lettuce, a handful of carrots, and a few onions, if you're lucky. Some people think that gardening is not worth all of the hard work and time spent for the little you receive, but sometimes you have to look at the rewards beyond your actual products.

One afternoon, I spent hours planting seedlings, watering with a mixture of Miracle Grow, and tending to the needs of my vegetable plants. That evening as I looked over the lush green garden, I felt like I had really accomplished something that day. It made me feel good about myself; I had a feeling of satisfaction as I was doing my part to help my family.

After a stressful day of test-taking at school or a busy evening working in the kitchen, I found that pulling weeds and trimming back extra growth was very relaxing. I concentrated on removing the useless plants that were going to take nutrients out of the soil and away from my vegetables. Then I focused on cutting off the limbs that would not produce fruit in order for the plant not to waste energy growing them. The work made me forget all about the challenging calculus test or the waitress yelling she needed her food. That precious moment of not having a care in the world is well worth all the difficult tasks of maintaining a successful garden.

At the end of the season, when it is time to harvest the fruits and vegetables of my hard

work, nothing tastes better. A salad made of crisp lettuce, vine-ripened tomatoes, fresh cucumbers, sweet carrots, and juicy red onions harvested from my own garden tastes better than anything I can buy anywhere. It's amazing how much better a sandwich tastes when my dad

puts a little fresh green lettuce and red tomatoes on it. On rainy fall days after all the produce has been picked and cleaned, my mother and I spend time together canning the extra large, meaty tomatoes and crisp, orange carrots. Then we pickle an abundance of green cucumbers so we can enjoy the wonderful taste all year.

To look at the assortment of fresh vegetables that I know I took good care of and grew from tiny seeds is the biggest reward of all. When holding a perfectly shaped red tomato I have just picked off the vine, I feel responsible for it. I know that it would not have been there if not for me and that all of the hard work I put into taking care of it has paid off.

The time consumption and hard work may not be on everyone's list of favorite things to do. The produce may not cost all that much in the grocery store, but sometimes it is not always what one receives that matters. I feel that the time I spend in my garden is not wasted, but rather something that I would not trade for the world. To me, it is what is behind the actual vegetables that means the most and is the most rewarding.

# The American

Alex Groysman

IT WAS IN THE SUMMER of 1988, while I still lived in Ukraine, when I met my favorite uncle for the very first time. He came to visit us from the United States. I remember waiting for him with my parents and grandparents at an old railroad station in Kiev. I never saw a real American before and I was really excited to meet him. Soon enough we heard the noise of a steam engine as his train arrived. As it stopped, we all waited patiently for him to walk out onto the platform. Before I got a chance to see him, he was almost tackled by my grandmother as she ran quickly to kiss and hug her oldest son for the first time in many years. Finally, after all the crying was over, I saw him. He appeared to be an average sized man with a black beard and long curly hair. He was dressed in what I considered to be very strange attire. He wore white sneakers, dark blue jeans, a white t-shirt that was not tucked in, black sunglasses, and a gold earring in his left ear. You could tell easily that he was a foreigner. After he hugged my father, he smiled as he walked over to look at me for the very first time and said, with an accent, “Hi, Bandit.” (He still calls me that today.) For some reason, I became very shy and hid behind my mom.

After everyone was calmed down from all the excitement, we loaded my uncle’s belongings into the two taxis that took us back to our apartment by the Dnipper River. As my uncle unpacked his suitcases, I realized that he had with him lots of presents for me, and everyone in my family. I was excited to see what he had brought me from the “greatest country in the world.” I remember him giving me two packs of bubble gum, which back then were not found in Soviet stores, as well as other “foreign” gifts. We had many relatives and friends come over

for dinner that day, and we all conversed with my uncle during the meal. For the first time I met many cousins and other relatives that I never knew I had. Everyone came to see the “American.”

Sadly, his short, memorable visit came to an end, and it was time for him to go back. I found myself back at the same railroad station. This time the atmosphere around us was melancholy, as everyone was sad about his leaving. My grandmother was once again crying, this time not with joy, but with sadness, wondering when she’d see her son again. My uncle hugged everyone before getting on the train, and then waved good-bye to us from the window of his cabin. As his train was leaving, I remember thinking, “I will never see him again.” Fortunately, I saw him three years later when I moved to the United States.

# The Glorious Five Days

**Alexandrea Satar**

“Surprise, we’re going to Cancun!” shouted my best friend, Jenny. Those words spoken in pure joy, caused me to leap up out of my seat immediately and to hug her, with a wide smile on my face. It was the beginning of the summer of 2000, and we both had just ended four years of our high school. Jenny and I, without a doubt, felt that we truly deserved a vacation worthy of a few carefree days on the beach. Jenny’s mother, Rosie, had planned and talked with my mom, Evelyn, and came to the conclusion that it would be a good idea to give us a prepaid Cancun vacation as our graduation reward. Indeed, we thought it was a good idea, more than a good idea, an excellent idea. No other summer would be able to top the summer of 2000 when Jenny and I hopped on a TWA plane, and talked excitedly during the entire flight, about what to expect in Cancun, Mexico.

As soon as I smelled the crisp, warm, sea-shore air, I knew I was in a place where everyone’s mission was to have fun. Jenny and I took a taxi and arrived at the four-star hotel, Caribbean Princess, where our mothers had made reservations for our stay of five days. My eyes were wider than ever when I caught sight of the huge, white hotel. It had features, such as a nightclub, restaurant, pool, appealing scenery and so on. The location of the hotel is on the northeast tip of the Yucatan Peninsula, along Cancun’s famous hotel strip on the Caribbean Sea. I was ecstatic to be standing on an island surrounded by the warm blue aqua waters of the sunny Caribbean Cancun. The warm, windy weather, the smell of sun-tan lotion, and the various social events that were taking place. A Mexican band singing

and playing with all handmade instruments, making the surroundings seem full of energy. The nearby shopping areas, nightclubs, and restaurants made walking not a difficult task.

Although it was a four-star hotel, we spent most of our time outdoors. We wanted to discover all the hot spots in the town and rest on all the white sandy beaches. The beaches, like the Playa Langosta, were filled with amazing blue crystal water that was very pleasing to the eye. In Playa Langosta, Jenny and I had the opportunity to swim with the dolphins. Our experience with the dolphins was a peaceful, relaxing experience. We stroked the dolphins’ sleek skin and held on to their fins while they swam smoothly through the water. Also, they gave us a show by executing their many talents like shooting up from the water, flipping gracefully once or twice, and then plunging back into the water like an Olympic driver. Swimming with the dolphins was my favorite activity during my vacation. In addition, we went scuba diving, where we discovered the kingdom of the underwater world. I felt calm as I snorkeled past the variety of sea animals of different shapes, colors, and figures. They created the most beautiful blend of aquatic creatures. Jenny and I loved every moment of it, and we could not suppress our excitement. We continually brought up the topic among ourselves as if we were foreigners to the ocean.

One eventful night was ahead of us when Jenny and I planned to go out on the town on a warm, yet breezy evening. We slipped our tube tops on, our dark blue mini skirts, and slid into our go-go boots and dashed out of the hotel excitedly in search of a nightclub.

We headed for one of the most popular nightclubs, La Boom. The club doors opened with colorful lights that shone through, spinning as they glowed upon the dancers on the disco floor. I grabbed Jenny's hand and we walked directly to the dance floor, passed the enormous speakers with a voice singing "Let's get loud!" and began dancing, dancing, and more dancing. Soon after, we decided to explore the other clubs nearby.

After a stroll through the wild and loud streets of Cancun and walking by a few intoxicated girls, we came upon the most famous nightclub of all, Fat Tuesdays. Even before we entered the club, we could hear people yelling, "Take it off!" As we cautiously walked in, the sight of several girls in skimpy bikinis dancing were before our eyes. Jenny and I looked at each other and yelled over the music, "Wow!" We fought our way through the crowd and witnessed girls and guys dancing without any shirts on. One female's clothing consisted entirely of a red thong bikini and, to my surprise, I spotted a male who wore a thong also, but he did not receive as much attention as the female did.

Jenny and I both enjoyed it because it was something new, which we would not encounter where we live in the Poconos. Fat Tuesdays was a club where no one felt self-conscious and everyone enjoyed himself or herself. It was the highlight of the night.

My experience in Cancun, Mexico was one memory surely different from my others and can allow me to look back on it with happiness. The extended freedom that came with this vacation is what made it possible to do all the things I would not normally do, like

dancing in the most famous nightclub in Cancun. Witnessing the live Mexican band singing and performers displaying their talents along the streets of Cancun, like salsa dancing, created colorful memories for me. Between all the adventures, relaxation, celebrations, and exploring, I have come to the conclusion that Cancun is a place I will revisit if I want to just have fun and in the process add some wild activities to my agenda. Cancun is the place to be as carefree as I can, which is exactly what Jenny and I did. It is truly a playground paradise.

