

Best of Freshman Writing

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Formerly *Best of Four*

Volume 7

Student Voices

A Commonwealth College Publication

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Best of Freshman Writing

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Welcome to the seventh volume of **Best of ...**. For the past half dozen years we were *Best of Four*, publishing the best writing in English 004 classes, primarily on the Hazleton campus. Two years ago we began accepting submissions from some of the other Commonwealth College campuses, and this year we made the big plunge into accepting submissions from all twelve of the campuses that comprise the Commonwealth College.

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And we opened the submissions to English 015 and English 030 students as well. Now we are the **Best of Freshman Writing**, with a good many reservations about that awful sounding name.

First of all it's hard to say, and that means it's hard to remember. We need a new name, something catchy that also tells folks something about what we're up to. We welcome your suggestions. Feel free to email us at the address in the "contact box" on this page.

Second, we're still not sure how people want to use the magazine. Almost everyone agrees that publishing student work is a good idea, but ideas diverge considerably on what to do with it. Some of us want to make sure that the essays are "cleaned up" so that they represent a notion of near perfect writing; others want to keep the work "pure," in virtually the same state that it came to us, sometimes with faculty comments. Some faculty simply want their students to see what writing looks like when it is published, recognizing that a writer's perspective changes when she or he sees the work in print and knows that others are actually reading it, along with all that implies. Other faculty members use it as a text in their courses, having their students edit the work, discuss the topics.

We've made some compromises. We've tried to be consistent with our presentation of student work, but we've also tried to maintain the meaning and purpose that the writers have set forth. It's important to remember that the work contained here is that of writers who are just beginning their careers in higher education. Of course some of them are older than eighteen, some are also not freshman (or "*freshpeople*" as one person suggested that we refer to them in an attempt to avoid sexist language).

We could go on with a long list of our concerns, but dwelling on our fears no doubt reveals more about us than about the magazine or the work contained within it. The work's the thing that really matters. We hope it inspires you, our readers, as much as it has us.

Jason Cedar

English 4 – Scranton Worthington campus

Taking a College Calculus Exam

Taking a college calculus exam, like the three exams I have taken this semester, can be a stressful and sometimes terrifying experience. As I started my first exam I didn't know what to expect. Carefully and calmly, I read each problem as I got to it, checking my solutions as I

went. The calm feeling went away mid test, after I looked at my watch, and noticed I had very little time to finish the remaining problems. Panic stricken, I struggled to get through the rest of the exam before my time to finish expired. I left the class with a hopeless feeling, anxiously waiting until the next class to receive my grade. My grade, a 92, made me wonder why I worried so much.

At my next calculus exam, I entered the room feeling calm and relaxed. Surely I wouldn't make the same mistake again. Carefully, I worked each problem, paying particular attention to the time. Toward the end of the exam, an unexpected problem arose: I couldn't remember how to do the problem. On an exam with only six problems, missing one totally is a serious mistake. Again, panic shot through my body, my hands were sweaty and shaking, and my thoughts scrambled inside my head. When I received my grade, a 78, I was devastated, since it was the lowest grade I have ever received on a math test.

The experience of two calculus exams, along with many hours of studying, made my third exam a different situation. Letting my emotions get to me like they had on previous exams was unacceptable. Calmly I started, so I didn't spend too much time on any one particular problem, and I kept a keen eye on my watch. My thoughts were filled with the information I had studied; effortlessly I related the exam problems to homework prob-

lems—until the seventh question came up, and to my dismay, the only question I was unsure of. I had looked at every review problem, except the one like question seven. My hopes of receiving an A for the course were riding on me getting a grade in the high nineties. "How do I do this problem?" I asked myself.

Feeling the urge to panic, I thought about my two previous exams. Using this experience to my advantage, I skipped the question I didn't know, finished the exam, and came back to it. Realizing I could spend my remaining time on this problem, I paused to sort my thoughts. Thinking about what I had reviewed, I worked out the problem, and having given it my best shot, I handed in my exam. The result of this exam, a 99, was a great boost to the confidence I have in my math skills. It's also a sure sign experience is invaluable when taking a calculus exam. I feel the anxiety I had with calculus tests is a thing of the past.

Amber Frace

English 4 – Hazleton campus

Hobbie, PA

Hobbie, Pennsylvania has been my home for eighteen years. This quiet community contributed to my growing imagination. Located approximately twenty minutes from the nearest town, Hobbie provided me with a safe haven from busy streets, fast cars, and crime.

My house was located directly across the road from Moyer's Grove Campground. During the winter months the campground looked like a ghost town out of an old western. However, once summer began, the campground was swamped with people from all over the country. Our quiet Hobbie home was soon flooded with sounds of screaming children playing in the park and noisy house bands belting out the latest songs. As I watched the campers checking in and out, I saw many different people from many different backgrounds. Some were dressed in cowboy boots and cowboy hats, others had accents and were hard to understand, while others yet brought their cute little poodles and stuck their noses in the air when anyone tried to talk to them. I began to make up stories about the different campers as a way to entertain myself on those long summer days.

One of my favorite stories was one that I made up about a couple who lived at the campground during the summer months. The couple spent most of their time riding around in a golf cart and sitting in front of the campground's store entrance. As they sat in front of the store, the man would smoke a pipe and the woman would knit a sweater. As I observed this couple, I got the impression that they were a retired couple with many grandchildren with whom they enjoyed spending time. As I watched them, I considered the possibilities of why they spent all summer away from their home and grandchildren. Did they find that summer was their time to get away from problems that they had in life? Could summer be their only time for rest and relaxation?

There were endless possibilities for why they left home. As I watched them, I thought of the television show, *America's Most Wanted*. Could this couple be fugitives hiding at the campground during the summer and someplace like Florida in the winter? My stories of this couple told of the brutal murder of a drug-store clerk and their exciting escape from the police. For hours I would watch them as stories popped into my head. My stories came to a sudden end when my friend told me that the couple lived in a nearby town and stayed at the campground because they enjoyed summers in the country.

I made many friends with the kids who camped regularly at the campground. They came from Florida, New Jersey, Maine, and many other states. We would ride our bikes, play in the park, and take walks. We played manhunt most Saturday nights and held get-togethers at my house where we shared the comfort of bathrooms and electricity, since many of them stayed in tents while at the campground. One friend whom I met was from my school. I remember seeing him in the halls, but I never talked to him until he came over to play a game of softball with a group of us in my yard. We became very good friends and not only spent time together at my house but also in school. It seemed as though we were never apart from one another.

Living across the road from Moyer's Grove Campground allowed me to expand my imagination and make new friends. I learned about many different people and places while living across the road from the campground. My curiosity and imagination as a child is still with me today as I sometimes peer out the window and watch the campers check in and out.

Kristy Kitching

English 4 – York campus

Cigar Molds

I gaze at my grandparents' cigar molds, which are displayed in my living room, and I recall such wonderful childhood memories. These old blocks of wood really do not mean anything to others, but to me they are very special indeed. For me, the molds mean history, family

history. From the early 1940s until the late 1960s, my maternal grandparents made cigars by hand. They had their own cigar factory in the small two-story garage located behind their house. My sisters and I spent much of our childhood in the factory. We would stop there almost every day after school, knowing that Grandpa had some candy tucked away for us. The first floor of the garage contained a coal bin and a large potbelly stove, which provided heat for the second floor. This was where the actual production of the cigars took place. I can remember running up those old and creaky wooden steps to the second floor and, around the corner, Grandpa would be sitting at a large machine. This machine would strip and chop the tobacco leaves. To the left of Grandpa sat his large roll top desk, where I would sit for hours and draw pictures. Beyond the desk in the far corner, you could barely see Grandma because of the large stacks of molds that surrounded her. She sat at a small table where she rolled the cigars and stuffed them into the molds. I would sit there and watch her hands work swiftly, and I would breathe in the sweet smell of tobacco. Right before my grandparents stopped making cigars, they were recognized as some of the last craftsmen to make cigars by hand. Grandpa's picture is on display at the Historical Society of York, and there have been several articles written about my grandparents. Years later, I took some of the molds before everything was sold at public auction because I needed to have something that was about my grandparents' trade. To everyone else, these cigar molds probably mean noth-

ing. To me, these molds represent the past; they are where I came from. Eventually, I will pass them on to my children, and the family history will continue.

Adam Shaffer

English 4 – Mont Alto campus

An Unknown Leader

The dark night was lit by the fiery inferno that blazed from within the three-story house. On the first floor of the burning home, two firefighters battled the flames. Everything seemed to have been going according to plan that night until the floor beneath the two men suddenly col-

lapsed. Startled and shaken by this unexpected turn of events, the backup man on the hose line coolly began to make an escape with his partner close behind. The backup man led the way to safety outside of the blaze. Incredibly, the two men cheated death that night: both emerged from the smoke and flames. My father, the backup man on the hose line, had little idea that this test of courage and leadership was just the first of many in the line of duty.

At the age of twenty-two, my father joined a volunteer fire department. He wanted to serve and protect his community, just as many firefighters do. Since 1977, he has served in three fire departments as an officer. In Shanksville, my hometown, he has been the fire chief for the past fifteen years. Through his years of service with the Shanksville Volunteer Fire Department, he has dealt with many tragic accidents. My father has responded to numerous fatal car accidents, but none more traumatizing than a motor vehicle accident that claimed the life of one of his own firefighters. Firefighting is a brotherhood, so the loss of “one of your own” is very difficult to handle. During this time, he set an example of compassion while continuing to provide emergency response services for the community.

At each and every emergency call to which my father responds, he must take decisive action and give orders, which ultimately affect the lives of others. My fa-

ther is very intelligent in putting his skills to work. He is also very outgoing, friendly, and caring. He always puts others before himself by being there for my family, working full-time to provide for us, while unselfishly serving his community as fire chief. His personality makes him an effective leader, not only within the fire department, but also in the community as well. These qualities also make him a wonderful father to me. I’ve watched him and know that he receives considerable personal satisfaction from being a volunteer in the fire service.

