

Best of Freshman Writing

Volume 9

Student Voices

A Commonwealth College Publication

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Contents

<i>April Gilbert</i> “Cancun”	4
<i>April Gilbert</i> “My New Dog Neechi”	6
<i>Kimberly Ann Jones</i> “The Lost Tradition”	7
<i>Kimberly Ann Jones</i> “Nerves”	8
<i>Tom Hoburn</i> “Snow Storm Baby”	9
<i>Andrew Michael</i> “How To Get Completely Lost”	11
<i>Chris Hanney</i> “The War of the Stars”	12
<i>Dana Helsel</i> “Role Reversal within <i>MacBeth</i> ”	14
<i>Douglas Webster</i> “What Are We Fighting For?”	17
<i>John P Netterwald, Jr</i> “The Frogs”	19
<i>Joy Marshall</i> “The Case of Billy Frank Vickers”	21
<i>Kenneth Cara</i> “Joe Paterno: <i>He Is Penn State</i> ”	23
<i>Matt Meckey</i> “Fishing—The Best Hobby”	26
<i>Michael Butler</i> “Pop”	28
<i>Michael Norris</i> “Wings”	30
<i>Mike Schueftan</i> “Capital Punishment”	31

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Best of Freshman Writing

WELCOME to the ninth volume of **Best of ...** For the past several years we have been publishing student writing with the intention of both celebrating the work that our students do and of sharing it with others for a variety of instructional purposes. Beginning with volume seven, we started accepting student essays from all twelve Commonwealth College campuses, from students in English 004, 015, and 030. The essays in the current edition are all from students in English 004 and 015 classes.

Many of our readers have asked about our editorial guidelines, which we publish on our web site (www.hn.psu.edu/faculty/jmanis/bof.htm). We only accept essays produced in the courses listed above, and the essays must be submitted by faculty members from the campuses. In other words, **Best** is not an “open submissions” publication.

Some faculty have asked if we will accept short stories or poems. The answer is quite simply no. Other Penn State publications are better suited for this purpose, like *The Palimpsest Review*, which serves all non University Park students. Many campuses have student literary publications as well.

At the end of each fall and spring semester, we send out an email call for papers to the various campuses within the Commonwealth College, but our final deadline for papers is May 15 of each year. The papers must be typed and double-spaced, with the student’s name on them. All documentation should be in MLA parenthetical style and verified by the student’s instructor. (Please see the editorial at the end.) Faculty should gather the students’ papers and send them in one envelope from each campus, along with a signed copyright agreement form, which can be downloaded from our web site. (See above.) The student’s return address should also be included so that we can send her or him a copy of the publication in which her or his essay appears.

We hope you like this edition of **Best** and that more of you will participate in its production in the future by submitting essays to us. We are all very curious about how students are writing throughout the system. **Best** provides a meaningful link between faculty and students throughout the state. Let us know what you think about it. We want your suggestions and help.

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April Gilbert
Du Bois – English 4

Cancun

VERY LITTLE CLOTHING is required. There is very little pressure, very little rush, and very little reminiscent of the world. The Cancun area is undeniably a fabulous place to take

a vacation. It has luxurious hotels, exciting activities, and mysterious sightseeing tours.

First, Cancun has gorgeous hotels. The architecture of one representative hotel is fabulous. Walking into the entrance of the hotel is like walking through a breezeway because there are no doors. Upon entering, the visitor is mesmerized by the colossal tropical floral arrangement that's so stunning and full of vibrant color that her mouth drops in awe. Soon, she realizes, after the initial shock, that she is walking on marble floors that look like mirrors reflecting rays of dancing light. Indoor waterfalls accompanied with lavish foliage engulf her; every sense is stimulated. Happily greeted and escorted to her hotel room, she is delighted to see that the hotel's beauty continues throughout every part of it. Posh describes the room exactly. The bathroom floors, counters, and the shower walls are polished stone, native to Mexico. Surprised, she looks over the balcony to see the S-shaped pool with a floating bar and the bar's roof covered in bamboo. Walking through the hotel lobby, through the fresh gardens, through the pathway to the pool are picture-perfect peacocks flaunting their beauty, and, indeed, they are very beautiful. Every minute detail of the Grand Hotel is designed to give her an unforgettable experience.