### Travel

Travel has been an essential part of western education for a very long time. Where have you travelled to? What did you learn? What in such an experience would be important to tell others about?

### Diction

Word choice is important. At times the writer of the accompanying essay refers to people by their gender: "male" and "female." What effect does this have compared with referring to people simply as men and women?

# Go Sharks!

**Beth Olexa**

“YOU’RE LATE!” were the words I most commonly heard in high school. I was constantly late for my first class, which was biology. My teacher was extremely boring and mean. She would never listen to anyone in the class. If I asked her for help, she would look at me like I was some kind of bug to be squashed. This could have been because I always managed to show up ten minutes late to her class. I did not care that I was late. The only thing that I was missing was the pledge of allegiance. This tardiness, however, did catch up to me, when “Mrs. Biology” made me write the pledge of allegiance fifty times.

She was always treating the class and me like we were in the first grade. I not only had to write the pledge of allegiance but also a ten-page report on chromatography. I was not the only one punished by being required to complete such an assignment. Three of my classmates were also forced to write the paper. My teacher made us write the paper for talking while she was explaining to the rest of the class what seashells were. No one in the class was paying attention. It just happened to be that my friends and I were the only ones talking out loud.

Besides putting up with my teacher’s ridiculous lessons on seashells, I also had to tolerate her horrible personality and frightening appearance. She used to be a marine biologist, and was constantly in the sun, so her skin looked like it was “burnt to a crisp” and her hair looked like it had not been brushed in years. She would always tell us stories about scuba diving. The thought of her in a wet suit made me nauseous. There was one story in particular that she would tell the class on a weekly basis. It was the time she went scuba diving with her husband (who

could imagine her being married?) and a shark bit off her husband’s foot. She would tell the story as if she were proud that her husband lost his foot. The only thing I could say about my biology teacher and her class is that I was glad it was over along with my first year of high school.

My biology teacher was by far the most ridiculous teacher I ever had. She would tell the class that she was the one in a million kind of teacher. I used to say that she was the one in a trillion kind of *something*. I recently heard that she has moved back to Florida to pursue her career as a marine biologist. I only have one thing to say, “Go sharks!”

## **Argumentation and the Use of Details**

The use of details in creating an effective argument is well established. How effective is the use of the physical description of the teacher in this essay?

While the essay is not precisely an argumentative essay, it is clearly meant to be persuasive. What is the author trying to persuade us of?

# The Big Boss

**Brant Dencker**

Every household has that one person who always seems to make the decisions, or at least has a say in them. A mother or father usually possesses this power as the head of the household. My family is a little different though. This power goes to the youngest of us all, my sister Ambur.

On the outside, there is nothing extremely special about her. She is a typical nine-year-old. She has blue eyes, and light brown hair. Her wardrobe is typical of any young child, one that mocks anything that an older sibling would wear, as she fits her way into society's standard trend for the time. From her mother she has gained poor eyesight and wears glasses. She has inherited from her father the height and size of a tree.

Despite her young age she is an armrest for me at six feet three inches, and I have no thoughts of messing around and bringing out that raging bull temper that she can torment anyone with. When she gets in a mood, she has the habit of slamming her door. This door is a sliding pocket door, and when slammed by only her does it sound like the clapping of thunder during a violent storm. I also have learned the hard way from many sibling rivalry fights that she can knock down anyone as if they were one of many little gnats flying around her head during the fall. This temper can and has many times gotten our parents so frustrated that they have given in to her or altered the family's plans for the day.

There are other ways that Ambur can get her way. She has this hidden conniving power. Her best friend lives just down the road from us and shares a seat on the bus with Ambur. The two of them will plot up the most masterful of schemes and then propose them the very second they open the door to the house. Understandably, our

parents usually reject this scheme due to the lack of proper notice. This always plays into the hands of the plot. Unknown to anyone but her, the rejection included a promise of "You can do it another time," as if it were a standard clause in a rejection. So now the next plot comes along and when it gets the usual rejection, the cries of misery come out as she complains, "But you promised, Mom!" After this plea of desperation and thunderous slam, our mother usually gives in and allows her to engage in her scheme.

Despite these pessimistic views, Ambur is the apple of my eye. She is a very lovable child and easily enjoyed. We do many things together and I'd have it no other way. When the newest animated movie in the theatre comes out, she, without hesitation, turns to my wallet and me and asks to see it with me. I willingly take her because she is my sister and I love her with all my heart. She has a sweetness and sense of humor that is untouchable. She is very quick with a comeback to which one has little choice but to smile and laugh at as if it were just voted joke of the year. She is an amazing child and even better sister. If I could pick any little girl as my sister, I would choose her in a heartbeat.

# Ski Instructor: The Good Life

**Brian Leach**

“I WISH I WERE A SKI INSTRUCTOR: I would sit around and do nothing and ski for free all day.” This is a common phrase uttered to me after I tell someone what I do for money in the winter. I cannot blame anyone for thinking that way; that’s the reason I became a ski instructor. I loved skiing, idolized ski instructors, read *Powder* magazine religiously, and used the movie *Aspen Extreme* as my Bible. I considered T.J. Burke and Dexter Rutecki to be my idols. All these examples portrayed ski instructors as handsome young men who always had beautiful women, lavish condos and made enough money to be considered upper class. In the movies, ski instructors only taught beautiful women who spoke bad English but had cute foreign accents.

In the real world of ski instructing, there is no big money to be made and no one owns nice condos. I know from experience that many ski instructors sleep in their cars and the ones who live close to the resort live in small cottages in the woods with small coal stoves as their only source of heat. Most ski instructors are students and many only have the job for the free ski pass. For the most part, we are not handsome men and women.

We are a motley crew: some are housewives, some are men with beer guts, and some are retired people just getting some extra cash. There are never gorgeous women willing to pay big bucks for a ski lesson and, if there were, I guarantee they would not have a foreign accent.

Instead, we start our day at seven by setting up our work site and getting the shop ready for the hordes of children and parents who will soon be there. Each instructor is in charge of twenty to thirty kids and expected to improve the child’s skiing. The children usually are in no mood to

ski: they miss their parents, and they’re cold. Because of their lack of coordination and having uncomfortable skis and ski boots on, many children spend a majority of their time lying in the snow. A child who misses his or her parents and is cold and wet is never pleasant.

The ski lift is an instructor’s worst nightmare. Luckily children are fearless and always wanting to explore new things. Ski lifts are not made for three-foot tall rambunctious children. Trying to get twenty some children up a ski lift that is 20 to 30 feet above the ground is nerve racking.

The real fun does not begin until we start going down the slope. Twenty-some children skiing at one time is a precious scene to watch. For the teacher, it becomes a whole different scene. Unintentionally, some children ski into the woods, others lie at the top of the hill, and a few go for the ultimate rush of bombing straight down the hill. Just when it couldn’t get any worse, it does. It is time to brush the snow off their coats and hats and put their gloves back on for another trip up the hill, because there are still three more hours of teaching for them.

At this point many people would ask why I am still an instructor. These people do not know the feeling I receive when I see a child ski for the first time. In the movies, we never see T.J. Burke teach a child how to ski from scratch.

### **Freshness of Language**

One of our jobs as college writers is to avoid the clichéd use of language. Does this writer do that? Does he use a cliché in an effective manner?

# Just a Housewife?

**Brittany Preslock**

WHEN A WOMAN says her occupation is a homemaker or a housewife, what do you picture? Do you think of Peg Bundy from the TV show, *Married With Children*? Or, do you consider her to be someone who does a lot of work? Unfortunately, many Americans perceive a housewife as being unskilled, uneducated, or lazy. However, I see a homemaker as a woman who works non-stop day in and day out. She is the one who stays home with the children, organizes the household, and also sets forth a set of rules in a household.

A housewife's main reason for staying home is to raise her children in a familiar atmosphere. There are a lot of mothers who give birth to a child and go back to work roughly six to ten weeks after delivering. This leaves a newborn baby in a daycare being cared for by complete strangers. Those first six months are extremely important for a mother and her child to bond. A baby needs to build that trust with its mother through spending time with her. Instead, a child forms a bond with a caregiver.

Today, it is possible that babies get lost in the shuffle at daycare because of the growing amount of children being tossed into them. On the other hand, housewives are there for that baby. In this situation, a baby is taken care of the way they should be. Just think of what good it would do your baby. He or she will not have to experience the feeling of negligence from their mother if she decides to take more time off of work. I think it is better so that a baby feels wanted by its mother.

Another important job of a housewife is to keep a house organized. There are so many chores that need to be kept up with in a house or it just won't run smoothly. My mother was a

housewife from the day my brother was born in 1972 until I was well into grade school. My mother worked from the minute she woke up in the morning until she laid herself down to sleep at night.