The ultimate test of leadership for my father fell on the fateful day of September 11, 2001. Just like any other Tuesday morning, he got up and drove to work at Pepsi-Cola in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. By 9:30 a.m., the entire world was in shock as terrorists hijacked two commercial airliners and flew them into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City. At that time, my father was notified that he was to report to the fire station in Shanksville following the collision of the second plane with the South Tower. Before my dad would arrive there, a Boeing 757 had crashed just one and a half miles outside our sleepy town, burying itself with a fiery explosion in the fields of a former strip mine. Once on the scene, he took command until relieved by the Pennsylvania State Police and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). For eleven days following the crash, my father led his vol-

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unteer firefighters in the important task of recovering human remains, personal effects, and fragments of the aircraft.

With the nation caught up in these acts of terrorism, my father's responsibilities continued at Command Center for United Airlines Flight 93. The Shanksville Fire Department, under the direct leadership of my father, continued to extinguish fires at the crash site, assisted Haz-mat workers with decontamination, and cleared timber for FBI investigators while also responding to two additional structure fires and two cardiac arrests. On the sixth and ninth days after the crash, my father led his firefighters in the Federal Memorial Service, forming a color guard to show respect for the grieving families of the victims who came to Shanksville. This service put a human face on the tragedy, which my father will probably never forget. He has told many news reporters that this event has been "one of the most touching things I've had to deal with." Through the disaster, he has led his fire department with the highest level of professionalism during their most important trial yet.

In the little town of Shanksville, you won't find a Mahatma Gandhi or a Winston Churchill. You will, however, find a very friendly community where ordinary people go about their business. Many citizens of Shanksville have said they are proud to call Shanksville home because of how well the community responded to the crash of Flight 93. When I think about this disaster, I think of one person who was a true leader and whose actions have inspired many even though they might not know his name. I proudly call him, "Dad."

Khyati Valand

English 4 – Hazleton campus

A Neighborhood in India

In my seventeen years of life I have moved three times. These were not just minor moves, but they were life-altering changes that I was forced to adapt to. I have lived in four neighborhoods; however, I will discuss only the first one.

The first neighborhood, my favorite, was in India. I loved it very much. My mom, sister and I lived in an apartment in a small town outside a city named Ananda. The apartment complex was in the shape of a square, and in the middle was a paved quadrangle. All the children played there so their parents could keep watch from the doors that opened into the quad.

My sister and I went to an English teaching school because we knew one day that we were going to move to a place where English is the primary language. The school day was extremely short, considering the amount of time that children must attend here. My mom would take us to school at seven in the morning and pick us up from school everyday at twelve. To tell the truth I do prefer the seven to twelve schedule to the eight to three one in the States. Once we arrived home, she would fix my sister and me a snack, and then she would tell us to get out our homework, and she would help us with it if we needed. Sometimes we took a nap before we went out to play. We didn't always enjoy the nap, but my mom would make us take one, and the other children's parents would make them do the same as well. In some cases we didn't take a nap, so around two or three o'clock it was playtime. We would go outside to play all kinds of Indian games.

For example, one was called passport. In this game we used rocks as passports, and there would be four squares with four

lanes separating the boxes so the person who is "It" can move around, but the person is not allowed to travel outside those boundaries. There would be a couple of people in each box, and all the passports were kept in a small circle in the middle guarded by the person who is "It." Then each person had to try and steal back his or her passport, so once the person had the passport he or she was able to travel to other boxes, but if the person who is "It" touches another player in anyway, the person touched is now "It."

One of my favorite games was playing house. Someone would play the father and another person the mother, and everyone else played the roles of the children. In order to play we would take our toy kitchen sets and snack food that each person would bring from his or her home, so that we could pretend we were making dinner. We also brought a blanket or something to place on the ground because we played outdoors and there was always plenty of dirt and dust flying in the air, and we also didn't want to appear too filthy or our parents would spank us or yell at us. We set up house under a tree where there was plenty of shade.

Growing up in India was a good experience. I loved it there. While living there, I learned much about my culture and religion. This environment was right for me, and it's a good place to raise children because the children are happy even if they don't have the best toys in the world. What

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was important was that they had each other. I haven't seen any of my childhood friends since we moved from India to the Bahamas, but I do think of them every now and then. It was the best neighborhood on earth. I will always think of India as my first neighborhood and the best neighborhood.

Katie Aughenbaugh

English 15 – DuBois campus

My Grandfather

A well-respected man, my grandfather fought through difficult times, yet in the end managed to prevail against the odds. Always striving for the best and never settling for less, he never allowed obstacles to get in his way. Whenever he ran into a problem, he simply looked at it as

a challenge that had to be overcome. His motto is “That which does not kill us makes us stronger.” My grandfather is an extraordinary person. He has acquired many good qualities that are very important to him, such as having the courage to leave home to create a new and better life for himself, loving his family unconditionally, and possessing an endless supply of knowledge.

My grandfather’s love for his family is as great as the love any one person is capable of having. He and my grandmother have been married for fifty-four years and have been blessed with six children and fourteen grandchildren. He has always done his best to raise his children into mature adults and, in my opinion, has done a very nice job. He has also worked hard to provide for them and ensure that they have opportunities that he didn’t. A good source of advice, he never hesitates to help his family out with problems. My grandfather is one of the most selfless people I know.

My grandfather’s knowledge of the world surpasses the knowledge that many people have. He has learned much over the years; however, he does not try to come off as a “know-it-all.” He has experienced many different things in life and has many stories to tell. Striving for success in everything he did, my grandfather refused to give up when things weren’t going exactly as planned. To experience life and all it has to offer was his main goal. By living life to the fullest, he was eliminating the chance of having regrets about the path he had chosen to take.

My grandfather’s drive to succeed prompted him to leave Italy, the only home he had ever known, to come to America and begin a new life. Speaking only a handful of words in English, he traveled to the United States in search of adventure. He took the initiative to teach himself the English language through the use of various books and dictionaries. Joining the army, he enabled himself to see the world and meet new and exciting people. After World War II, he became inactive in the military and learned the trade of a tailor. He was a natural and became very good at his work. My grandfather has worked hard all his life and is now enjoying his deeply deserved retirement.

My grandfather has lived a very rewarding life. He is very content with the outcome of his choices and feels he has fulfilled his dreams. The path that he has chosen to take has proven to be a successful one. His accomplishments are an inspiration to all who have had the privilege of knowing him.

Devon Bowlin

English 15 – Fayette campus

Almost Famous

Even when it's over, they promise it will not be over. In memory and nightmares, they hope to live forever. "We're going to kick-start a revolution," Harris says—a revolution of the dispossessed. They talk about being ghosts who will haunt the survivors—"create flashbacks from what we do," Harris promises, "and drive them insane" (qtd. by Gibbs 42).

The above is an eerie excerpt from a *Time* article about the Columbine Tapes made by Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold prior to the Columbine massacre. On April 20, Klebold and Harris, students at Columbine High School, started a brutal shooting spree that left twelve students and one teacher dead. The tapes they made are almost unbearable to watch. In them, Harris and Klebold talk of the people they will kill and their plans to do it, and their wish to be martyrs, to start a revolution. "You have two individuals who wanted to immortalize themselves," says Holstlaw, an FBI agent in charge of the case. Holstlaw continues, "They wanted to be martyrs and to document everything they are doing" (qtd. by Gibbs 42). These tapes bring up the question of why they would do something so horrible. Although much evidence supports their motive being revenge, the stronger evidence supports the notion that the killers of Columbine committed their acts to gain celebrity status.

Now there is nothing better than being a celebrity, someone whom the majority of people in society know. Celebrities have admirers and are role models. Most people would think of a movie star when *celebrity* is mentioned, but that is not always the case. A celebrity can be a television personality or a movie star, but he or she can also be a local hero, president, athlete, and, though most people do not want to admit it, they can be killers. A celebrity can also

be a combination of positive and negative characteristics. O.J. Simpson was a talented and famous football player who also was an actor and sports commentator. Then things changed. Instead of turning on the television and seeing him making a winning catch in the game, he was seen evading police in his white Bronco. He was taken to court and tried for the murder of his ex-wife and her male friend. He was found not guilty, though all the evidence pointed to his guilt. This was a sports hero whom children admired. Now, he was famous not only for his football talent, but for his murder trial as well. Another sports figure who comes to mind is Mike Tyson, a talented boxer and well-known public figure. He was also accused of rape more than once, spent time in jail, and once bit off a man's ear during a boxing match. This last act was seen on television. What kind of influence do people like Simpson and Tyson have on the children who admired them as sports figures? It is normal for the child to look up to someone well known, but if that person is a negative influence, then the parents must intervene.

Attaining celebrity status is a motive for murder because there is such a strong desire to be famous. Children watch television and see all the glory that comes along with being a celebrity. Ask children what they want to be when they grow up or whom they most admire and many will say a movie star, or famous. Is the dream

and desire to be famous enough to excite two boys from Littleton, Colorado to kill their fellow students? It's not the desire alone, but when people are pushed so far and teased for being "losers" they would give anything to be popular for once (Cohen 44).

In a survey conducted on the subject, I dispensed 15 questionnaires to varying age groups and got almost the same response from all. Adults over the age of 30 seemed to agree that the killers did not become famous for their actions, but actually did it to become famous. On the other hand, the 15–17 year-old age group seemed to agree with both of the above statements. All showed a strong desire to be famous and also were in strong agreement that Klebold and Harris are famous for what they did, even if their image is negative. Readers should understand that this image is only negative to some. Those who are teased and tormented the way that Klebold and Harris were hold them as gods (Drummond 29). Children who are teased constantly feel like they are nothing. Everyday they witness the popular children getting everything they want, and for once, they would like to be unforgettable. Who would not want to live forever, or at least have their memory live on (Dickinson 40)? Klebold, Harris and others who committed these severe crimes were all teased or harassed throughout their school careers. But revenge alone was not the inspiration for their killings. They could have achieved revenge by stealing their tormentors' clothes in gym class or spray-painting their lockers, but would that have made them immortal? No, they went the extra mile to make sure their names would be remembered even if they would not be around to appreciate it (Morrow 46). Instead of spray paint, they brought in semiautomatic weapons and bombs to do their dirty work.