Second, Cancun has exciting daytime and evening activities. The kinds of activities she chooses are all up to her. She can go for a cool swim in the deep blue ocean, or lie on the beach and soak up the sun and get a really awesome tan. Xel-ha is a wonderful place to go snorkeling to see dazzling fish swimming around the stunning and captivating coral reef. Swimming with amazingly charming and gentle dolphins is a thrilling experience that she will never forget. Also, parasailing over the ocean offers a picturesque view that is absolutely extraordinary. Hit the fast lane on a jet ski or go on a speedboat ride. Twenty-four-seven, the

night life never ends here in Cancun; she can party hardy and dance her little heart out. Easing from the fast lane, she can relax and enjoy a mini-cruise to the photogenic Island of the Blue Lagoon where the movie *Blue Lagoon* was filmed. Awaiting her arrival are a delicious food buffet and desserts. Soon after, the sun seemingly sinks down into the ocean, and the night comes alive with native music and dancing shows with entertainers dressed up in vibrant colored attire. Finally, the term "shopping till you drop" definitely applies here. All the fabulous malls, boutiques, and gift shops are perfect places to find that perfect souvenir or gift for that perfect someone.

Third, Cancun has mystifying sites and tours that are simply amazing. There are, for instance, excursions through the vast caves and the seemingly never-ending tunnels. Colorful stalactite formations resemble icicles hanging from the cave's ceiling looking like alien spawns formed over thousands of years by dripping calcareous water. Because of the lack of water on land, the tree trunks grow down through the ground and through the cave's hollow space, to reach the cave's water beds. The trunks just skim the top of the water, and no roots grow beyond the trunk, and the trunks are flat over the water. It's amazing! Carefully, the tour guide leads the intrepid tourist through the thick green jungles; she can see all sorts of wildlife, like snakes, scorpions, monkeys, and tropical birds, to name just a few, and the unique Chiclet tree, which is where Chiclet gum comes from. Furthermore, the tour continues to the ancient ruins of Chichén Itzá where the mysterious pyramids were made by the Mayan Indians. By the alignment of the stars, the Mayans could read the constellations' positions, which enabled them to tell time, seasons, weather, and more. Hence, the Mayans received the nickname "stargazers." To this day, no scientists or mathematicians are able to explain how they read the stars and even how they were able to build the pyramids. Stone slab walls decorated with people of dif-

ferent nationalities—the Chinese, Japanese, Romans, and Indians with their feather headdresses and all of their attire—were proof that trade was practiced thousands of years ago, across land and sea. Astonished and shocked, the visitor is told about the Mayan worship of their celestial and snake gods, according to which they would sacrifice young virgins as a tribute and to honor Mayan gods. Throwing young virgins into abysmal pits alive, Mayans considered it an honor to be chosen for a sacrifice.

In conclusion, if our visitor is tired of the cold weather, heavy clothing, and the pressure and rush of the world, she can leave the rat race and move into a slower pace of her own. In Cancun she can leave it all behind and take a vacation where there is beauty, fun, and relaxation. Here, in Cancun, she can just go with the flow.



April Gilbert
Du Bois – English 4

My New Dog Neechi

THE TIME I got my first new dog, Neechie, from the Clarion Humane Society was real joy. I remember making the phone call to the Humane Society in Clarion, Pennsylvania, on July 5,