Her day started off by making breakfast for a family of six, cleaning up after a family of 6, and getting at least four out of the six out the door. One of us kids would have to be on the school bus at one time, while the others had to be on the bus at a later time. It didn't end after we were all out of the door because there were more things to be tended to besides us. Being a housewife, my mother did it all. She cooked, cleaned, did the laundry, and more. The funny part was that she did it all at once. While she had a pot of spaghetti sauce on the stove, she would have loads of laundry in both the washer and dryer. There are many other tasks my mother did as a homemaker too. As you can see, being a housewife is more than a forty-hour-a-week job. It's a job with all day, all night hours. If you ask me, those are hard shifts to cover!

Along with taking care of the children and keeping organization in a house, there is one more significant duty of a housewife. That would have to be the role of being the authority. She is the one with the set of rules to follow in the home. My mom had her set of rules that my two brothers, my sister, and I had to follow. If we didn't abide by them and my mother found out, she would let us know we did wrong. We would get that crack of the old hand across the butt! I think this sets kids straight and they know where they stand with their mom. Sometimes I would ask my father to do something when I knew my mom would say no. That would only work every once in a while because my parents picked up

on schemes. I then realized that rules were rules. My mother had her set of rules for a reason. That reason was to make better people out of the four kids in my house. I see some of my friends who didn't have any rules to follow and it shows. Some of them have no morals because of this. They don't care what they do, nor do they care about the consequences. I believe that because my mom was there, she taught me the things essential to stay focused in life. I see the difference between right and wrong, and it makes me feel good about myself. I think that children should have the opportunity of having their mom being a housewife rather than working all the time. It makes the child feel wanted and cared for if they have a set of rules to keep to.

Despite all of the erroneous ideas people may have about housewives, I argue that a housewife provides a structure for a family. She holds the family together and keeps it running efficiently. With out "Mom," families could fall apart at the seams.

**Reader Response**

How do you respond to this essay? Are there weaknesses to the writer's argument that you can point out?

# Technology in My Life

**Bryan Hunsinger**

WHAT WOULD LIFE be like without technology? The world has evolved to be so technologically advanced that most people would have difficulty imagining life without it.

Almost everyone, if not everyone, in my generation is familiar with technology. Whether they are up to date with the innovative dreams of the future, or just satisfied with the ideas of the present, they are still surrounded with a world of technology.

I have not lived a day in my life where I was not affected by technology in some way. I think that it is an important aspect in our everyday lives, and I support its growth and expansion. Without it, many jobs would be difficult or even impossible. Technology plays a profound role in schools, offices, hospitals, and homes. I am very interested in technology and the new advances that are apparent to me every day. I have always been amazed when I read or heard about a new product or idea, and anticipate what will come in the future.

I am very familiar with computer technology. I actually hope to build my career upon it someday. Since I was young, I have always found it very remarkable. Using a computer and discovering what makes it work was always interesting to me. Computers and the Internet are still a vital part of my life. Most important, my computer assists me with school work such as researching information for my classes, typing papers, or retrieving facts about careers in which I may be interested.

It also serves as a way for me to stay connected with people. By utilizing e-mail and chat programs, I can instantly and efficiently keep in touch with family members or friends without using a telephone. I can also keep myself updated about newsworthy events and weather forecasts. Finally, I use my computer for entertainment purposes such as playing online games, surfing the web, and shop-

ping online.

Besides the desktop PC, I am also familiar with laptops and PDA's which are similar to computers, but are smaller and more mobile. They are useful for me when I leave my house so I can still utilize and enjoy most of the things I do with my computer.

Another technological aspect that I am familiar with and that I depend on is the cellular phone. I have owned a cellular phone for several years, and it is quite often very helpful. Having a cell phone allows people to reach me if I am not at my house in case of an emergency or just to talk. Also, it can be helpful if I am driving, and I need directions or assistance.

Among the thousands of technological devices available for our use, these are just a mere few with which I am familiar. There are of course the appliances common to every household that I consider to be technology such as the TV, VCR, telephone, DVD player, stereo, calculator, microwave, and even the automobile. All of these devices help out in people's everyday lives in one way or another. Technology provides people with information, communication, entertainment, and efficiency.

The world without technology would be very unfamiliar territory. Most people are spoiled by the way technology works to their advantage, but they just don't realize it. If technology were to vanish from our lives, most of the tasks that we consider common and effortless would appear demanding and grueling.

I am thankful that I have had many experiences with modern technology, and I hope my experiences continue to grow. I am curious and anxious to see what will arise in the future. Will we ever live to see a car that flies? One will never know. As the gap between man and machine grows smaller and smaller, we will be exposed to new and exciting inventions that will facilitate our lives even more.

# Adjusting to High School

**Chris Serra**

FOR ME, adjusting to life in high school was quite complicated at first. I was always the type of person who hated school and never understood why we had to go for so long. Seven hours a day just seemed like a waste of time. Personally, I would much rather be in bed sleeping or doing other things that interest me.

The first day of high school was difficult, because I did not know what to expect. All I could remember were everyone's stories about how someone was starting a fight or how the students were trying to start problems. People always made it seem as if it were a prison, not a school.

On the first day, I found out it was like a prison. The high school had security guards everywhere. They had a guard in every bathroom. They had at least three guards in the cafeteria at all times, and they always had two guards patrolling the halls. If someone was to do anything wrong, there was no doubt that they would surely be caught, just like I was. Before I go into detail, let me explain a little bit more.

I had two first days of high school because, after junior high, I decided I wanted to play basketball for Bishop Hafey, a Catholic school across the street from the high school. Bishop Hafey started two weeks before Hazleton High School did, so, when I dropped out of there after a week, I was still a week early for the start of the Hazleton area school year.

My first day at Hazleton was much better. I saw many of my friends and had class with a few of them. We compared our schedules to see what classes we had together to check if we had lunch together. Most of us had lunch at the same time, so we decided to sit at the same table. I felt much more comfortable at this school than I did at the last one.

At lunch, people started to throw food at each other at the table behind us. One of the students ended up hitting a girl sitting across from them by accident. The girl was not too pleased by being embarrassed in front of her friends, so she threw the food back at the student who had hit her and accidentally hit me. I stood up, looked at the girl, looked around, and then threw the piece of pizza back at her, not knowing that the rest of the cafeteria was also going to throw the food they had. It did not take long before there was a full-blown food fight. Students were flipping tables, throwing trays, and yelling as loud as they could, "food fight" as if everyone had not already known about it.

Unfortunately it turned out that security was watching and singled me out as the one who had started the whole thing. I was hauled off to the principal's office on the first day. He did not even know I was at their school because my mom never called to tell them that I was dropping out of Hafey and coming to the high school. However, the next day, my mom and the principal cleared everything up and I was enrolled in the right school. The principal suspended me for five days and told me that he might involve the police in this incident because I had started what he thought was a riot.

Thank goodness he never took that drastic measure. That is about all that went right for me on the first day. After that, I knew things could not be much worse (or at least I hoped not). From then on, I knew that I could handle almost anything the high school could throw at me.

# A Trip To Guatemala

**Cristina Ramirez**

IT WAS A HOT summer day in August, about six o'clock in the morning, and we were all sitting on the airplane ready to take off. Six of my closest friends and I were heading on a missionary trip to Guatemala, a place we thought we were ready to handle, a place we never thought would change our outlook on life.

After seven hours on the plane, we finally landed. With a sigh of relief, we got off the plane with red blood-shot eyes and pounding headaches. We left the airport on our way to the city of Guatemala. When we arrived at the base, our director handed us a folder filled with tons of colored papers. When I opened up my folder, I found a week full of destinations that we had to travel to. I was shocked that they had every hour of every day planned on this piece of paper. Our director also informed us that in twenty-four hours we needed to be ready for our thirteen-hour bus drive to the next city.

Two days later, we arrived at Puerto Barrio, getting ready to start our outreach program. Our first destination was a jail. We took a boat, across the crystal clear blue waters, to the other side of the city. As we entered the jail, the smell of body odor met us. It was as if millions of sweaty workers were trapped in one room for years. All the flies and insects crawling around the dark and wet halls made us want to lose our lunch. I had a strong feeling of distress.

My heart just went out to these women who live there. All of us had a look of sadness on our faces. Although saddened, we could not let this strong feeling distract us from our outreach program. The women and men were separated, so the women in our group went to the female cells and the males went to the male cells. When we got to the cell, there were feces all over the court-

yard. The women had no clean clothes, weren't wearing any deodorants, and had not showered in days. It shocked me how rough third world country jails can be. The purpose for our visit was to tell these women about the Lord, and to counsel them one on one. We also distributed deodorants, soap, clothing, and Bibles. My heart just cried at hearing the stories of all these women who hadn't seen their children and didn't even know if they were alive.