And if their motive was truly for revenge, why didn't they just attack the athletes who had taunted them? Not every child that Klebold and Harris went to school

with teased them. They had many friends, and there were also the people who just did not notice they existed. Why then did they not go into the school and kill the "jocks"? They showed no "favoritism" for any one group. It was merciless, blind killing. This alone discredits revenge as being the sole motive for the murders. If someone is striving for revenge, he or she does not attack an innocent person; instead he or she will go right for the person who caused the pain.

This is not to say that what Klebold and Harris went through was not cause for their violence, because anyone who has ever been teased knows how severe and painful it is. They were exposed to violence daily, even violence committed against them by fellow students. This constant exposure to violence left them drained of mercy, that they had no problem doing the things they ended up doing: payback to those who hurt them, glory, and the creation of a cult for all those who have suffered and been cast out. They wanted movies made of their lives, which they had laced with "a lot of foreshadowing and dramatic irony," as Harris put it. "Directors will be fighting over this story," Klebold said. They even argued over who would be director: Spielberg or Tarantino (qtd. by Gibbs 42).

Columbine is not the only school that has been hurt by these kinds of attacks; Santana High also felt the effects of kids who were ready to make their mark on the world. Andy Williams brought a gun to his school and killed two of his fellow students, and injured thirteen others. The weekend before this, he began saying he was going to "pull a Columbine" on Santana High. Two of his friends called him a "pussy" and dared him to do it (McCarthy 24). Just the fact that he mentioned such a thing shows he was inspired by the acts of Klebold and Harris at Columbine. They had become immortal, at least to Williams, and he wanted to follow on the same path. He wanted to feel that same kind of immortality that they had.

Williams was frightened and teased and was the outcast at school. He dreamed of being famous, of making all the people who teased him jealous of what he had become. Why he decided to take the route he did no one but he will ever know, but it leads one to believe that it was the influence of Klebold and Harris's actions. He wrote in his notebooks "One day ... I'll be almost famous." He admired Klebold and Harris because they made children like him—unknown and disliked—famous. He dreamed of one day being able to stand among the ranks of the two of them and others who did the same (McCarthy 24).

There are other opinions on the issue of what causes children to become violent. Two of the major ones are that there is not enough evidence to support celebrity status as a cause and the other is revenge is the greater cause of youth violence. However, the greater evidence still supports that it is celebrity status that primarily drives youths to become violent.

The argument that there is not enough evidence to support celebrity status as a cause is a good one. There is no documented scientific study to say that it is, but there is also not one to say that it is not. There have been no studies to date on "problem children," saying that their only motivation is revenge, because we do not know who the real "problem children" are. While there may be some certain stereotypes that the others have fit in, they are not carved in stone. There is evidence, though, showing that celebrity status could be a major cause for the violent actions taken by today's youths, the Columbine Tapes for example. They have been cited many times in this paper because they contain strong evidence. The killers, Klebold and Harris, said themselves that they wanted to be famous. They wanted their lives to be made into movies. They wanted to be celebrities.

The other argument that revenge and bullying are the greater motivation for the violence is also good. In traditional society, most people would lie to blame bullying and revenge as the main reason for children committing murder, because there is actually

something people can *do* about bullying. They can initiate zero tolerance policies for bullying, where even one offense for bullying could lead to a suspension and two offences in expulsion. They could have counseling services available twenty-four hours for bullies and their victims to attend. But there is nothing physically that can be done to stop a child's desire to be famous. Society puts so much pressure on children to be popular, to be "the best." Just watching television, a child can see who the popular characters are, and who the outcasts are. Children all aspire to be the main character, the one with all the friends, and the one with all the power. A parent can instill the morals in the child to just be the best she or he can be and not worry about what other people say or do. Revenge is just easier to accept by most people because as mentioned, there are things to do about it. However, just because there is an "easy fix" to something does not mean that it is the true cause.

In this essay there are many examples that lead one to believe that celebrity status plays a major role in the decision of youths to take violent measures to receive attention. Negative attention is attention nonetheless. Think of children a mother pays no attention to. They act out, doing badly in school. The mother then yells at them, and they are actually getting what they wanted, attention. Attention is exactly what Klebold, Harris, Williams and others were going for. Though the things they did were wrong, and the attention they received from doing them was negative, they still got what they wanted, which was to be known. Their names are forever immortalized because of what they did. Anyone with access to some form of media, or with friends, knows who Klebold and Harris are, and what they did.

Society has leaned toward the notion of bullying and revenge as the cause for youth violence. In the case of

Klebold and Harris, most people, who have heard all about the culture of cruelty, the bullying jocks, has concluded the two ugly, angry boys just snapped and fired back. It turns out there is much more to the story than that (Gibbs 42). If their motive was truly revenge, why did they not just attack the athletes who taunted them? It is most likely because retaliation against a specific group was not the point. This shows that their actions may have been about celebrity as much as if not more than cruelty. "They wanted to be famous," concludes FBI agent Mark Holstlaw, "and they are. They're infamous" (qtd. by Gibbs 42).

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Pinocchio vs. the Puppet-master

As a child I watched the classic movie, *Pinocchio*, the story of a puppet boy who survived spectacular adventures. In one scene Pinocchio, who had been tricked into joining a puppet act, was forced to perform as part of an intricate recital of constrained string-puppets. To

appease the crowd, the evil puppet-master manipulated the wooden puppet into executing ludicrous movements. Just as this controlling, malevolent puppet-master hid behind the dancing girls and painted sets of his act, so Osama Bin Laden and Charles Manson hid behind the scenes as their “puppets,” brainwashed by these ruthless men, perpetrated heinous acts of murder. The similarities between Bin Laden and Manson are uncovered by *Pittsburgh Post Gazette* journalist Dennis B. Roddy in his thought-provoking article, “The Helter-Skelter World of Osama Bin Laden.” Roddy’s use of Manson as a metaphor for Bin Laden is a dead-on comparison of two darkly charismatic leaders of destructive factions.

Bin Laden’s hatred for the prosperous capitalistic empire of America and for Western beliefs parallels Manson’s hatred for the African-American people and their culture. Manson clearly despised the black community, believing that whites were a superior race. During his trial, the criminal inscribed the Nazi swastika on his forehead, crushing any doubt that this vile, wretched creature had played no part in the offensive murders. Similarly, in the days following the September eleventh attacks on America, Bin Laden has shown his hatred for Americans and their culture through countless television briefings and letters directing his followers to destroy Americans. His views have apparently been imbedded in the culture of the Afghanistan public and innumerable Muslims willing to listen. Another *Pittsburgh Post Gazette* columnist, Phil Williams, affirms that “even Bin

Laden’s head on a platter would not stop the functioning of the transnational terror network” (B-4).

While Manson committed murder in an effort to create a war against blacks, Bin Laden crafted a death mission to manifest a war against the United States. Manson wanted to create a racial war against blacks by generating a crime scene that would incriminate a supposed black trespasser. Manson’s plan to cast blame on another party is no new idea. “What is mad,” Roddy declares, “is that an obscure, failed musician who did not bathe thought it would work for him” (B-1). However, Bin Laden’s plan is much less feasible than Manson’s plot. Whereas Manson hoped to create a war against an ethnic group, Bin Laden wishes to create a world where Muslims are the sole inhabitants (B-1).

Bin Laden, much like Manson, is a sole conspirator who has single-handedly manipulated a tightly knit group of weak-minded followers into believing, conspiring, and finally carrying out fanatical actions to destroy the lives of innocent people. Manson similarly influenced his “family” with powerful words, feeding the flame of hatred that undoubtedly was already embedded in his followers. Bin Laden also incites hatred in his followers. Much as the glowing embers of the Manson Family were fueled by Manson’s prejudice, the Taliban’s

flames of hatred have been fanned by Bin Laden's detestation of a world that is not strictly Muslim. These flames, ignited at the millennium by the Afghanistan radio network of Taliban-controlled broadcastings, will be much more difficult to put out than those snuffed by simply catching a lone assailant like Manson. Williams asserts that "the war against terrorism is clearly different from any other the United States has fought: There are no clear fronts, no obvious battlefields, and no enemy center of gravity to provide lucrative targets for United States military might" (B-1).

Bin Laden clearly is the "Manson of Afghanistan." His efforts to incite a war mimic those of the madman Manson. But just as Pinocchio broke free of the demented puppet-master, so too will Afghan rebels disengage themselves from the strings of Bin Laden and the Taliban. Perhaps the road to the end of terrorism—covered with rocks and laden with twists and turns—will take longer to navigate than Pinocchio's path home. Pinocchio did, however, complete his journey. America can only hope that, just like Pinocchio, it too will reach its destination—the defeat of terrorism.

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Improving Citation Instruction*

Plagiarism is a crime that frequently occurs in many schools across America. “A ... survey of 4,471 high school students ... found that more than half had stolen sentences and paragraphs ... [and] 15 percent handed in papers completely copied from the Internet” (Wilgoren). Board members, this type of data is disturbing and illus-

trates that our children need improved instruction in source citation. We do not want our children becoming part of these alarming statistics and being known as cheaters when we have the ability to prevent it.

A startling example of what happens when cheaters are caught occurred in Piper High, when “28 of 118 ... sophomores” were accused of stealing “sections of their botany project off the Internet” (Wilgoren). As this situation came to the nation’s attention everyone within the district began “to feel the backlash” from it (Wilgoren). Examples of the “backlash” are “a sign posted in a nearby high school [reading], ‘If you want your grade changed, go to Piper’” and “a company in Florida ... [asked] for a list of students—so it would know whom never to hire” (Wilgoren). These are some of the problems that could occur from an accusation of plagiarism, so it is imperative for every possible precaution to be utilized to prevent our students from becoming cheaters to avert a disaster similar to Piper’s from arising here.