1994. I had just asked the volunteer worker who answered the phone, “Do you have a little dog there that needs a loving and caring home?” She said that they had just received a little puppy a few days before. My heart leaped in my chest. I was so excited that I wanted to get there as fast as I could. My friend and I drove off in my car to the Humane Society so fast that I did not notice anyone or anything from my house to our destination. It was like we were traveling at the speed of light. We were at my house; then instantly we were there! As I pulled into the parking lot, I saw the large cement building. It looked so cold and expressionless, and I barely noticed the small, old, ragged sign that hung between two poles about four feet off the ground. “Definitely not hip on the advertising,” I thought to myself. Then all sorts of thoughts came over me like a rushing river. I was so excited and so happy. I felt heroic because I was going to save a little dog, from “The Pound,” as some people would say. I don’t like that term, but I soon understood it after I entered the building. The first thing I remember was the smell. It was like a still stagnant pond, almost lifeless and algae ridden as if it could not breathe and needed a refreshing rainfall to bring life back into it again. The sounds I heard were of rattling metal and clanging noises from the dogs and cats pawing at their cages and tipping over their dishes with excitement and hopes of a new and loving home where they would feel safe and loved. Oh, how my heart ached as I looked around at wall-to-wall cages filled with wagging tails and exultant eyes. After the initial shock of it all, my thoughts went back to my little puppy. The volunteer greeted me happily and led me to a little room where the small dogs were kept. There she was! I saw her right away! She sat so still and patient, her little black nose almost touching the cage bars. Her large brown

piercing eyes stared so intently at me, and they never blinked, not for a moment. She was the color of the ocean sands. Her head tilted ever so slightly downward with a kind of quiet humility, but her eyes were still gazing at me with anticipation. I turned to look at the other puppies, and they all seemed to be content. Some were sleeping and others eating. As I looked back at my little puppy, she never moved. Her eyes stayed fixed on me. I said to the volunteer, “I will take her home!” The volunteer took her out of the cage and put her into my arms, and, oh, the intense flood of emotion that came over me was overwhelming. Such joy and gladness filled my heart. She was beautiful! She was shy and timid, but I could see that she was comforted by my embrace. She was about the size of a baby’s shoe box. I filled out all the necessary paper work, adoption papers, and birth certificate. She was nine and a half weeks old and about three pounds. Then off we went and headed for home. As we were driving home, Neechi curled up in a little ball and snuggled comfortably in my protective arms. She already knew she was home, in my arms. I was her hero; she was now my baby, my pride and joy! Years have gone by now, and Neechi will be ten years old this July. She weights about eleven pounds now. We’ve had many wonderful years together, and we’ll have many more. She’s not the shy timid little puppy she was. She is so full of spunk and energy. She is very happy and loved, and I feel loved by her. There will never be a moment in time that I would ever regret the day that I walked into the Humane Society and took home my first new puppy, Neechi Lee Kerr-Gilbert. It was the most heartfelt and loving experience of my life!



Kimberly Ann Jones
Worthington Scranton – English 4

The Lost Tradition

EVERY SUNDAY was understood to be a family day. No one even thought to make plans with friends or to schedule anything on that day. It was our “family tradition.” I only

wish I appreciated that time with my family more as a child.

It always started out the same way. My two brothers and I would awaken to the smell of breakfast, being cooked by my father. We would climb out of bed and wearily make our way to the table. After eating more than we knew we should have, the calm that we once were all in disappeared. The hectic “getting ready” took over. There was fighting over the bathroom and trying to find lost shoes, even the occasional fist fight between my brothers and me. Although I hated getting ready in such disorganized circumstances, I would love to relive it again. My father rushed the three of us out of the door with barely enough time to make the five minute drive to CCD class. Directly after CCD, we would meet my parents in the church for mass. As much as my brothers and I fought, we knew how to behave in church, and usually the hour passed uneventfully. We got the case of the giggles now and then, but a stern look from my father put that to an end very quickly.

The next part of the afternoon was the part I dreaded most. We would all be loaded up into our minivan and taken for long boring drives to the places my parents loved to go. I would have no choice but to stare at the miles of trees and to listen to the local country station for hours.