The next day we all took a trip to an all-girls' public school. The girls ranged in age from seven to thirteen. There were about three hundred girls running around the big, open, hot courtyard. As we walked in the gates, I started to talk with some of the girls. One girl asked me if she could give me a hug. I said yes, and in about two minutes I had over fifty girls trying to hug me. There were so many girls that I fell on the floor and more and more girls fell on top of me. I felt the boiling concrete on my back and the pressure of all these little girls on top of me. I felt as if I was drowning and there was no way out. I had to be pulled out of the crowds and was instructed to stay on the platform.

All that these girls wanted was a hug, and if one got one they all had to. We sang songs to them, performed dramas, and told them about the Lord. It was difficult for me to accept how much love a child yearns for because of lack of human contact.

The last day of my trip, I believe, was the hardest. We visited a village where all we saw were naked children running around and houses made of trees. There was no clean water in the area or electricity. We saw many children dying of starvation and diseases for whom we have the simplest cures. I thought to myself how hard it must

be to live a life of poverty. My whole outlook on life changed. In the village, we gathered all the children together and had one of my friends dress up as a clown to entertain them. We sang songs and also told them about the Lord.

I came to realize in that one vital week of my life how blessed I am. I have food, clothes and shelter. I have my health and have the privilege of getting up every morning and gaining an education that someday will help provide for my family.

### Some Helpful Hints

from *Prof. Elizabeth Wright*  
of the Hazleton Campus

#### 1. Apostrophe Use

Use an apostrophe when you want to show ownership of possession, such as *Ivan's last name* or *Andy's book*.

Add an 's when:

1. The noun does not end in -s, such as *Jim's bike*.
2. The noun is singular and ends in -s, add an 's, such as *Doris's hat*.

Add only an apostrophe if the noun is plural and ends in -s, such as *teachers' meeting*.

#### 2. The difference between **its** and **it's**

*Its* is used to show possession, such as *the dog lay on its side* or *the horse at its hay*.

*It's* is a contraction, such as *It's always important to use the apostrophe correctly*

or *It's a shame that the student lost her book*.

#### 3. On revision

Students like to think that after they write a first draft an essay is finished; however, most successful writers admit that they create a number of drafts before coming up with the finished product. When revising, ask yourself whether the essay needs major or minor revision. Major revision might entail adding and deleting information you have included in the essay, arranging paragraphs, or even developing a new thesis or focus for the essay. Minor revision, which most often takes place after the major revision has been completed, might involve replacing verbs, combining or separating sentences, writing new transitions and topic sentences, and proofreading for spelling and grammatical errors.

#### Editor's Note:

*Some instructors divide the writing process into five stages:*

1. Gathering and sorting of information
2. Drafting
3. Revising
4. Editing
- 5 Proofreading

# An Objective View of Cheerleading

**Erica Chinetski**

IN OUR SOCIETY, people like to keep things uncomplicated and simple. Everything has to be in a certain order and place. We begin forming stereotypes, ideas that many people have about a thing or group and that may often be untrue or only partly true. One such stereotype is the image of a cheerleader. Usually, cheerleaders are stereotyped as blonde, glamorous, air-headed, and undisciplined, but in reality most are ordinary, hardworking, and intelligent girls.

There is a common stereotype that cheerleaders are ditzy and less intelligent than other people. Many individuals see a cheerleader and immediately assume the cheerleader is stupid. From my personal experience as a cheerleader, I can say this view is untrue. Throughout high school, I was constantly concerned with my grades, test scores, and class rank. I was involved in various clubs, held down a job, was a member of the National Honor Society for four years, and won two academic scholarships. Most cheerleaders are dedicated to excelling in school, not because of the 2.0 G.P.A. requirement, but because they plan to attend college in the future.

Stephanie Maxwell-Pierson, the 1992 Olympic gold medallist in women's rowing pairs, said, "People have expressed their surprise after discovering I had been a cheerleader-they think I should have done something more 'challenging.' I've said to them, 'Are you kidding? To be able to work in total synchronization with a group of individuals-it's irreplaceable (Podhajski). Other people that feel cheerleading laid the foundation for mega-success are U.S. Senators Thad Cochran and Trent Lott and television mogul Aaron Spelling (Podhajski).

Another common stereotype of cheerleaders is that they are all blondes and have no minds of

their own. Yes, they all look alike because of identical uniforms, hairstyles, makeup, and shoes, but if one looks closely they are all uniquely different. Cheerleaders must present themselves in a professional manner because they have the crowd as their audience. In a squad of cheerleaders, the girls have different hair color, are many sizes and shapes, and possess individual personalities. For instance, I have brown hair, brown eyes, and I am not a stick figure. As for common sense, cheerleaders may talk about hair, boys, clothes, and looks, but so do most women. A large number of cheerleaders care about their jobs, community service, clubs, school, and family life: "True, airheads are sometimes known to show up on a squad, but that is true with any organization and should not be a stereotype of all cheerleaders" (Alesha).

A cheerleader's life is not just fun and full of glamour; it takes much hard work and complete dedication: "Cheerleading is a sport and an art that is unique and representative of the most positive aspects of gymnastics, dance, and fitness...It encompasses all of these elements into one discipline" (Cheerleading Authority). A skilled cheerleader must be able to perform a difficult tumbling pass at a moment's notice and learn dance routines in synchronization with the rest of the squad. Also, this activity does not guarantee popularity, a boyfriend, or an awesome social life. The cheerleader's time basically consists of studying, hours of practice, and participation in other extracurricular activities.

In conclusion, cheerleaders are not stupid, glitzy, or undisciplined. They are smart, diligent, and ordinary girls striving to achieve leadership, sportsmanship, and teamwork. The stereotypical view of cheerleaders is inaccurate;

cheerleading is a positive, difficult, and incredible activity.

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### Citing Sources

Traditionally, writing papers with secondary sources is the province of college freshman composition. That is, students traditionally learn to do this in English 015 or its equivalent. However, more and more students are coming to college already familiar with the proper way to do this. As a result, some faculty ask that English 004 students write the sorts of papers which require proper citation.

Generally, the use of anyone other person's words, ideas or statistics must be cited. Failure to adequately explain where the words, ideas and statistics have come from is an act of plagiarism. Serious academic consequences can result from such behavior, and it is a federal crime to commit plagiarism.

Sometimes students think that if they change another writer's words that they do not need to cite the writer as a source. This is not true. Sometimes students think that if they change some of another writer's words that they do not need to use quotation marks. This is also not true.

*One of the principal reasons for using another writer's words, ideas or statistics is to lend credibility to our position in an argument. If a writer can demonstrate that a person of significant authority supports her or his position, then the argument is stronger.*

# Drinking is No Fun in the End

**Gwen Donmoyer**

“DID YOU LEARN YOUR LESSON?” My mom hesitated, and then continued to preach. “I expected more from you young lady,” Mom yelled from the other end of the telephone. I tried to speak, but all I could do was listen to my mom’s hurt voice echo through my head. These were just a few of the phrases my mom repeated the night I told her I was cited for underage drinking.

I’m a college student, and I thought I was never going to be the one who had to tell my parents that the police cited me for underage drinking. I never knew all the consequences of drinking and I chose the wrong way to find them out.

I’m not going to lie: I had a fun time, but it just wasn’t worth it. Drinking has both negative and positive effects—obviously more negative than positive. I only know of one positive effect; it leads to good grades, at least in my case. (How?) After I was caught, I didn’t want to leave my room because of the fear I had of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Whenever there was a party (there was one almost every night), I would do my homework or study when the halls were nice and quiet. After a couple of tests, I noticed that my grades were improving; this gave me a good reason never to drink again.

Now let me explain some of the many bad effects. The first and worst thing that happened to me was that I had to tell my parents. It was one of the hardest things I ever had to do. I’m the kind of girl who earns good grades, does whatever her parents tell her, and was a positive role model for her younger siblings. However, my actions that night tarnished my perfect record.

The second effect was the citation itself. I had to pay a fine of \$300, my license was suspended for 90 days, my insurance increased, and I had to go to four counseling meetings, each one costing me an extra \$25. This meant that I needed a second job, one that I’m not sure I could have handled.

The campus was notified, adding to the consequences I had to accept. Even though we were caught off campus, the campus punished us for harming the school’s reputation. We first had to attend a meeting with a counselor. At this meeting, anything could happen, from a simple warning stating that we should not do it again to being expelled from school. I had to attend those. They were nothing very serious, but I recommend staying away from alcohol unless you have money to burn, and you don’t care about what your parents think.

I was told to “use my head.” I didn’t, and look at what happened. My advice is to take your parents’ advice, and mine, and stay away from alcohol. The hour or two of fun I had wasn’t worth the pain I caused my parents and my wallet.

## **Education Majors**

Education majors should be aware that an arrest connected with alcohol, no matter how minor it might seem, could prohibit you from receiving your teacher’s certificate.