One possible solution, the one that is currently implemented, is to teach source citation as it is necessary in the English classes for specific assignments. This begins during the ninth grade and continues until graduation. Although this appears to be an excellent way for presenting the ma-

terial, it is not and exhibits numerous problems, such as the lessons are not long enough and the same material is always covered.

The current length for a class is forty-three minutes. In this amount of time any English teacher assumes he or she can cover everything students need to know about source citation, but the cold hard fact is that, no matter how much the teacher tries, he or she cannot do it. I know this personally because I have sat through these classes, and then had to spend enormous amounts of time outside of class learning what was not taught. The most common element missed when this topic is taught is what material requires citations and what does not. This makes it extremely difficult for any student to learn proper source citation because he or she is presumed to learn it on his or her own when the teacher has failed at his or her job.

This leads to the next problem with this method, which is the material that is taught in class is routinely being taught over again in the next grade level. This does not provide students with more in depth knowledge about the topic, but rather a duplicate, mind numbing, and meaningless lesson, usually on how to create a works cited page. There is only so much a student can learn about a works cited page year after year, so it makes sense to incorporate other aspects

* This essays was written for a very specific audience, a nine-member school board.

of citation into these lectures, instead of continuing to teach the same concept year after year. Also, teachers always complain about repeatedly teaching topics that should have been mastered in the grade level before, so why are they teaching source citation in this fashion? Apparently they feel that the works cited page is the most important part or the only part of any source citation project, but knowing what to cite is not important because they almost never explain that concept.

The solution that I propose to help deter plagiarism is to first teach source citation and plagiarism as part of the English curriculum in the middle school; second, assign coursework that is meaningful to the course and students; and third, monitor extended projects by asking students for work illustrating their progress.

The first step, teaching source citation, should be an integral part of all middle school English class courses. Teaching it at this stage of students' schooling allows for complete concentration on explaining exactly what plagiarism is and how to avoid it before being required to implement it into a major research project. Teachers would administer small practice assignments on each of the different methods for using someone else's work in papers, such as quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing. Then teachers would be expected to review these assignments with the students in order to explain what was done correctly and what was not. This would permit students to make mistakes and learn what is expected of them before they are required to complete an assignment that depends fully on citing material.

After source citation is thoroughly taught, the next step is to provide students with meaningful and interesting projects that relate directly with classroom work. When a project is assigned year after year, an example being the sophomore leaf project, with no changes, it does not "respond to the needs and interests of the students" (Howard 49). The sophomore leaf project has this problem, which is why numerous students attempt to pass off someone else's leaf book as their own.

It does not connect to any concepts in class because leaf identification is not taught, so from the students' perspectives it is a time-consuming, monotonous, and worthless project. If it were given and the characteristics of the leaves discussed and applied to identifying what type of tree they came from, it would become related to the coursework and be a worthwhile project.

Finally, it is important for teachers to "ask for and comment on work at each stage of a ... project" (Gomez 20). This allows for students to receive feedback on their work and the opportunity to ask questions they might have about any part of the assignment. For teachers, it provides them with proof that students are working on their own project, because it would be senseless to copy someone else's work and create the work that is required at each checkpoint. When this step is combined with the other two, it makes plagiarism avoidable because students cannot claim that they "did not realize what they were doing was wrong" due to the extensive exposure they have received in source citation (Wilgoren).

Source citation is an essential part of all students' education and should not be taken lightly. It is important for them to learn all aspects about it so that the district does not become marked as a group of plagiarizers, like the people at Piper, and to ensure they are better prepared for their futures. Therefore, by implementing my proposed method for teaching source citation the problems that occurred at Piper would be avoided here because students learn early about what plagiarism is and how to avoid it, they receive course work that interest them, and extended projects are monitored by teachers. Only if we invest extra time and effort into this matter are we guaranteeing ourselves that the situ-

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ation that occurred at Piper will not be repeated here. Then we will all no longer live under a blanket of false security, but a blanket of real security because we will know we have provided our children with all the tools necessary to prevent plagiarism.

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When I Grow Up, I Want To Be*

Work is one means we have of fulfilling our dreams and ambitions. As children, we always talk about how we want to be someone. Unfortunately, as we get older, sometimes circumstances get in the way and prevent us from attaining our goals. In “Bricklayer’s Boy,” Alfred Lubrano

describes how circumstances affect the choices we make through the relationship between his father and himself. The ideal would be that work should be a fulfillment of a dream that allows a family-oriented life. Yet most of us have to choose between the dream or the family when we begin to work as Lubrano points out. In making this decision, we have to deal with the effects our choice has on our family. These effects could lead to misunderstandings that may take years to overcome, or may never be addressed.

Family circumstances can make our career decisions for us. Lubrano informs us that his father “wanted to be a singer when he was young,” but when it came to his family, “dreams simply were not energy-efficient” (248). His grandparents expected his father to work to bring money into the house in order to survive. Because of his relationship with his parents, Lubrano’s father learned a trade to earn money, and eventually married and had children. Lubrano tells us that his father’s “workaday, family-oriented life had been very in step with his immigrant father’s” (248). His father had put his dream of being a singer aside and chose to follow in his own father’s footsteps. We can see this through our own parents and their relationships with our grandparents.

Whether they had dreams or ambitions did not matter when it came to the family. Money was needed so that food could be put on the table, the house could be heated, and the doctor bills could be paid.

Thus the generation before us put their dreams on hold and chose the same lifestyle they observed as they grew up. There were exceptions to this view. Lubrano’s decision to be a newspaper writer because “I wanna tell the truth” unsettled his father (247). Lubrano’s reasoning was that “it’s real life and writing about it would make me happy” (247). His father told him that, “You’re happy with your family. That’s what makes you happy” (247). Lubrano did not follow what his father thought he should do as my father did. My father was expected to work in the mines as his father had. This did not fit in with what he thought he should do. So he joined the Navy by lying about his age when he enlisted. When he was discharged, my father learned carpentry. The entire time I was growing up, I remember how he would work at his job, then come home and work on remodeling our house. This was my father’s way of proving that his choices could still provide a better life for his family. My father never talked about doing anything else, but I know he was a perfectionist when it came to his trade.

Even though our parents never pursued their own dreams, they hoped that their children would be able to fulfill their

*This essay is an example of a student’s “reader response” to an assigned reading within the framework of a class; thus no work cited notation was required at the end of the paper. The audience is the teacher and the writer’s fellow students.

dreams. Lubrano states that his father “promised himself I’d never pile bricks and blocks into walls for a living” (246). Our parents look to us to fulfill our dreams as a way for them to feel that they had fulfilled theirs in a sense. Where they did not have a chance to realize their ambitions, our parents feel that they should give us the opportunity to do what they could not. Lubrano mentions that, “for my father, earning the dough that paid for my entrée into a fancy, bricked-in institution was satisfaction enough” (246). His father felt that by providing an education for his son, he was providing a means for an easier life than what he had. Where Lubrano’s father was thinking along the lines of his life, Lubrano saw education as a means to accomplish his dream of being a writer.

Not everyone had the same view as Lubrano’s father of education as a means of having an easier life. When I wanted to go to college right after high school, because of an incident during my high school years, I wanted to study psychology and sociology. Since I was only seventeen, I needed my parents’ signatures on the college application form. When I approached them, my father’s attitude was that I would only be wasting money. His opinion was that I would meet somebody and wind up getting married and having children, and he refused to sign the form. I was extremely upset. When my mother realized how much I had wanted to attend college, she told me that perhaps it would have been better for her to have signed the form and not let my father know. At that point, it was already too late because he knew about it and would have been furious if she signed after he had refused. I eventually married and had children, in a way fulfilling my father’s dream of what I would do.

Those who make the choice to pursue their dreams usually do so by making a career decision and furthering their education in that particular area. When the career ensues, the focus is geared to the

job rather than on family life. Some careers can be very demanding and energy-focused so that there is very little time for oneself, let alone the thoughts of having a family. Lubrano recalls how “I live for my career, and frequently feel lost and codeless, devoid of the blue-collar rules my father grew up with” (248). At times, he feels the lack of familial comfort he remembers growing up with. He misses it, but his choice of a career has led him on a different path than the one his father took. Because of this, Lubrano feels that “with no baby-boomer groomer to show me the way, I’ve been choreographing my own tentative shuffle across the wax-shined dance floor on the edge of the Great Middle Class, a different rhythm in a whole new ballroom” (248). By deciding to follow our dreams, we venture into unknown territory unlike anything we knew as we were growing up. Even when we are older, this holds true in a way. My daughters decided they did not want to continue their schooling when they graduated from high school. I decided to return to school because I was aware of the value of an education in today’s world. My husband and I talked about it, and I realized that I would not be completely happy unless I tried to achieve my dream. It definitely is unknown territory, and there are more trying days than I would like to have.

Circumstances may dictate our choice of our dream or our family, but it really is our decision in the end. The often-difficult part is reconciling these two factions so that we feel content with our decision. Lubrano tells us that “my father isn’t crazy about his life: but that his choice was to be “provider and protector, concerned with only the basics: food and home, love and progeny” (248). As he looks at his style of living, Lubrano states, “I live in what the real estate people call junior one-bedroom in a dorm-like condo” and describes how he spends his time with, “I rent movies during the week and feed single women on Saturday nights” (248). It is only when we acknowledge the fact that the combi-

nation of dreams and family would be the ideal do we come to terms with our decision. It is when family is accepting of our decision do we feel the support that is so necessary to accomplish our goals. Lubrano's father tells him "I envy you. For a man to do something he likes and get paid for it—that's fantastic" (250). This is a powerful statement that shows how the choices we make may not fulfill our dreams, and in a sense leave us wondering what might have been. Although originally unhappy with his son's decision, Lubrano's father is in a way acknowledging the choice as being the right one for his son and admitting that perhaps following the decisions made through the generations is not always the "correct" thing to do. His father did not have the option to choose between family and dream. What he did do was to give that option to his son by providing an education to enable him to make a personal choice.