Eventually, we would arrive at our destination. We would end up at Harvey’s Lake or Lackawanna State Park for a walk in the woods. I must give my parents credit; they remained positive and tried to keep us happy through endless whining and “he said/she said” fights. As soon as five o’clock rolled around it was time to eat. Denny’s, Big Boy’s, and Friday’s were favorites. Just thinking about those restaurants makes me feel happy and calm inside; so many hours were spent there. During dinner we all got our chance to talk. Whether it was a funny story that happened in school or a joke we overheard, we all got our turn to

tell the family what went on that week or what was bugging us. Then back to the minivan for the long drive home. Sleeping was our favorite pastime, mainly because we were exhausted from the day of activity.

Now that family tradition is, for the most part, gone. My older brother is now twenty-two and works full time, unable to make time to spend Sundays with the family, although I can’t say I’m any better. I work part time, and in my first semester in college. I am completely overloaded trying to do homework and trying to maintain a social life. My younger brother is only thirteen, so he is the only one who still spends Sundays with our parents. I long for those Sundays we spent together. I can’t help but sense a sadness my parents must feel, no longer being able to depend on that day as family day. Although I could do without the fighting, I long for the closeness we once all shared on that day. This Sunday family day is not what it used to be. In a sense it is a lost tradition.



Kimberly Ann Jones
Worthington Scranton – English 4

Nerves

I TRACED MY PEN impatiently in a figure eight on the cool, smooth wooden desk. My stomach twisted in knots, and my foot shook because I was so nervous. I glanced down

at my blue turtleneck sweater and picked off a piece of fuzz. What I was about to do I dreaded, but I knew I had to do it if I wanted to become secretary of the Community Human Service Organization. As club members slowly trickled in, I began to think, “What if I make a fool out of myself?” and “What if I lose?” Finally, the president called the meeting to order. Then he exclaimed with a bit too much enthusiasm, “Who first?” The girl I was running against stood and quickly walked to the front of the room. She spoke and returned to her seat just as fast. I can’t remember what she said or even what she wore. My nerves were shot. Then, without a word being said, I stood. I knew it was my turn. As I walked toward the blackboard, I looked at the off-white floor tiles, breathing deeply, trying to calm my nerves. I had rehearsed my campaign speech several times before with my friend Ashley, so I looked at her first for some emotional support. She smiled, and I knew I would be fine.

I started my speech with a sure and confident tone. “Don’t let them see your fear,” echoed inside my head. It seemed that in a split second my speech was done. As I walked back to my seat, I listened to the applause that followed me. I smiled, “I did it!” Then slips of paper were passed out, and that made me remember that I wasn’t done yet. The papers were collected and counted. My heartbeat was so loud that I thought everyone could hear it. My hands shook with nervous anticipation. Minutes seemed to last hours. Then the announcement of the winner was made.

As I absorbed the words, I sat back and closed my eyes, taking a deep breath. The smile on my face explained everything words could not.



Tom Hoburn
New Kensington – English 4

Snow Storm Baby

THE YEAR WAS 1992; a cold December arctic wind had brought a chance of snow to the area. It was the weekend and time to relax after a long hard week at work. The weather

service had predicted several inches of snow to blanket the region by the next day. Not to worry: it was the weekend and traveling was not a necessity.

At the time, my wife Jeanne was pregnant with our soon-to-be daughter Tahlyn. We had waited eight long months for her to arrive, and finally her due date was getting closer and closer. The excitement grew stronger as the days went by.

By Friday afternoon it had begun to snow and quickly several inches had accumulated. As the snow was falling, clean up quickly began. The neighborhood soon filled with children excited over the freshly fallen snow. Since all of the schools were closed, the children were assured enjoyment for several days.

The sounds of the winter snowstorm were echoing throughout the town, from the snowplows in the distance, to the scraping of snow shovels that sounded like fingernails scratching a chalkboard. Neighbors were shoveling snow that had accumulated on their sidewalks and driveways.

The snow that was predicted to be several inches by the end of the weekend quickly piled up to around eight inches by that evening. At times, the snow was falling so heavily you could hardly see the streetlights that glistened like beacons in a sea of snow. With the landscape draped in white, the trees hanging over as to almost touch the ground, homes pillowed in a fluffy white shroud, winter had surely arrived and with a vengeance.