# Cat Got Your Duck

Holley Evans

ONE DAY I came home from work, and decided I needed to change my hair color for about the tenth time that month. Fortunately, I had a huge assortment of various colors ranging from jet black to platinum blonde right in my own bathroom. After choosing a shade, getting everything ready to prepare the color, and applying it to my head, I thought it would be nice to take a long hot bath as I waited for the color to set. While bathing, I thought, "What the hell, I might as well shave my legs." So, I was lying there with chocolate brown dye on my head smelling of acetone and latex, and shaving cream all over my legs. All of a sudden, I heard loud rapid knocks on the door that didn't stop. Jumping out of the tub as fast as I could, I threw on a robe with the dye and the shaving cream still intact, and opened the door to see two little children crying. When I asked them what was wrong, they said, "It's your cat. He's got a duck!"

There was a day care and a pond with big fat fluffy geese a block and a half down the street. Standing there, I was thinking. "Well, that's not so bad." These two little children frantically started pulling me out the door. Getting to the street, I saw what was actually happening. There was Frybill, my cat, literally riding this two-foot tall goose like a cowboy, repeatedly biting it in the back of the neck in front of a day care full of children that were screaming and crying at the top of their lungs. So I took off down the street like Carl Lewis, hair dye on the head, shaving cream on the legs, and a light powder blue terry cloth robe with puffy white clouds and smiley faces all over it.

Finally, I got to my beast. He had all four paws hooked into the sides of the goose, and his mouth around the neck of this thing with his teeth sunk

in for the kill. I was screaming, "Frybill!" Frybill was growling like a rabid dog, the goose was honking, and all of the children were still screaming and crying. After seven good tugs, I finally detached Frybill, with a long white feather hanging out of his mouth, and the goose waddled down the street as if nothing had happened. By now the children at the day care were gasping for air because they had been crying for so long. Then I just snuck off with Frybill under my robe before any adult on the street noticed what had happened.

## What Is an Essay?

Or perhaps more appropriately, what is a college essay? The student work on this page seems more what we would expect out of short story than an essay. We've come to expect that work produced by writers in an academic setting will sound a certain way and more often than not be in response to someone else's written work on a given topic.

What do you think college writing is? What does it sound like? What is its purpose?

What part does "entertainment" play in essay writing?

A key element in college writing is its "reader centered" quality. What do you think this means?

# Walking Advertisements

**Jessica Stefanik**

OKAY, I admit it. I'm guilty, guilty of being one of the millions of teenagers today paying certain companies so I can advertise their brand name clothing. We are all walking advertisements for stores such as the Gap, Abercrombie & Fitch, Old Navy, Structure, Aeropostale, and many more. Why? Why are we all running to pay top dollar for a little label that says, "Abercrombie"?

I think the "wear brand names to be popular" phase comes during adolescence when we are trying to fit in with our peers. I attended a public high school where I was in constant competition with the people around me. If we wanted a high status, we had to look like we deserved it. If we dressed like dirt balls, we were treated like a dirt balls; if we dressed sophisticated and clean, we received respect because people thought that we had money and were no one to be trifled with.

Companies like Gap and Abercrombie increase their prices because they know how gullible teenagers are today. We are willing to pay fifty dollars for a pair of jeans just because they have a label (on the back that no one ever really sees anyway) that reads "Gap." These companies are overpricing their clothes because they know that they will get the money for them. Their advertisements make us think that their clothes are "in" and that we need to look like the models in the ads in order to be cool. It works. Teenagers today are trying so hard to fit in and be popular that they'll pay anything to have those jeans or that shirt.

If you don't think that anything written here is true, just think about yourself. What are you wearing right now? Or what about that person sitting next to you—what is he or she wearing?

Why do you think teenagers pay thirty dollars for a T-shirt with a little brand name attached to the sleeve?

The worst part is that these trendy clothing stores are spreading all over and reaching younger generations. We now see Baby Gap and Limited Too in our malls. These children will be brainwashed into thinking that they have to wear brand names because that's what they have always worn. The clothing stores will be able to increase the price even more because their clothes are all that future generations will buy. So how do we stop this cycle of kids wanting to fit in and clothing companies increasing their prices with the demand? It's almost impossible. Kids will always go through the adolescent stage and there will always be public schools where teenagers are able to wear anything they wish and do not wear uniforms. These two factors make teenagers feel they have to do something to fit in.

Advertising is paramount in today's consumer world. The fact that people are constantly being influenced and persuaded by advertisements makes it hard to ignore these ads. We have to start small. Stop paying fifty dollars for those jeans. Stop going into these stores and buying overpriced things that really aren't needed. Once sales start dropping, prices will start dropping. Reverse their thinking and end the cycle.

# Professional Ballerina Is a Real Career

**Laura A. Gilpin**

I HAVE BEEN DANCING since I was three years old. When I told my friend Dorothy, that I wanted to be a professional dancer, she said, “That’s nice, but what will your real career be?” Since then I have noticed that many people misunderstand dancing as a profession.

Dancing is a real career. It takes hard work and dedication to be a dancer. Dancers need to be strong enough to put up with the physical, emotional, and verbal abuse of teachers and choreographers. They also need to practice for many hours every day. Marie Taglioni, the first great ballerina, often collapsed unconscious with exhaustion at the end of a two-hour session (Menning 2) Some girls start dancing as early as two or three. Many dancers start training for their professional careers between the ages of ten and thirteen, and start performing usually no later than eighteen. Many dancers never even make it into a professional company, and those who do usually retire in their mid to late twenties. Dancers who are lucky can dance professionally into their thirties and forties; that is if they don’t have children or health problems. Numerous dancers become addicted to drugs like caffeine and cocaine to keep them going because they starve themselves to achieve the physique of a professional dancer. Then they take drugs to help them relax, such as sleep aids and painkillers. Others suffer from psychological problems from stress caused by the quest for physical and technical perfection.

One dancer to suffer from mental illness is Olga Spessivtseva. Her increasingly obsessive perfectionism caused her to reject several contracts (Menning 26-27). Her tour of Australia in 1934 was the greatest triumph of her career,

until the first signs of mental breakdown compelled her to leave the company. She had a severe breakdown in 1940 caused by the absence of the art for which she had sacrificed everything. She was institutionalized in a state hospital until 1963. “Her devotion to her art was total, even extreme. Of her Giselle it was said, “She danced not for herself, not for an audience, but for the dance itself.” But she could not separate the dancer from the dance.”

It takes hard work to be a professional dancer. I don’t think a person could be a ballerina and have what many people consider a career. All of the hours of practice and the stress of perfection make professional dancing just as much of a career as any other profession.

## Work Cited

Menning, Vim. *A Coloring Book of Great Dancers*. Santa Barbara, CA: Bellerophon Books, 1991.

### Diction

Avoid using intensifiers in your writing. Most of us are prone to writing words and phrases such as “a lot,” “really” and “always” in an attempt to convince our readers of the seriousness or quantity of whatever it is we are discussing.

Trust your reader. If you do your job describing something, you will not need to intensify the language.

# Our Place

**Manuela Lawson**

MY FRIEND Tatjana and I have been best friends since second grade. Tatjana had long brown hair and blue eyes. She was very friendly and open, and she liked to have fun and go out with friends. As she grew older, her hair was always done in a nice way and she didn't leave the house without make-up. When I got to high school in Germany, I made other friends but no one compared to her. Tatjana was the sweetest girl in the world. When we were in eighth grade, she started acting very differently toward our other friends and me.

She seemed very distant and unhappy. I always tried talking to her, but she just shrugged me off. It was not like her to keep things from me, considering we always talked about everything. It just seemed to be getting worse; she never went out anymore, never called me, and, when I called her, her mother would tell me she didn't want to talk to anyone. I thought that was very odd, since I was the person she came to with all her problems. The only time I would get to see her was in school.

This behavior went on for about a month, when I decided to go to her house and make her talk to me. She refused to tell me what was wrong. I felt very sad and angry at the same time—sad because I knew she was in pain, and angry because she would not let me help her. I kept thinking to myself that there must be something I could do. Tatjana looked unhealthy, with big dark circles under her eyes and her hair a mess. My best friend, who always looked remarkable and happy, now looked really tired and disgusted with her life.

Then, one day, she called me. I was so happy to hear her voice, although she sounded tired and sad. I felt as if everything would be better now; she would be her old self again and she

would be my best friend again. She said she needed to talk to me and I should meet her at “our place” on the castle in our town. Walking toward the castle, thinking about why she acted the way she did and said the things she said I realized that it wasn't going to get better.

Mentally, I played back the three months that had passed without being close to Tatjana, and I knew that something was really wrong. Suddenly, I didn't want to go up to “our place” anymore because I was afraid of what she was going to say or do. However I knew I had to, I had no other choice. There was nothing in the world I wanted more than my best friend back. I had to go and help her—it was now or never. My hands were sweating, my body was shaking, and my heart was beating very rapidly.