As I pursue my education, it becomes very stressful to juggle the classes, the family, the housework, and the homework. When I embarked on this journey, I made a deal with my husband. He feels that he is getting too old for the job he has worked at for so many years. I told him that when I was finished with my degree and I obtained a position, he could look for another job that would be less strenuous on him. He laughs about it, but I feel that it is one way I can repay him for the support he has given me while I accomplish my dream. Although this may seem maudlin, Lubrano evinces this in his story of his father applying for a civil service job that required a written essay. Both his brother and he helped when "his father tried to change his life" (249). In order to prepare for this, Lubrano's father had to "take a Stanley Kaplan-like course in a junior high school tree nights a week after work for six weeks" (249). Because he had supported both his sons when they were in school, both Lubrano and his brother felt the need to support their father in his quest. Lubrano feels that "Whatever is between my father and me, whatever keeps us talking and keeps us close, has nothing to do with work and economic class" (249). It is what keeps

families connected that matters over all other things.

In theory, our dreams should encompass a career that permits a family-oriented life. But the demands made by each of these elements are not easy to reconcile. It is easier for us to make a choice between career and family. This decision may invoke consequences that need to be faced, whether they are short-term, long-term, or concerning family or friends. The best we can hope for is that eventually the two sides will merge into one for us. After all, our ultimate goal in life should be to choose what would make us the happiest for the rest of our lives.

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Reflections of a City

When thinking of Belfast, Northern Ireland, people conjure up images of bombs, riots, and terrorists. This is such a small percentage of what the city really is. From vacations in my youth to living there and then visiting last Christmas, I have come to appreciate the beauty

and the softer side of “Bitter Old Belfast.” The city is where I spent my happiest childhood days and where my mother fell in love with a British soldier in the troubled summer of 1973. I have come to see Belfast as an old friend, a place I can return to when things get bad, a city that has seen so much and yielded so little. The booming of bombs has been replaced with a booming economy. Belfast is a town caught in an endless cycle of growth and change.

The city is a simplistic grid of Victorian red brick. Dotted in between this nineteenth century façade are modern gray towers and stark office buildings with neon signs clinging to their sides. The city is a strange mixture of old and new, and the history of the city is depicted in the painted murals on its walls. The city hall can be viewed as the center of downtown. In front of this eye-catching building are the stores, cafés, and offices. Behind it lie the nightclubs, bars, museums, and theaters. Belfast is alive with energy from the crack of dawn to the small hours of the morning. Days are full and busy.

Visitors to the capitol join the workers and shoppers on the city buses that depart from the surrounding suburbs every twenty minutes and deposit their passengers in the heart of the city. Automobile traffic is slow as people are everywhere, jaywalking in front of cars. Morning rush hour is chaotic as people begin their brisk march down the main street in front of the city hall to the multitude of stores anxiously awaiting their arrival. The aromas of rich coffee wafting from Bewleys world famous coffee house and the earthy

smell of soda bread baking at Delaney’s café provide a sense of comfort and familiarity. Gucci-clad businessmen pass working class grandmothers as seagulls squawk overhead. Everyone is making his or her way to a destination, passing a vast array of retail businesses with American coffee bars squeezed next to British clothing stores.

Meandering down the main streets idly window-shopping, people hear car horns beeping and the brakes of the large buses screeching as they arrive at their numerous stops. The smell of petrol fumes hangs heavily in the air. The street vendors have set up their pitches on the hard black pavements and begin crying out descriptions of their eclectic wares. The newsvendors join the yelling match announcing the early edition of *The Belfast Telegraph* in the thick heavy accent of the people. The sounds of cell phones ringing, heels clicking, and conversations taking place in half a dozen languages add to the constant hum of this lively town.

As morning draws into early afternoon, people make their way to the bars and cafés for a late lunch. Some of the bars are more than two hundred years old and their polished dark oak and exposed wooden rafters reflect the rich history of the area. Outside, the voices of street performers echo along the tunnels of the arcades. Irish folk and American jazz blend together

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in a celebration of sound as the talented musicians busk for loose change.

As the afternoon continues, children appear on the streets clad in uniforms displaying their school colors. They spend their pocket money at the different food vendors along the sidewalk, and the distinct presence of fish and chips pervades everything. Walking further down the side streets, visitors encounter the infamous Corn Market, home to the naysayers, spiritual speakers, preachers, and religious fanatics of all denominations. Shouted Biblical references follow shoppers into the smaller, locally-owned shops that edge the square.

As the Albert Clock chimes five, a swarm of people appears, hastily making their way toward buses and taxis. Armored police cars surreptitiously crawl down the road as Japanese tourists take pictures of the machine guns resting on the front of the vehicles, tank-like in their appearance. A Scottish bagpiper packs away his instrument as the crowd disperses and afternoon fades gently into night.

Shaftsbury Square is the place to be on a Belfast evening. A string of restaurants is dotted along this busy road. Students of nearby Queens University make their way to one of the many bars including the student union, the Eglantine Inn, locally known as “the egg,” or to Laverys, the three-storied alcoholic haven. Italian and French restaurants sit adjacent to comedy clubs and theaters. Visitors to the turn-of-the-century Botanic Gardens or the Belfast Museum make the short trip on foot to the square to dine early or catch a show. Music spills onto the street from Morrisons Pub, leaving melodic tunes in the air. Traffic lights and turn signals blink frantically as passengers alight from the frequent taxis. People are everywhere, fashionably dressed, greeting friends, shouting, singing, and laughing. The alcohol continues to flow, and the singing increases as today turns into tomorrow. When two or three in the morning arrives, the bars pour their customers onto the

pavements, where they can catch the last bus home. By four o'clock, the city is catnapping, only to awake early and begin the cycle again.

The stores, the museums, the theaters, the music on the street corners, and the preaching in the square present just small snapshots of this city. Belfast changes with its occupants and is a reflection of its people. The current flourishing economy has put Belfast on the world map and opened its doors to everyone. Belfast, the city I love, is a constantly repainted canvas on Northern Irish history.

Jon Robison

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Why Is There Still Terrorism?

“They killed our civilians; therefore, we are justified in striking back with a wide range attack on them.” That’s the feeling of most Americans with regard to Osama Bin Laden and Afghanistan, in the wake of the September 11 attacks. However, that’s also the feeling of many

Islamic radicals in the wake of the United States’ bombing of the al-Shifa pharmaceutical plant. They kill us, we kill them: repeat. One of the two involved parties needs to realize that killing will only bring more killing. History shows us acts of terrorism long before there was a United States, and these acts have always been met with violence. If violence against terrorism were so effective, then why is there still terrorism?

Make no mistake; I am not saying that terrorists are justified in killing thousands of innocent people. Terrorism is wrong, and the entire world needs to cure the “cancer,” as Thomas Friedman calls it (F-1), of terror. But is violence really going to stop violence. Is *our* violent response going to stop *their* violence? Bin Laden will tell anyone that his violence is only a response to our violence, which shows that any level of force will only be met with more hijacking, possibly chemical or biological weapons, and other forms of terror. And suppose we drop a bomb that hits Osama Bin Laden and kills him? That will not stop Al Qaeda or any terrorists. They only want to avenge Bin Laden’s death with more American deaths.

To properly understand a solution to this mess, one must first understand the motives of the terrorists. They claim that America has corrupted the world with our supposedly anti-Muslim standards, and ruined their economy by taking advantage of them. Each of those claims can be refuted easily. First of all, Muslims were,

and are, able to practice Islam in the United States. No law has infringed on that right, either here or abroad. The terrorists, however, have done much to hurt and defile Islam. The Holy Quran, in verse 4.29, warns followers not to kill themselves. Verse 2.205 says that “Allah loveth not mischief” nor anyone whose “aim everywhere is to spread mischief through the earth.” The hijackers, and their comrades, have done more to disgrace Islam than any number of Americans.

It is also impossible for any logical person to believe that the enemy of the average, Arabic Islamic person is the United States. The reason for extreme poverty in the Middle East is because of the extreme wealth concentrated among a very few. The top classes of people in the Middle East are living in castles and palaces, while many Afghans are homeless. Osama Bin Laden himself is a multi-millionaire, yet he tells poor Arab workers that the United States is the cause of their poverty. It only seems logical that wealth, of which there seems to be no shortage in the Middle East, should be spread among all, so that all have enough.

Rather than bombing Afghanistan, which will only stir up anti-American sentiment, Arabs, Muslims, and many others need to stand up and expose Bin Laden for the damage that he is doing for his own cause. In Afghanistan, there is no one to expose the lies coming from the Al Qaeda organization, or the other ultra-rich who are blaming America for Middle

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Eastern poverty. The radical Islam movement, with its “fire in the bellies of its young men,” as Raymond Close says (qtd. in Mitchell F-4), is severely misdirecting that fire, and allowing themselves to be controlled by people who will harm them. Only when the young men of Islam realize that they are disgracing other Arabs and other Muslims by causing terror will terror end.

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English 15 – Hazleton campus

The Designated Hitter Rule

“YOU’RE OUTTA HERE!” screams the umpire emphatically as the batter swings and misses for out number three; as usual the players on the field set off for the dugout to prepare for their chance at bat.

Coming off the field in a different manner than the other players, however, is the pitcher. He struts back to the dugout, superstitiously stepping over the foul line, as if he’s the king of the ball field. What gives this pitcher such confidence to walk in such a manner? Could it be the fact that he’s at the top of his game, and he’s playing exceptionally well, thus giving him such assurance? Or could it be the fact that he’s an American League pitcher and for another half inning he doesn’t have to worry about doing anything else? It’s his turn in the batting order, but instead of going to the plate himself, he’ll just send a Designated Hitter in his place. How is that fair? All the other players have to do their job on the field as well as in the batter’s box. What makes the pitcher so special that he doesn’t have to take his turn at the plate, one may ask?