The Christmas season was just two weeks away, and I really didn't mind the snow. I've always enjoyed a white Christmas because it sets the mood for the holiday season. By this time I was getting cold and tired from the never ending shoveling, so I decided man against the weather just wasn't working. I would finish the clean up after it stopped snowing. So I headed back to the house to dry out and have some hot chocolate to take the chill off and settle in for the night.

My wife, who was now nine months pregnant, began experiencing labor pains. We would surely be making a trip to the hospital in the middle of the night. That's when my greatest fear set in. Like a child peering from a window, looking for old Saint Nick on Christmas Eve, I too found myself with my face pressed against the glass scouring the landscape in hopes it would all melt within the next ten minutes. But, in fact eight more inches of snow had fallen in that short period of time. What I had shoveled earlier was like nothing I would soon have to endure. I would have to move fast and get the job done if we were to make it to the hospital in time.

After checking on my wife and making sure she was comfortable, I proceeded to the task of snow removal 101. The snow, now up to my knees, seemed to go on forever. Periodically, I would check on my wife. Her labor pains were getting closer together and time was running out. Finally, the snow had been cleared, and I could now see the street. Then came the job of finding my car. I found that it had been buried under a tundra of snow that had been left behind by the plows that had gone through during the night. Again, I would have to shovel another huge pile of snow. At last the job was done. Now the question was would the car start? The temperature had dropped off quite a bit and with the way my luck was going, what was one more obstacle? After scraping the ice-covered windows, I climbed in and with a turn of the key it started. All I could say while walking back to the house was "Thank God it started. Thank God it started." Now we were ready to make the trek to the hospital. To my wife's amazement everything looked like a winter wonderland. She exclaimed, "It's like being shaken up inside a snow globe!" The wind was whipping the powdery snow into our faces as we made our way to the car.

The streets of our neighborhood were almost impassable. The snowplows must have stopped plowing sometime after midnight. As we crept slowly along, I could hear the snow being pushed by the bumper of my car kind of like a snowplow pushing through deep snow. All that kept going through my mind was what would happen if we got stuck or if we ran out of time and the baby arrived before we get to the hospital? Finally, we arrived at the hospital. What would have taken ten minutes on a dry day had ended up taking almost an hour.

So problem one was solved. We now had another problem. The doctor in charge of the delivery was snowed in and therefore could not get to the hospital. What would we do now? The doctor in charge had already been on duty for twenty-four hours, and it looked like he was going to be on duty for a few more, if my wife had anything to do with it. At 11:15 a.m., our snowstorm baby was born. On December 11, 1992, my wife and I, along with Old Man Winter and one very tired doctor, welcomed our daughter, Tahlyn Marie, into the world. Her rosy red cheeks seem to fit the moment as if bitten by Jack Frost himself.

Tay, as we call her, will turn eleven years old soon. She is a beautiful, talented, vibrant, young girl, with dreams of someday becoming a star. She sings and dances like a professional, so strong willed that the snowstorm of 1992 could not slow her down. In fact, nothing will get in the way of her dreams when she is ready to fulfill them.



Andrew Michael
Hazleton – English 15

How to Get Completely Lost

THE ABILITY to get yourself lost may seem like a rather simple task. You may think this is as easy to do as just throwing the road map out the car door window and simply taking

whatever road seems most appealing at the present moment. But to really truly get yourself completely lost to the point that you could end up one thousand miles or more from your originally planned destination while thinking you were going in the correct direction in the first place is an extremely difficult event all in itself. If you are interested at all in learning how to become completely lost while traveling, then please follow the succeeding steps.

The first step you would want to take in order to get completely lost is to lose all your common sense. You would have to be the type of person who is so dull in the area of rational thinking that even if the correct directions were to be lit up like a sign on the Las Vegas strip, you would not have enough deductive reasoning skill to think that these might be the correct directions. If the thought of becoming completely lost has made you interested after reading the first step, then the second step should leave you even more enthusiastic than the first.