Finally, after what seemed like forever, I arrived at “our place” and I saw her sitting on the edge of the cliff. Scared, not knowing what was happening or what to think, I yelled out her name and she turned around. She looked pale and frightened. I could smell the fresh air and I remembered all the great times we had up here. She climbed off the edge, came over to me, and hugged me. I had tears in my eyes and wondered if it was going to be ok. She didn't really say anything; she just started walking back and forth. I asked what was wrong and she just stared at me. She looked lost, scared, and alone. She climbed back up on the cliff and just sat there. I begged her to come down, but she just looked at me with tears in her eyes. I felt so weak; I didn't know what to do. I asked her again and again to come down, but she said that she was just sitting there. I just stood there feeling helpless. I went to climb up and sit next to her, when she said if I did, she would jump. I was in total

shock; I didn't know what to think, or say, or do. Afraid of what she might do, I just stood there. Tears were rolling down my cheeks and I felt very empty inside. Then, she turned around, looked me straight in the eyes, told me she loved me, and jumped. I let out a loud "No!" but she was gone. I broke down and cried. I couldn't move. I was in total shock. I felt as if my whole life was over.

I heard the ambulance and police cars, and I could hear the voice of a police officer. It sounded so far away, but he was standing right next to me. I looked up at him crying, and he just put his arms around me. Two of the police officers took me home, and told me they would need to ask me some questions. I told them exactly what happened.

This happened two weeks before I left Germany to come to the United States, so I don't know what happened. What I do know is that I wish I would have talked to her earlier, talked to her mom or dad, just tried harder to find out what was wrong. Maybe there would have been something I could have done to help her.

### **Research and the World Wide Web**

It is no secret that Penn State will encourage you to use electronic sources in your research activities. You have probably heard that "you can find anything on the Web." Or words to that effect.

Be careful when you use the Web or any other electronic resource material. As you probably already know, a works cited entry or bibliography entry, consists of three important elements: the author's name, the title of the work, and the publication information (including the name of the publisher, the place of publication, and its date).

Finding this information on a Web page isn't always easy to do. Reputable sources will usually have all of this information plainly visible. Search engines often do not differentiate between the best sources of information on any given topic.

For the most part, you will want the most up to date and reputable information possible on any given topic. You will also want to make certain that your reader can locate the sources you are using too. And you should make it easy for them to find. If it appears that you have left something out of a works cited entry or that you have in some way attempted to mislead your reader, you could be guilty of failing to live up to the standards of academic integrity to which you subscribed by becoming a Penn State student.

# The Dark Knight and the Man of Steel

**Mark Keenan**

EVERYONE has a hero they look up to, a person in whom they believe. Our society has created an exaggerated form of heroes: superheroes. Two of the most famous are Batman and Superman. These two superheroes are very different in many aspects such as their reasons for fighting crime, how they fight crime, and even their normal way of living. But, all in all, although Superman is physically superior, Batman is the better superhero.

In America we often judge a person by how much money he or she has. Whether this is right or wrong is unimportant. Batman, also known as Bruce Wayne, is a multi-billionaire. He owns a huge mansion with a butler. Mr. Wayne also owns an underground fighting center with lab equipment and the best of everything money can buy, sweetly dubbed the Bat Cave. Batman also invents many of his own crime fighting gizmos, which shows his intelligence. Batman has the superior attitude when dealing with the real world, and it shows in his bank account.

On the other hand, Superman, also known as Clark Kent, works for the *Daily Planet*, a Metropolis newspaper. Mr. Kent walks around with Lois

Lane and only goes off to save someone whenever an actual story erupts. Superman has the Fortress of Solitude where he can get away for a while, but, unlike the Bat cave, it serves no actual purpose! Also, whatever gadgets Superman does have were given to him by the government; Superman is a freeloader. It's good that he fights crime, or he would serve no purpose at all.

Secondly, a person's past tells a lot about them. This is definitely true in the cases of the Caped Crusader and the Last Son of Krypton. Bruce Wayne was born into a very wealthy family. He

loved his parents and was treated well. But, on one fateful night coming home from a show, little Bruce witnessed both of his parents robbed and shot on the street in front of him. This scarred him for the rest of his life. Bruce trained all his young life to start a war against crime to avenge his dead parents.

Superman, however, was the sole survivor of a planetary explosion, not remembering a thing. After landing on Earth little Clarke was adopted by the Kents, who raised him as their own. Clarke discovered his powers and moved to Metropolis. He decided he would fight crime because he could. Batman has a greater passion for fighting crime because of what happened to him but this is not true for the Man of Steel.

Finally, a person's past may take a toll on how he or she performs tasks. This is very true for both Batman and Superman. Because of Batman's experience, he fights crime mostly at night, the same time of day in which his parents were killed. Batman also deals with the criminally insane, which could be a direct reflection on how he actually feels following the death of his parents.

The way in which Batman fights crime is as a detective. Batman is ever searching a way to improve the lives of the citizens of Gotham City, yet he is thought of as a vigilante. Superman, on the other hand, is loved by all of Metropolis, excluding the super villains. Superman saves people during the day, when crime is least likely to happen. Superman wouldn't know this because of the lack of crime in his hometown. Superman's real quality is saving Earth from the rich and super-powered aliens bent on destroying the Earth. Superman does not care about the crime rate in Metropolis; he's too big for it.

In the end, I believe because of Batman's self-improvement, financial position, and superior intellect, he is by far the better superhero. Superman fights crime because he has superpowers. Batman achieved superpowers because he wanted to fight crime. There is a big difference.

**Curious about the Grading Standards for English 015?**

These grading standards establish four major criteria for evaluation at each grade level: purpose, reasoning and content, organization, and expression. Obviously, every paper will not fit neatly into one grade category; it may, for instance, have some characteristics of B and some of C. The final grade it receives depends on the weight the instructor gives each criterion.

**The A Paper**

1. The A paper has not only fulfilled the assignment, but has done so in a fresh and mature manner. It has effectively met the needs of the rhetorical situation; it makes a substantial contribution to the situation; it is fully accommodated to its audience(s) and is likely to move them to act as the writer desires.

2. The evidence is detailed; the sources of information or persuasion have been used creatively and cited appropriately. The evidence presented is appropriate to the audience. The reasoning is valid. Beyond that, the paper is thoughtful, showing hard work, good judgement, and sensitivity to the complexities of the situation or issue.

3. The organization is effective for this audience and purpose. The introduction establishes the context and purpose of the communication. Segments, whether sections or paragraphs, are fully developed and follow logically from what precedes them. Headings and subheadings are appropriately used. The conclusion is suitable in tone and strategy.

4. The prose is not only clear and readable but occasionally apt and memorable. It contains few errors, none of which seriously undermines the effectiveness of the paper for educated readers.

**The B Paper**

1. The assignment has not just been followed but fulfilled. In taking its stand, the paper shows a clear sense of audience and purpose. It shows more awareness of the implications of what is saying and of its assumptions about the audience than the C paper does.

2. The writer has not settled for the most obvious evidence. The B paper is characterized by thoroughness. The reasoning is more than adequate. Not only does it make no mistakes, but it shows thoughtfulness and some awareness of complexities and other points of view.

3. The B paper has an effective introduction and conclusion. The order of information is logical, and the reader can follow it because of well-chosen transitions. Paragraph divisions are logical, and the paragraphs use enough specific detail to make their point tellingly.

(More on the next page.)

# My Cats

Maureen Reilly

CATS come in many different shapes, colors, and sizes. They each have their own personality, which makes them unique. My two cats Chloe and Ebony are different in many ways, but I love them both just the same.

Chloe is a thin gray cat. Her fur is very different. It is a beautiful soft coat, unlike any other cat I've seen. Chloe is only one and a half years old. She is a fairly new addition to our family, but she adjusted to the new setting very quickly.

Chloe is energetic. She loves people and will do anything to get their attention. She loves to play. She is constantly running around the house all day, getting into trouble. She'll go into my bedroom, steal little stuffed animals, and line them up at the back door. When I come home each day, I have a little greeting party waiting for me when I walk in.

My other cat, Ebony, is fat, black, and has long fur. She weighs about forty pounds and has a little patch of white fur under her chin. She is fifteen years old but still in good shape.

Ebony's personality is completely opposite from Chloe's, which is most likely a result of their age difference. She is very reserved and laid back. She usually hides during the day or when friends come over. Ebony just likes to find a warm, quiet place to snuggle. She enjoys cuddling on the couch with me and watching TV, or taking a nap.

Chloe likes to play, but Ebony, not interested at all, just runs down to the basement. I used to think that Ebony was jealous of Chloe. Now, I believe they are getting to be friends. Every now and then I see them lying on the couch next to each other, sleeping. Their differences are what make them so compatible. I don't know what I would do without them. Cats are like people; no two are the same.