The aspect that makes pitchers so special is that pitchers are no doubt the most important players on the field; if the pitcher were to be injured while batting, the game will take a drastic change for the worse. Besides, pitchers are taught to pitch, not bat, while up at the plate all the pitcher is generally good for is an automatic out for the opposing team and a chance for spectators to use the restroom. Although it may be unfair to the players who play in other positions, pitchers are just too important to risk, and they should most definitely be allowed to have Designated Hitters bat for them if they so choose.

National League president John Heydler

first thought of the idea for a Designated Hitter in 1928. Heydler thought that there was a lack of action whenever a pitcher would step up to the plate, and for the most part everyone else agreed. However, his proposal for a Designated Hitter was shot down. It wasn’t until forty-five years later in 1973 that the idea was resurrected and would eventually become rule 6.10. The rule states: “Any league may elect to use the Designated Hitter Rule. A hitter may be designated to bat for the starting pitcher and all subsequent pitchers in any game without otherwise affecting the status of the pitcher(s) in the game” (Macmillan 3015). It has been said many times by average American baseball fans that they do not think it is fair that the American League is allowed a Designated Hitter, while in the National League it is not allowed. But as can plainly be seen, both leagues have the option to designate a hitter for the pitcher; however, the National League independently decided against the rule. This raises another question as well: What happens to the Designated Hitter Rule when an American League team plays a National League team? For this situation, the rule states:

- (a) In the event of inter-league competition between clubs of Leagues using the Designated Hitter Rule and clubs not using the Designated Hitter Rule, the rule will be used as follows: 1. In World Series or exhibition games, the

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rule will be used as in the practice of the home team. 2. In All-Star games, the rule will only be used if both teams and both Leagues so agree. (Macmillan 3015)

All these rules are needed just to explain that the pitcher receives a free pass when it comes to his turn at the plate. Why is it that no other positions have the same free pass?

Simple, no other position on the ball field is as important as the pitcher's position. With all due respect to the other eight positions, without the ball being delivered to the plate, the game obviously can't be played. For arguments sake, let's take away the centerfielder, or the shortstop, even the first baseman from the average ball game. Sure, there may be more hits, and the game may even be a bit more exciting due to this drastic change, but the game will still go on. If the pitcher is taken away, however, who is going to pitch the ball? Nobody. Who is going to want to watch a bunch of player standing around doing nothing?

Of course this situation could never occur, because even if the pitcher were to step up to the plate, be hit by the opposing pitcher, and knocked out of the game, there is no rule that says another pitcher cannot be put into the game. Sure, this can be done easily, but what if the team's success is based on how well that pitcher is pitching? It would not be fair to that team if their star pitcher were intentionally hit, leaving him unable to pitch for the remainder of the game. It is like a punch in the face. And what happens when a person is punched in the face? The person struck will want to punch back. Therefore, when the opposing pitcher steps to the plate, he will certainly risk becoming another hit batter. To surpass all of these baseball politics, baseball said, "Hey, if you don't want your pitcher to be in harm's way, you can send another hitter in his place." This way teams do not have to worry about losing their most important player on the field and can stay focused on playing the fundamentals of the game.

Speaking of politics, just as the United States would not send the president to fight

on the battlefield of a war, baseball teams do not send their pitchers to the plate. Let us imagine a game: The United States versus The Taliban; in the game let us imagine the president as the pitcher, the battlefield as the batter's box, and the military as the Designated Hitter. The president pitches the ball to the Taliban and easily gets them out. Now it is the United States' turn at the plate and the president's turn in the lineup, but instead of sending an important figurehead such as the president who may not be so effective on the battlefield, the United States designates the military to go to the plate in the president's place. Now the risk of losing the president is gone, and at the same time, they have sent up a far more powerful hitter.

Just as the military would be more effective on the battlefield than the president would be, Designated Hitters are more effective at the plate than pitchers are. Pitchers are taught and trained to dominate their pitching role and for the most part are not taught to hit. How fun is it to watch a pitcher who steps up to the plate and gets out fifty-two times out of sixty? About as fun as watching grass grow. On the other hand, if a powerful Designated Hitter comes to the plate instead, and generates three times as many hits as the pitcher, it would be much more exciting. Average, everyday American baseball fan Mike Collura agrees. He sends a comment to the "Voice of the Fan" page of *The Sporting News* and writes, "somebody please tell me how watching a pitcher strike out or ground out adds excitement to the game" (Collura 8). Plain and simple, spectators enjoy watching action, and to be blunt, when pitchers bat, there is no action.

Many players have cashed in on the fact that pitchers are indeed no good at the plate and have used it to extend

their careers. Since a Designated Hitter is used only to hit and not to field, players who are physically unable to successfully play in the field yet are still capable of hitting the ball exceptionally well are often used as Designated Hitters. This means that if a player who was once good in both the field and at bat can no longer effectively fulfill the position on the field due to age or injury, that player can now be used primarily as a Designated Hitter. Collura states this fact very nicely:

This is a rule [The Designated Hitter Rule] that has allowed great hitters like George Brett, Robin Yount, Dave Winfield, Paul Molitor [all players whose age disallowed them to continue playing in the field] and others to continue their careers. This rule allows the best hitters to continue their careers after their fielding abilities have gone. (8)

The Designated Hitter Rule has allowed for many great careers to be extended, but only because they do not have to play in the field anymore. How is this fare to the players who have to play in both the field and at bat?

David Namec states in his book *The Rules of Baseball*:

Almost every baseball analyst and historian is disturbed, however, by the way the DH rule has enabled so many players to achieve career and single-season stats that seem bogus in comparison to the accomplishments of players who had to do full duty both in the field and at bat. (117)

That statement is very true, but should The Designated Hitter Rule be completely disbanded just because of a few lopsided stats? No! To refer to my argument from before, would the fan rather watch grass grow or watch an exciting baseball game? Besides, at one time or other every Desig-

nated Hitter played in the field along with all the other players; however, only the elite players earn the right to continue their careers as Designated Hitters, a hidden rule of baseball that every player is entitled to, yet not capable of fulfilling. This hidden rule serves as a fan favorite as well. When a great player, such as Dave Winfield, who was adored by many fans, becomes too old to serve his purpose on the field, instead of being forced into retirement the player can now keep playing, keeping many fans happy, and serve as a Designated Hitter.

Since 1973 American League baseball has been saving spectators the agonizing pain of watching pitchers try to hit. Some say it is not fair that pitchers do not have to hit, and they want The Designated Hitter Rule abolished. Pish-posh, The Designated Hitter Rule not only saves us from the horrible sight of pitchers attempting to hit, it also makes the baseball politics that can occur after an ill-fated fastball strikes an opposing pitcher obsolete. It makes sure that the pitcher will always come safely out of the dugout after every inning to face the unyielding opposition. It allows old stars to continue playing the game even after their heyday, which in turn keeps their fans watching. These reasons explain why The Designated Hitter Rule is here today and here to stay, and believe it or not, it is not going anywhere.

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Diane Stypulkowski

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Gray Shoelaces

Impatiently waiting for my turn to play jump rope, I eyed my eager group of friends who seemed determined to keep me holding the rope instead of actually jumping. Yet, as a ten-year-old girl, I yearned to spend all of my waking hours with this band of friends. We were playing directly

across the street from my house. I tried very hard not to look at my house, not because of any particular aversion I had toward it, but because I wanted to avoid seeing the little, familiar shape of my brother pop out in front of it. He was a constant annoyance to me, and I would have gladly played elsewhere in order to elude him. I usually placed myself strategically within the neighborhood in order to stay out of his range of sight from our front porch.

Eddie was trouble for me from the day he was brought home from the hospital. For four years I had strived to keep him as far away from me as possible. Everything was done for him, with him and about him. Once, while I was being loudly reprimanded for tracking dirt into the hallway, my brother sat on my mother's lap, enclosed by her soft words and her brown hair falling over his blond hair. His little body seemed framed by her entire body as they blended together peacefully. I stared at them and became entranced. I was jarred away by my multiplication-table book as it was thrown in front of me. "Do your math work!" my father growled. I couldn't protest. It was my duty to do school work even during the summer. My lips curled into a smile when I remembered that children start kindergarten when they are five years old. My brother was four and my highest hopes were to see my father drilling math problems into my pampered brother's head

quite soon.

Somewhere, an unwritten rule existed regarding my being my brother's keeper. My main responsibility, other than being a star pupil even in the sweltering summer months, was to keep my brother safe. This rule also implied that I must take care of him at all times and in all places. This was fairly easy while we were at home. He was a placid and conforming child and enjoyed obeying my instructions. He preferred me to be involved with him than for me to ignore him. Eventually I found a loophole in this rule. Unless I was in his presence, Eddie couldn't leave the front porch. This meant I had to try to leave him standing on that concrete porch quickly and efficiently. Of course I was usually successful. He would end up with his lip quivering and his voice trailing. I would tear around the corner of the house triumphantly and never look back. I couldn't look back.

Finally, it was my turn to jump when something flickered by the side of my eye. "Yes," I sighed, "it's Eddie." He waved his hand and pleaded with me to help him off his concrete island. I ignored him effortlessly and continued my game. My friends glanced sympathetically at me. Most of them had younger brothers and sisters they also had to dodge. Within minutes I had forgotten about him. That was when I heard a sickening noise. It was a combination of brakes squealing and a car horn blowing followed by a long moment of si-

lence. I knew without looking that something wrong had happened. Fear swelled in my stomach and reached the surface of my skin through every pore. The sounds of shouting, screaming, doors opening and slamming, window screens sliding open, and my heart pounding filled my ears. I had turned my face to the street that separated us and saw my neighbor picking up my little brother. He scooped him up like a frail kitten would be handled and carried him back to our front porch. My first instinct was to run away, but it was too late. My father stood over my brother and extended his arm out toward me. He pointed to me as he barked my name. I was also aware of his eyes falling on the jump rope that was still clamped in my hand. As I crept closer, I could see the spit flying out of his mouth, accompanying his heated words. I knew I couldn't wiggle my way out of the fact that I had been playing while my brother, trying to join me, was hit by a car.