The second step in the process of getting yourself completely lost would require you to need not have a care in the world. In other words, if the world were to burst into a fiery mass of molten flames and death for the entire human race was unavoidable; you would most likely look away from the situation. Instead of panicking or worrying about loved ones or precious possessions, you would just simply pass it off as if it were just another daily occurrence. With this carefree attitude, you would then continue with your daily life doing whatever had preoccupied you before being so rudely interrupted with the events of the world erupting into a giant torch. If you are still interested in the thought of becoming completely lost after reading the first and second steps, then the third step in the process will sell you on the idea of becoming completely lost.

The third step in becoming completely lost involves the ability to be ingeniously stubborn, so stubborn

that you do not want to stop and ask for directions because of your insecurity that the person to whom you are asking directions may think that you are a dim-witted moron who should not be on the road. And if you should stop and ask someone for directions, you then believe that the person gave you directions, not because they want to help you, but rather that they want to see you make even more of a fool of yourself. This is a fear that you most certainly must have in order to ensure your stubbornness in the journey to becoming completely lost. You must also be stubborn enough that even if you were to be shot repeatedly several times and blood were to be gushing unstoppably from your body, such as water explodes through an old dilapidated dam, you would still argue the event of being shot. You would argue that instead of being shot, you were just merely wounded, grazed if you will, by the passing bullets that were whizzing into you like a swarm of savage hornets attacking an intruder of their hive. This would go on of course until finally you collapse and fall to the ground, dead because of the loss of blood.

If becoming completely lost the next time you decide to travel on the open road seems appealing to you, then do not hesitate any longer. By all means, if you are this interested in this type of mindless activity, then seriously take into consideration giving up your common sense. Please, whatever you do, do not be afraid to be carefree with your life—maybe even to the point of careless, if you're crazy enough. And whatever you do, do not exclude the ability to be so ingeniously stubborn that you would argue the fact that you were right when deep down you know you were wrong, even if a loaded gun was to be held to your head.

After all, if it were not for these mindless times when we choose not to be rational and instead do what we want to be doing, then where would the adventure be in our lives?

Chris Hanney
Delaware County – English 15

The War of the Stars

IN 1975, a young director named George Lucas wrote the story of the rise and fall of Anakin Skywalker. The story was so long that it had to be broken up into a pair of

trilogies, the first trilogy focusing on Anakin himself and the second focusing on his son, Luke. He determined the second trilogy to be the most exciting and resolved to film that one first. Unbeknownst to Lucas, he was creating what would soon become one of the most widely recognized and revered science fiction epics of all time. The epic is known to all, young and old, as *Star Wars*.

The incredible popularity of the Star Wars universe was surprising to Lucas when he first made it. In fact, every producer he proposed the idea to rejected it, except for one: Twentieth Century Fox. At this time, science fiction (also called sci-fi) was not in any respects a profitable movie idea, but Lucas was determined to make his film. The executives of Twentieth Century Fox had seen Lucas's previous film, *American Graffiti*, and vowed to produce Lucas's next movie. Lucas made a deal with Fox that would end up making Lucas a multi-millionaire. The deal seemed so ridiculous to Fox that they thought they were ripping him off. In 1977, the first film of the second trilogy, *Star Wars: A New Hope*, was released, smashing box offices across the country and soon becoming the most successful film in North American history.

In 1978, Lucas began production of the second chapter of the trilogy, *The Empire Strikes Back*. He financed the film out of his own pockets. The movie was released in 1980 and again smashed box offices, becoming the most successful movie of 1980. Soon thereafter, Lucas made *The Return of the Jedi*, the final chapter in the trilogy. It was released in 1983 and grossed over 265 million dollars. Just before its completion, however, Lucas announced that he was leaving the *Star Wars* project for another time, when computer generated effects were more advanced and cost-effective.