## The B Paper (cont'd from previous page)

4. The expression is competent, more ambitious than that of the C paper, less felicitous than that of the A paper. Not only is sentence structure correct, buty it also uses subordination, emphasis, sentence length and variety, and modifiers effectively. It would be surprising to find serious sentence errors—comma splices, fragments, or fused sentences—in a B paper. Word choice is idiomatic, vocabulary precise. Punctuation, grammar, and spelling conform to the conventions of edited [written] American English.

## The C Paper

1. The assignment has been followed. The paper develops its points with a sense of audience.

2. The information or degree of persuasion in a C paper is appropriate. That means that there is evidence, and though the evidence is perhaps obvious and easily accessible, it has been gathered honestly and used responsibly. The C paper may exhibit some minor imperfections or inconsistencies in mapping out the arguments, but it commits no major flaws in reasoning.

3. The organization is clear. The reader could easily outline the presentation. Paragraphs have adequate development and are divided appropriately. Transitions may be mechanical, but they foster coherence.

(Cont'd on page 35.)

# Transform Yourself

**Natania Mertz**

FROM WORKING through a recipe to improving your sex life, comes along a set of all-ready-made instructions. Our economy has profited by the well-liked mantra of having someone else run our lives in accordance to society's rules of a productive individual. An entire section in books stores has been contributed toward the concepts of how to, self-help, put together, and cooking made easy. We have so many instructions and directions to untangle, how could you ever be able to maintain each one through out its entirety? There should be a basic instruction book produced for the sole reason of effectively interpreting and obeying instructions, or at least a two page English assignment.

The first tip on how to trek through any foreign process is to clear your mind of any past ideas that may pertain to this new way of thinking. From putting together a bicycle to establishing a trustworthy relationship with your partner, you must be willing to allow yourself the belief that whatever step comes next is the most efficient and reliable step existent. Do not ad lib or take short cuts.

Another important tip that may be used before the actual operation would be to first read through all instructions carefully. This should do one of two things: assist you in deciding whether or not this process is really suited to your needs, or in getting a larger picture of your completed goal. You should now receive a more thorough understanding of each individual step and its purpose. Minimize all confusion so when you come to the bump further into the sequence, it will not take away from the flow. Without flow, a process is useless and ineffective.

Now it is time to begin doing whatever it is you are being directed to do. Read over your first step twice. Do not be afraid to refer to the hard copy. Write down all of your likes and dislikes about the

step. Feedback is a necessity in giving your process your own special spicy individuality. Make sure you know exactly what the director is trying to tell you. You could talk to others who have already been through the steps. Maybe you can even invite a few buddies over to work on the scheme together. If you feel comfortable with the speed of your progression you may now execute the first step.

Do not become lazy! Although the process may be lengthened a bit, it will be worth it. Doing things thoroughly the first time will prevent you from having to start over. In the long run, you will not only save time, but also be in better control of emotional stress and frustration. In the end, it is all about control.

Go through each step as if it were the first one. Stay enthusiastic and do not postpone breaks. If you are getting easily irritated, that may be a sign that you need a nap, walk, or cookie. On your breaks, you may want to remind yourself the reasons for starting your project. Whether Johnny wants a new bike or Janie a new sister, we must remain in touch with our initial logic. This will keep the ambitious momentum from sizzling out.

It is important to be healthy while engaging in a project. Sleeping and eating appropriately can keep those power engines running. Exercise can always be fun. A healthy life style can affect our productivity. This tip will only help if your actual goal is not maintaining a healthier lifestyle. That just would not make any sense.

Do not juggle too many things at once. Superman could not even take on more than one process at a time. Always keep in mind that if we devote all of our energy into one result, your likelihood of success will double, maybe even triple. Your focus should be collected,

directed, and then applied.

If each individual tip were to be incorporated into your instructions, you may actually find yourself enjoying the victorious road to the American molding. Taking charge of your own life by letting others dictate your soul's being can influence growth of mind, body, and spirit. So let us whip up some magic. We are on our way!

The C Paper (Cont'd from page 33.)

4. The expression is competent. Sentence structure is generally correct, although it may show limited competence with such elements as subordination, emphasis, sentence variety, and length, and modifiers. It relies instead on simple and compound sentences. The paper is generally free of comma splices, unintentional fragments, and fused sentences. Word choice is correct though limited. It may contain errors in spelling, mechanics, and grammar that reveal unfamiliarity with the conventions of edited [written] American English.

The D Paper

1. A D paper attempts to follow the assignment, even if the choice of topic or situation is poor, whether too broad, too narrow, or inappropriate. A D paper often shows a poor sense of audience and purpose. For example, it may over or under-estimate the audience's prior knowledge or assumptions. Or it may correctly assess the situation, but add little of substance to it.

2. Necessary evidence may be missing, irrelevant evidence present, or the inter-

pretation or evaluation of that evidence may be inadequate. The reasoning may be seriously flawed, resting on insufficient understanding of the situation or the audience. Or it may rely too heavily on evidence from published sources without adding original analysis.

3. Organization may be significantly flawed in any of the following ways: relevant segments may be missing; topic sentences may be absent or inappropriate to the content of the paragraph; paragraphs are not well developed or divided or arranged; transitions are missing or incorrect; introductions or conclusions are missing or incomplete.

4. A D paper may have numerous and consistent errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. The syntax or diction in some sentences may be so flawed that they are incomprehensible. Lack of proofreading can turn an otherwise adequate paper into a D paper.

The F Paper

1. It is off the assignment, even if it is correctly and coherently written. (Many instructors require that such papers be rewritten before assigning any grade.)

2. It relates to the assignment but has no clear purpose, or goes off in several directions. It is missing essential elements of the assigned form of communication.

3. It falls seriously short of the minimum length requirements.

(Cont'd on page 36.)

# The Ideal House Pet

**Paul Menago**

BOTH DOGS AND CATS make good pets because they provide friendship and good company to their owners. I have had both cats and dogs for pets in my life. Aside from the small, noisy kind my grandmother has, I love dogs. Although a dog makes a good pet, a cat by far makes a much better house pet.

A dog tends to be more social than a cat, but a cat seems to understand when and where it is appropriate to be social. Several times I have visited the house of a dog owner, and several times I have been abruptly greeted at the door, having been jumped up upon and almost knocked over by the dog. First impressions are important and guests should be treated with more respect. Several times I have visited the house of a cat owner. After taking off my shoes and settling down by finding a seat somewhere, the owner's cat has curiously come over to greet me. With a purr, the cat would comfortably sit next to me. If I hadn't looked, I would not have even noticed the content, peaceful cat.

I agree that a dog can be a clean pet, but for the most part, a cat is much cleaner. Almost everyone has stepped in doggy droppings before. Outside, dogs seem to go whenever they feel like it at any place or time, leaving their owners embarrassed or having to clean up the mess. A cat, on the other hand, tends to be shyer about bathroom activities and covers it up so it is not noticed. Once in a while, cats will lick their fur to clean themselves up. While cats keep themselves clean, dogs usually need a bath every now and then to remain stink-free.

Both dogs and cats like to eat. It just seems that dogs eat so much more food than cats do. When dinnertime comes around, dogs in most cases will pester the diners begging for food even if their food bowls are filled with dog food. Unlike dogs, cats

tend to understand that the food being prepared is not being prepared for them. While a dog might beg for attention, a cat earns it by respecting his/her owner. I have never seen a cat that would whine and stare at anyone while they ate.

Cats and dogs both make different sounds. While a cat meows, a dog's bark is much louder. Although it's possible, I never heard a cat meow at the mailman, neighbors, or other people in general. In contrast, it seems like every other house on my street has a noisy dog barking.

Aside from all the noise, I have never seen a "Beware of the Cat" sign. What kind of pet is a pet that you have to beware of? For the most part, cats seem to be less vicious than dogs and easier to get along with. A cat is just as playful as a dog, but a cat isn't possessive like a lot of dogs are. For example, some dogs would not give up a toy if their lives depended on it. When children try to take it away, dogs can get vicious and react by barking or biting. In contrast, cats tend not to care about who possesses their toys. They like to play chase and catch with their toys, and they usually play every time you want to play with them.

While it is true that cats and dogs both make good house pets, most cats just seem to fit the laid back and quiet pet stereotype, willing to greet anyone inside the house. They are quiet, peaceful, and respectable. With this in mind, they serve as the ideal house pet.

The F Paper (Cont'd from page 35.)