Apparently, my neighbor had been traveling very slowly in an effort to park his car. My brother wasn't injured, but the reality and fear of such a trauma still lingered in the air. I began to hate him even more than I already did. My parents were so upset that my brother and I ended up in our room for the night. We shared a small room with our beds set parallel to each other. My mother came in and sat on his bed for quite some time and stroked his hair until he fell asleep. I turned my back once again. I despised my proximity to this little wretch. My mother stood up and left the room, being very careful not to come anywhere near my bed.

The night flashed by and I awoke facing my brother. He was still asleep. I had seen him in this position hundreds of times before, but this time I focused on him. My mind began to play many incidents I wasn't particularly proud of. Generally, I was a very mean sister, but I would never dwell on it and/or feel guilty. I would deliberately avoid watching the cartoons he enjoyed. I even tried to make my parents

see what a delinquent he really was. Then, as he sighed in his sleep, guilt grew in my throat, and I squeezed my face into my pillow. My lungs felt like they were expanding to the point of explosion. Relief came only when my hardened little heart began to soften and bulge as it did in the famous scene with the old Grinch's heart by Dr. Seuss.

Eddie stirred under the only set of matching sheets in our entire house. Softly he said, "Diane, don't be mad at me." I didn't have the right to be angry with him, yet he expected me to be angry. After trying to talk to me didn't work, he gave up and slipped out of bed.

Soon I joined my grandmother and brother at the kitchen table. My grandmother shot me a look of disapproval and slapped a potato pancake on my plate. Eddie began to chew and my grandmother told us we could play outside for one hour even though our parents had punished us and forbidden us to leave the house until further notice. I glared at Eddie and ran to the first entrance door. I was fully aware that he didn't have his shoes on.

As I sat on the cold concrete of the front porch, I waited to hear his footsteps fall in the hallway. There was a distinct and delicate rattle of glass signaling when someone approached the front doors. I heard Eddie whine my name. When he opened the final door, his face twisted in confusion. His gray shoelaces were untied, and one of his heels was jammed incorrectly into one shoe. He limped toward me. I stood up slowly, and his face fell. He was expecting me to bolt like a deer in reaction to his next movement. Sadly, he crouched to slip his heel into his shoe and tie his laces. As he stood up, I continued to wait for him to join me. He smiled sweetly at me when he realized he didn't have to hurry.

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Overcoming the Hurdles in the Race for an AIDS Vaccine

Throughout the past few years, as the AIDS epidemic has begun to change the face of the world and its people, many fields and careers have also been forced to adapt to this challenge. Science, chemistry in particular, is no different. Much of the work of chemists throughout the world

focuses on AIDS research, especially on that of an AIDS vaccine. Now, multiple organizations of scientists draw together to form centers dedicated to AIDS research. Companies and governments pledge millions of dollars to vaccine and medication development. Individual scientists themselves devote many hours in the hope of making some kind of breakthrough. But obstacles, both scientific and financial, make the work difficult, though not impossible.

Unlike most of the deadly epidemics of the past where large amounts of information were known about the virus and how it worked, AIDS seems much like a mystery to scientists. With the polio epidemic during the mid-twentieth century, scientists trying to find a vaccine understood everything about the disease. However, AIDS has proven to be very different. Because the main problem of the virus is that it attacks the immune system and leaves the body defenseless, old methods of vaccine production are not feasible for an AIDS vaccine. The normal approach would be to use damaged or weakened forms of the virus, but in the case of AIDS the risk that this will disable the immune system is too great. Therefore, scientists have begun testing new techniques while trying to produce immunity without causing an infection.

Although measurable progress has been

made in the methods of forming vaccines, this progress does not come without challenges. Along with the problem of finding a system of making vaccinations, the dilemma of how to test new forms of the drug also burdens scientists. Human trials raise questions because of the chance of the virus actually triggering infections in healthy people. These scientific uncertainties also affect other aspects of vaccine research. The many risks that accompany research and trials cause large drug companies to hesitate in financing these projects. Successful vaccine study cannot continue efficiently without the support of these companies. But the cost of the vaccine when suitable for sale presents the most challenging financial problem. It is feared that the cost will be too high for many of the people who are most seriously affected by the AIDS epidemic, those in developing countries like in Africa.

The majority of an article by Jon Cohen discusses the scientific obstacles that baffle researchers. The problem of the H.I.V. virus is that every time H.I.V. infects a cell, it mutates, forming more than one strain. This raises a question. Could a vaccine made from one strain of the virus cause a new infection? And since the H.I.V. virus weaves itself into DNA, killing the immune system, scientists “must also be on guard against inadvertently disabling critical weapons of the immune

system itself" (Cohen). Because of these questions, Cohen believes the most efficient way of testing is to use monkeys. He feels that by using this process, scientists could pinpoint successful methods much more effectively. However, even through the uncertainty, many scientists stay away from animal testing and prefer to learn right away how the human system reacts to their products.

These biological and scientific concerns are not the only things that hamper vaccine research. Many drug companies want to avoid the risk of funding a vaccine that may infect healthy people. Also, many are more likely to support drugs to suppress the virus in those already infected. As Cohen points out, "[V]accines tend to be less profitable than drugs." It is more profitable for a company to manufacture a drug that must be taken regularly than a vaccine which may be only needed once or twice during a lifetime. Because of this lack of interest by companies who are relied on to support projects financially, yet another hurdle blocks the road on the way to success.

Independent scientists like Cohen are not the only people who have written about the obstacles facing AIDS study. Articles written by large research groups inform the community about current progress. One such article is "Private Investment in AIDS Vaccine Development: Obstacles and Solutions." This article, written by a group of researchers led by Amie Batson and Martha Ainsworth and featured in the *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, chronicles the results of a study given by the World Bank AIDS Vaccine Task Force. This survey asks various corporate firms from all over the world questions about "barriers to AIDS vaccine development; and the probable extent to which various mechanisms would stimulate private investment" (Batson, *et al.*) This article summarizes findings on the answers to these questions.

One of the questions asked to the survey participants by the Task Force con-

cerned one of the greatest obstacles that research must confront, the problem of continued financial support from private investors: "All companies cited important scientific uncertainties causing the development of an AIDS vaccine to be risky and expensive" (Batson, *et al.*). The hazards the AIDS virus pose to the immune system cause the two most widely used vaccine methods, using live or weakened forms of the virus, to be impractical methods for forming an AIDS vaccine. Other approaches now being tried have no scientific evidence to support the possibility of their success. Unfortunately, the only way to ensure the continuation of any trial is for "investment to be made early, before the results of a trial [are] known" (Batson, *et al.*). Because of these scientific questions, many companies are reluctant to become involved financially in a medical trial which is questionable about its success in the long term. They are hesitant to invest great sums of money in a product that may prove a failure. As a result, promising leads go uninvestigated.

When the Task Force asked the participants what could be done in order to calm some of the investor fears and make them more willing to back AIDS research projects, they introduced two strategies. The members were questioned about the effectiveness of push and pull strategies. Push strategies reduc[e] the risks and costs of investment, and pull strategies assur[e] a future return" (Batson, *et al.*). The group preferred the push options, where they could finance less risky, large scale research projects rather than vaccine trials. This way, they would be investing their money in a safer area of vaccine development, and can later decide whether or not to support vaccine experiments. But the firms also stated that, after the discovery of effective vaccines, then pull mechanisms would also be beneficial. Using these pull mechanisms, companies could compose a system of selling the vaccine to countries around the world, even underdeveloped nations. They could

create a system that would ensure their making a profit, while at the same time making certain that poorer, desperate countries got the treatments they needed.

Another AIDS researcher and scientist, David Baltimore, also discusses the challenges of AIDS vaccine research in his article, "Can We Make an AIDS Vaccine?," in the May 28, 1999 issue of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Baltimore, a professor and president of the California Institute of Technology, talks about the problems of AIDS and the immune system. He also discusses the new methods in attempting to make a vaccine that does not harm the body's defenses.

The primary focus of Baltimore's article is the human immune system and how it reacts to both the AIDS virus and different vaccines. Baltimore begins his discussion with the roots of the AIDS virus, primates in Africa. The fact that the AIDS virus is not only a human disease but can also be found in animals is one of the obstacles in understanding how AIDS reacts with the immune system. Unlike other human/animal viruses like Ebola, which, although it cannot be controlled by the immune system, does not spread quickly or easily among the human population, AIDS has proven to be very different. Because of sexual practices and drug use among humans today, AIDS "has evolved into a pathogen that humans can transmit to each other so effectively that it has produced an epidemic" (Baltimore). This epidemic now threatens human life more than any other disease in history.

The problems of AIDS vaccine research are significant, but not insurmountable. The two most important obstacles in the way of finding a successful AIDS vaccine are the lack of funding and the lack of conclusive knowledge about the disease itself. I also believe, however, that neither of these problems is irresolvable. After reading over the article from the *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, the concepts of the push and pull mechanisms make absolute sense to me. By giving the compa-

nies that are relied on for financial support the option of funding projects based solely on research, they may be more willing to support more extensive projects in the future. I think that since companies are worried about risks involved in premature testing of viruses, they may be more likely to invest in the research of the disease. They will become involved in every step of the process, not just the financial aspect, and this may give them a greater sense of control. If they are involved in the research portion of the project, they may also be more likely to continue to finance a trial as it moves into the experimental stage. They can then make the decision about whether or not to involve their money and their name in either animal or human testing of the vaccine.