For the next sixteen years, even without new films, the *Star Wars* universe continued to expand,

gaining more fans every year. Many books telling the tales of the future and past of *Star Wars* were published. A handful of cartoon shows appeared on television, although none were overly successful. Eventually, *Star Wars* video games hit the market, many of which were very successful. The big moment came in 1994, however, when George Lucas announced his plans to finally complete the saga by producing the first trilogy. *Star Wars* fans everywhere fainted.

So what is it that makes a film such as those made for the first *Star Wars* trilogy so popular in a time when sci-fi films aren't widely liked? The answer could be as simple as the flashy computer generated images or the action-packed battle scenes. However, there just might be one other reason that America caught on to the *Star Wars* hype so well: it represents us as a people: forward looking, always toward the future, fighting what we see as injustice and protecting the innocent. This is a story like no other science fiction story. It doesn't tell the horrors of invading aliens; it tells the story of a heroic youth fighting against a regime of evil.

The main character in *A New Hope*, Luke Skywalker, is a young man, but willing to learn. He is small and weak at first, but soon grows to show his courageous heart and strong mind. He represents our country, once a small colony; we were once weak and divided. But when faced with injustice, the country united, fighting against all odds for the sake of peace and prosperity. Luke Skywalker, in essence, represents the change that occurred in America during its history. It's not just the characters in *Star Wars* that affect America, however.

The very setting of this movie is symbolic of our way of life as Americans. This movie, as its title may suggest, is set in space, a place that mankind has looked to for eons. Space represents the future; it beckons to us and tells us of what our future may hold. America has always looked toward the future

and has been grasping that future since its creation, each day at a time. That is why people love *Star Wars* so much. It tells them, this is what you have to look forward to. One day, we will find our way into the universe, as well as our part in it. Admittedly, the *Wars* aspect isn't entirely pleasing, but it does show us that peace can prevail even under the tightest grasp.

Even the harshest critic would have to admit that *Star Wars* is no longer, or ever was, just a movie with a cult following. Unlike many other sci-fi films and series, it isn't restricted to a small select group of fans. It is a series that can be enjoyed by all. It is a classic story of good against evil. It is the same story told throughout the history of man but with a futuristic spin added to it. It is the combination of those two elements that makes the *Star Wars* saga so wildly popular. It shows us that the same beliefs that we have always held will always be held, even in a galaxy far, far away.



Dana Helsel
Beaver – English 15

Role Reversal within *Macbeth*

SHAKESPEARE'S *Macbeth* documents a man's desire for power, and the murderous acts that he commits in order to gain it. Nevertheless, it equally focuses on his power-crazed wife

and her amplified drive for control. Macbeth and his wife are joined by more than holy matrimony. Shakespeare creates an intriguing relationship that traces the downfall of not a single person, but an entity comprised of two. The concentration is directed on this oneness through the plot progression within *Macbeth*, in which the roles of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are reversed.

Even upon the first introduction of the Macbeths, it is evident that they do not represent the stereotypical men and women of Shakespeare's day. In public, Lady Macbeth plays the traditional housewife and hostess while Macbeth is acknowledged by his colleagues as a fierce and loyal warrior; however, the Macbeths behave quite the opposite when in only each other's company. Lady Macbeth blatantly distinguishes herself as the dominant force in the relationship. For instance, when Macbeth is unsure of how to manage Duncan's visit to Inverness, Lady Macbeth instantaneously seizes control of the situation, demanding that Macbeth "put/This night's great business into my dispatch" (1.6. 79-80). This type of behavior from a woman was unheard of in Shakespeare's time according to Roland Muschat Frye, who states, "This evil consists in Lady Macbeth's usurping, as a wife, that conjugal authority which Shakespeare's age regarded as naturally and irrevocably assigned to the husband" (102). Macbeth, however, displays no interest in assuming command and is portrayed as subservient to his overbearing wife, as Frye confirms, "While Lady Macbeth 'unsexed' herself, Macbeth profaned his sex by submission to her" (104). Hence, even from the start, the Macbeths' personalities reflect the inverse of the social standard of that time. As the play proceeds, however, the balance of this relation will reverse.