4. It may be plagiarized—either it is someone else's paper or it has used sources improperly or without documentation.

# Happy To Be Sore

**Rebecca Korinchock**

ON A COLD, dreary morning in January, I left my house for school. I departed a few minutes early because the road conditions weren't so good: wet, slushy, and icy. I didn't want to rush because I hated driving in bad conditions. Only about five minutes away from my house there is a semi-sharp curve and the oncoming traffic cannot see you. As I approached the curve, I noticed a large truck coming towards me that probably didn't see me coming, and he cut over the double yellow line. (I have a white car, so, with the snow, that made it even harder for the truck driver to see me.) When he saw me, he tried to move over, but it was too late. I knew that he inevitably would hit me. I pushed down on the brakes and I immediately started to slide on the ice. I lost control and I saw myself headed towards the truck. Even though I had a CD playing in my car, I could still remember the sound of the front driver's side of my Pontiac Grand Am crunching under the truck.

At first I didn't realize what was going on, or if I was ok or not. I had closed my eyes because I was so afraid, and, as I looked in the mirror, I saw I was bleeding. I knew I'd hit my face on the steering wheel, but I didn't think there was any injury. But to my disbelief, there was blood everywhere. I split my upper lip in the right corner and I put my teeth right through my bottom lip. Blood covered the front of my clothes and my jacket.

My first reaction was to find my cell phone in my purse and call home. At this time, the driver of the truck walked over to my car and asked if I was ok. He was ok, since I hit the rear part of his truck. I told him I didn't know because I was upset about my car, that I was bleeding, and because I didn't really know how much damage

I did to my face. He walked back to his truck to call someone to come for him. Once he left from alongside my car, I immediately dialed home. The phone rang, and rang, and rang. Finally, my father answered the phone. I was crying so badly that I could barely tell him what happened. My mother told me later on that when she heard the phone ring, she knew that something had happened to me. My mom, who was still home getting ready to leave for work, and my dad, who was almost gone for out of town business for the weekend, immediately started to help me. My mom called the police, and my dad came to be with me and to make sure I was ok.

A few minutes after my dad arrived, an ambulance showed up to examine me. They were very nice to me and treated me well. They made me go to the hospital with them. Once at the hospital, I sat and waited until the doctor came to my room. My parents showed up a little after I got there. I had several x-rays taken; the doctor checked all my joints, especially my neck. But I was ok except for the bleeding.

When the doctor finally came back to my room again, he told me that I would need stitches, but that I should go to a plastic surgeon. That kind of upset me again because I thought I would never look the same again. But he explained to me that they will fix the injuries better than an E.R. surgeon could. So, not to take any chances, we left the hospital to go to a plastic surgeon.

Once he started to stitch me up, it took over an hour to get them all in. There were over 50 stitches on the inside and outside of my mouth. The last several hurt because all the shots of Novocain I had gotten were wearing off. But I just laid there and took it because, if I had squirmed, it would have hurt more and taken

even longer. I hated having those stitches. They were blue and they looked so ugly. But I knew they weren't permanent, so that made it ok somehow. My car was demolished, just not fixable. I felt so bad that it happened, but my mom told me she could get me another car, but there's only one me and so she was glad it was the car and not me. My parents were wonderful through all this with me because they stayed by my side all day, and it made me more comfortable not being alone. After the plastic surgeon finished putting in all the stitches, he asked my parents if the E.R. took x-rays of my neck. I told him no they didn't, only of my chest and my head. He advised my parents that they take me back to the hospital for more x-rays, in case there was something wrong with my neck. So we went back to the hospital and sat forever- that's why everything took so long that day. We sat in waiting rooms most of the day. I was exhausted after that. We finally arrived at home around 1:30 that afternoon and I rested the rest of the day. That night, all my friends called to see how I was and were very supportive.

The next day, I stayed home from school, and it was so hard to get out of bed. I could have lain there all day because I was sore everywhere, especially my back. But, nevertheless, I was happy to be sore and waking up at home rather than injured more and waking up in a hospital bed.

It was never proven whose fault the accident was, but I still think it was the truck's fault. Although I didn't have my seat belt on, I can assure you, I wear it now all the time. This time, I was lucky not to be critically injured, but who knows? It could happen again and if I don't have a seat belt on, I may

not end up with little nicks and cuts like I did this time. If everyone was a little more cautious, there might be fewer accidents like mine and with seat belts, more lives can be saved.

The F Paper (Cont'd from page 36.)

5. It is plagued by more than one of the organizational deficiencies of the D paper.

6. Numerous and consistent errors of grammar, spelling, punctuation, diction, or syntax seriously hinder communication.

# A Dry Place To Sleep

**Steve Serra**

MANY PEOPLE do not realize how lucky they are until they experience a bad situation. I am a perfect example of this realization.

This past summer, a group of friends and I all went to Ocean City, Maryland, for vacation. It was Fourth of July weekend, and we planned to stay for a week. Everyone had been looking forward to the vacation since the end of school. We thought it would be the most exciting vacation we had ever been on, since there were no parents telling us what to do. The week finally came, and we set out on our way.

After driving eight hours to arrive there, because of a small detour, we checked into our apartment in South Winds Apartments. It was a two-bedroom apartment that was about the size of a refrigerator box. After criticizing our place for a while, we decided it wasn't too bad, because all we needed it for was sleeping and showering.

The first night came, and my friends and I had a good time and ended up going to bed relatively early. The following night did not run as smoothly. We decided to have a party and ended up making too much noise. The owner came and kicked us out of the apartment building, leaving us homeless. We tried to find another place, but everything was full because it was the Fourth of July weekend.

After realizing we were not going to find somewhere to sleep indoors, we decided to rest on the cement wall on the boardwalk next to the beach. As I was lying there, I noticed people passing by, laughing and pointing at us. It seemed they found it very amusing that we had no shelter and nowhere to sleep. That night, I didn't receive much rest because the only thing on my mind was that, if I fell asleep, someone

might steal my belongings.

The next morning, I was tired and started feeling like a true homeless person. I had been wearing the same clothes for the last couple of days and had not showered or brushed my teeth for a long period of time. This was not a feeling that I enjoyed or one to which I wanted to become accustomed. As the day moved on, my friends and I joked about our situation and still ended up having an exciting time. As the night came along again, our worries came along with it.

That night, we had a different problem, involving the weather. It started to rain hard, and we had no shelter. My friends and I had to carry our suitcases around until we found a dry place to sleep that could fit all of our luggage and us. When we finally decided on our resting-place, we agreed that tomorrow was a new day and we were going to try and find a place to stay with our remaining money.

The first thing the next morning we found a nice, cheap apartment. We were all happy just to have a roof over our heads, a bed to sleep in, and a shower in which to wash in. After settling down, my friends and I decided to keep the noise down and do everything possible to stay.

The vacation finally came to an end, and we all were on our way back to Hazleton. Even though things did not go exactly how we had planned, we still enjoyed ourselves. These experiences made me look at what I have in a different way and helps me appreciate the homeless more. I also know I will never laugh at another homeless person for as long as I live. I experienced what it was like without a home for a brief period of time and it showed me that it could happen to anyone.

# Circus Man

Thomas Kovall

IN WHAT ONCE was an empty farmer's field now stands the annual circus. Its bright flashing lights and large multicolored tents can be seen from miles away. The rides hiss and screech as their mechanical parts turn. Off in the distance, I spot a ride that I want to go on. As I walk toward what seems will be a nauseating ride, an elderly man dressed in a red, white and blue top hat, a white shirt with red vertical stripes, navy blue suspenders, dark blue pants, and a bright red clip-on bow tie topping it off, pops out of nowhere and says, "Hey there, son. Don't waste your time on those stinking rides. The show is about to begin."

He emphasizes "the show" with much enthusiasm. Knowing that it is his job to try and persuade people to come into these worthless acts so they can be conned out of their hard earned dollars, I respond curtly, while still walking, "Leave me alone. I don't care about your 'show.'" I turn back toward the ride thinking that it has all been settled when I hear his high heeled, black leather cowboy boots clapping in the loose dirt behind me. I think to myself "Man, this guy just doesn't quit." He yells, "Son, this is the greatest show in the world. You owe it to yourself to see it," as he points his large chunky finger back at the tent's archway.

I decide to give the old man a break and at least listen to what he has to say. I stop walking and turn toward him. Sticking his thumbs underneath the straps of his suspenders, he leans back with a big smile on his face. His big pot belly hangs way over the sides of his pants' waist line and what few teeth he does have are stained as yellow as brass. His eyes are squinting to protect them from the intense brightness of the sun

"What's so great about it?" I ask curiously.

"W-e-l-l," he says, dragging the words out as long as he possibly could, "the Ramonsey Brothers will attempt a never-before-seen triple cartwheel on a bar no thicker than a quarter one hundred feet in the air with no net."

"This sounds interesting," I think, as he continues.

"You can see all this and more for a measly four dollars and filly cents."

"Deal," I say as I hand him the money. He reaches into his back pocket of his pants, which is stuffed with tickets, and hands me one. This nameless circus worker tells me to have fun and enjoy the show as we walk back to the tent's entranceway.

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