However, push and pull mechanisms will not only be to the advantage of the financial supporters of AIDS projects. These two systems will also solve the second most important problem: a lack of precise knowledge about the AIDS virus. As I stated before, unlike other vaccine projects throughout history, researchers actually know very little about this disease. Many of the aspects and the workings of the virus are still a mystery to those who study it. By encouraging large companies to support research projects, researchers will also have a greater opportunity to unravel some of the complexities of this disease. They can then use this new knowledge and apply it to their research in trying to find a successful vaccine. In this way, the push and pull methods may prove to be solutions to two of the problems standing in the way of finding a cure to the world's greatest killer.

Note: Our editors disagreed about the use of the Latin abbreviation "et al." within the parenthetical citations in this article. Some say it is no longer needed; however, because an instructor had recommended the paper to us with them in, we decided to keep them.

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How September 11, 2001 Changed News Television

How does a nationwide tragic event cause news television broadcasts to change? The coverage of the September 11, 2001 attacks provides an excellent example for analyzing the many changes and adaptations that news programs make to their broadcasts in response to such an event.

On this day, members of the Al Qaeda terrorist network hijacked four American airliners at the beginning of the workday on the East Coast and turned these planes into weapons of mass destruction. Two of the four planes flew kamikaze missions into the target of the World Trade Center Towers in New York City. In mere hours, both buildings were leveled, thousands upon thousands of lives injured, missing, or lost forever. The third plane crashed into the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., again killing and injuring hundreds of innocent people. Lastly, the fourth plane was brought down in a field in Somerset, Pennsylvania due to the heroics of the passengers aboard the doomed airliner before making its way to another target.

Seconds after the first attack, every major network interrupted regular programs to bring coverage of what would become one of the biggest news stories in America's history. While, arguably, the entire nation was stuck in a state of shock and disbelief, television news anchors upheld their duties and provided a constant flow of new developments. Networks used every available resource for their coverage, and reporters and anchors got little or no sleep every night because of staying on-air for much longer periods of time. In the upcoming days and weeks after the attack, many aspects of news coverage began to change. The acts of tragedy on September 11, 2001, changed news tele-

vision through the amount of coverage stories receive, the format in which news is displayed, the way it is presented, the meaning of broadcasts, and the way the public watches news coverage.

Tragic news events cause different types of stories to receive varying amounts of coverage. Days after the attacks occurred, local news was still non-existent. Every news station around the country dedicated its entire broadcasts to coverage, and all assignments for reporters were all on-location at one of the crash sites. All available resources for both local and national networks became involved because nothing else seemed to be of equal importance during these horrible days after the attacks. Andrew Heyward, president of CBS News poses the question,

Will there come a time when we can be obsessed with relatively insignificant stories again? Part of me, as a peace-loving citizen says wouldn't it be great to have an America where the biggest story is about one missing person or a car crash in the Hamptons? We're not going to be living in that America for a long time to come.

(qtd. in Barringer 2)

In other words, while Americans are longing to view local news stories, these types of issues do not have the same signifi-

cance and importance during this time of warfare.

In lieu of local news, every type of news broadcast centered all of the attention and coverage to the terrorist attacks. News companies and the businesses that own them were forced to “tear up their budgets to give this big story the resources it warrants,” as stated by Seth Schiesel of the *New York Times* (1). By October 22, 2001, Wall Street analysts estimated that United States news companies might have spent \$100 million over their budgets to cover the conflict (Schiesel 2). But Schiesel also points out that the question is not whether these companies can afford the reporting of the attacks, but, rather, whether they can afford not to (1). In a sense, money and budgets were not an issue, just as local news coverage did not seem to have the same level of significance as before the crisis. With this increased coverage came much more coverage in interviews and live press conferences from many political figures such as President Bush and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, who were depended upon to answer very difficult questions.

The format in which news is displayed is another aspect in which news television has changed after the terrorist attacks. The television viewer could easily note that once one station had a headline of “America Under Fire,” “America Fights Back,” or “War on Terror,” every other network immediately joined the bandwagon by inventing a sort of trademark headline of their own. Even something as simple as the “LIVE” icon on the upper corner of the screen became a way of showing American pride—MSNBC first adopting a red, white, and blue “LIVE” logo, then Fox News displaying patriotism in the form of a waving American flag behind their icon, and so forth. But the most apparent change to the television screen was the introduction of the scrolling news line seen at the bottom of the screen on every news network channel. Fox News Channel was the first network to adopt

this new information line, which news executives now call “the crawl,” displaying such news messages as “Health and Human Services Secretary: U.S. Has Enough Anthrax Antibiotics ...,” “Italian Prime Minister Arrives in Washington Today to Show Support for U.S. ...,” “Stay with Fox News for Complete Coverage of the War on Terror ...” (Steinberg1). All of the major news networks have stated that their news crawls will be there for the foreseeable future, and many observers believe these lines have become a permanent part of the screen (Steinberg 2).

However, many news analysts and critics feel that this multitasking news screen is more of a distraction than an informative resource for the viewer. Eric Ober, who ran CBS News from 1990 to 1996, explains that running a crawl is the worst thing that can be done on a television screen to distract and confuse the viewer from listening to the news anchor. In his words, “You are muddying the presentation, and you are muddying the message” (Steinberg 2). Pamela Thomas-Graham, the chief executive of CNBC, feels that viewers are educated enough to have text data scrolling across the screen while simultaneously presenting a news story. CNBC, which already had two stock exchange tickers, now has three scrolling lines (Steinberg 2). These lines could clearly cause confusion and annoyance to a viewer who is unable to decide what to focus his or her attention on. Finally, Fritz essere, the chairman of communications studies at the State University of New York’s Oswego campus, envisions the future of the crawl to expand through color codes for news items and commercial messages and advertisements (Steinberg 3).

The way in which news is presented also provides an example of the changes made to news television. Uninterrupted, twenty-four-hour-a-day coverage was a common occurrence days after the attacks. Many cable networks cancelled regular broadcasts during these days as well: ESPN broadcast ABC News, VH1 and MTV

broadcast CBS News, TBS, TNT, and Court TV broadcast CNN, and The Learning Channel broadcast the BBC (Stossel 3). All of the major news anchors from ABC's Peter Jennings to CBS's Dan Rather to NBC's Tom Brokaw gave several fifteen-hour shifts, and as Scott Stossel, author of *The American Prospect*, observed, they all appeared to be sleepy, rambling, and confused at times (Stossel 3). To inform the viewer of new developments, all of the broadcasts seemed to be in a sort of race. This frantic pace of constantly updating and informing is undoubtedly what caused the rambling and confusion among the anchors.

Broadcasts took on a new meaning after this tragic day as well. Inspirational stories of survivors of the attacks served to uplift the spirits of Americans and bring back pride to America as a whole. But with these inspirational stories came false hope from inaccurate reporting, which caused even more despair for families and friends of those missing and killed. An example of this feeling of false hope occurred when several networks, led by Fox News, incorrectly told viewers that five New York City firefighters had been rescued alive after being trapped in a sport utility vehicle for two days underneath the rubble of the World Trade Towers (Stossel 3). While broadcasts offered a way to comfort pain and sorrow through stories of heroics, they also played a dual role of pointing out the many fears that Americans were feeling. Stossel also states that Peter Jennings, on several occasions late at night, "began constructing plots out of thin reeds of evidence." He would say, "Now I don't want to panic anyone," which meant he was ready to state something panic-inducing (Stossel 3). Numerous reports spoke of possible new terrorist attacks in the coming weeks, and more recently, reports of anthrax scares and confirmed cases of the biological weapon have been receiving the largest amount of coverage.

Terrorists believe that they are succeeding in striking fear in every American citizen but that is hardly the case. News television may have caused a sense of fear in the American public to a degree, but more im-

portantly, it caused America to come together as one nation and feel a part of the tragic event in some way. CBS's *60 Minutes* creator, Don Hewitt, told *USA Today* in an interview the week after the attacks was "TV's most shining moment since the Kennedy assassination—when America came to the TV set and held hands—and it may be TV's finest moment ever" (Stossel 3). Television news has shown people giving tributes to lost loved ones and holding vigils and prayer services for the fallen New York City police officers and firefighters. The firefighters were seen and heard chanting "USA! USA!" when their fellow firemen emerged from ground zero and when rallying behind President Bush's visit to the city (Ruby1). Lastly, the cooperation between the networks allowed for a new unity in American life. As Peter Jennings put it, television became "the national campfire," as all Americans huddled around it (qtd. in Stossel 3).

The final way in which news television changed came in the form of the way the public watches the news. Before the attacks, many people had the behavior of only watching the news when some huge story developed. Now, these same people are glued to their TV sets, wanting to learn more about the attacks and the terrorists themselves. Nielson figures show that daytime viewer ship was an average of 36 million during the week of September 9 but fell to about 29 million homes during the week of October 14, 2001. This figure was down nearly twenty percent, but it was still above the 27 million homes from this same time period last year (Beatty 2). But during these trying times, a ratings battle is probably less of a priority for news company executives.

The public also watches the news now in search of constant updates and answers. The before mentioned news crawl serves this purpose, but some-

times news anchors try to find even more information. Jennings provides for yet another example through trying to give the public more information. In an interview with Delaware Senator Joseph Biden, the chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Jennings received the reply of "I can't answer that question because if I do, then you'll ask the logical follow-up question, and I definitely can't answer that one without jeopardizing national security" (qtd. in Stossel 4). Stossel then explains how this situation left Jennings apologetic and all of the viewers wondering what the following question would have been, showing perfectly how viewers are, in a sense, not satisfied with the crisis coverage and are always searching for more knowledge.

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 affected many aspects of American life, from civil liberties to air travel to political humor, but one of the most visible changes has been in television news broadcasts. Whether it is the amount of coverage news stories receive, the format in which news is displayed, the way news is presented, the meanings of the broadcasts, or the way the American public now watches news coverage, it is clear that news coverage has changed indefinitely and will never be the same again.

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