Macbeth and his wife clearly exchange roles in terms of the amount of ambition they display. Al-

though both characters blatantly crave power, it is Lady Macbeth who is initially presented as the driving force in the relationship. Her intentions are purely directed toward obtaining immediate power. For example, upon first learning about the witches' predictions, she immediately devises a murder plot and takes charge of the situation. This is made evident as she coldly explains to her husband, "Only look up clear./To alter favor ever is to fear./Leave all the rest to me" (1.6. 84-86). Macbeth's initial reaction to the prophecy is quite different in that he is unsure of what actions should be taken to effectively seal his future, stating:

Present fears

Are less than horrible imaginings
My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical.
Shakes so my single state of man
That function is smothered in surmise,
And nothing is but what is not. (1.3.150-155)

However, later in the play, Lady Macbeth begins to lose her edge and assumes the more submissive role, while Macbeth assumes the assertive position. She no longer has to instigate or persuade him to murder; he does so on his own. Whenever someone stands in his way, he instantly develops plans for their assassination. This is made evident through his lack of concern for Banquo when arranging his murder:

Ere the bat hath flown

His cloistered flight, ere to black Hecate's summons
The shard-borne beetle with his drowsy hums
Hath rung night's yawning peal, there shall be done
A deed of dreadful note. (3.3. 45-49)

Furthermore, Lady Macbeth's first scene in the play depicts her abandoning her humanity, in which she states, "unsex me here" (1.5. 48); yet even upon the

murder of Duncan in Act Two, her position begins to weaken in correlation with Macbeth's mounting ambition. Lady Macbeth is perceived as a bit more human and not so dictatorial, marked by her explanation for not murdering Duncan herself, "Hark!— I laid their dagger ready;/He could not miss 'em. Had he not resembled/My father as he slept, I had done't" (2.2. 15-17). This act relates to the notion that Lady Macbeth may not be as committed in her evil ambition as originally depicted. According to Edith Whitehurst Williams:

Here is the first evidence that her dedication to evil (I.v. 41-55) is not going to sustain her, and it is an index of her motivation that filial piety restrained her. Had she been able to murder her father or, in this case, a father surrogate, she would have been an entirely different person. It is made clear that Macbeth has an intuition of her incipient frailty when he does not make her a party to the murder of Banquo but urges her to 'be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck' (III. ii. 45). To evaluate the character of Lady Macbeth both in terms of her expressed intention before the murder of Duncan without regard for the radical alteration afterward is to misread the character. (Williams 222)

Therefore, as Lady Macbeth's ambition increases, there is a noticeable alteration in her behavior. Yet, her strength does not increase with this change; instead, she begins to unravel, while Macbeth becomes the stronger force.

In addition, the Macbeths also gradually adopt each other's general behavior. Upon Shakespeare's first introduction of Lady Macbeth, it is evident that she often manipulates people for her own benefit. One of her frequently imposed techniques is challenging Macbeth's manhood, which she employs in convincing him to kill Duncan:

When you durst do it, then you were a man;
And to be more than what you were, you would
Be so much more the man. Nor time nor place
Did then adhere, and yet you would make both.
They have made themselves, and that their fitness
now
Does unmake you. (1.7. 56-62)

Through hurling such insults at him, Lady Macbeth is easily able to persuade him to murder. However, after becoming king, Macbeth utilizes the same strat-

egy when meeting with the murderers he hired to dispose of Banquo: "Not i' th' worst rank of manhood, say't,/And I will put that business in your bosoms" (3.1. 115-117). Whereas earlier Macbeth was reluctant to murder and was pushed to do so by his wife, he rapidly evolves into an individual eager to kill, while Lady Macbeth insists, "Come on, gently my Lord,/Sleek o'er your rugged looks. Be bright and jovial/Among your gusts tonight" (3.2. 30-32) and even, "You must leave this" (3.2. 40), which diverges with her former desire for him to take immediate action.

Macbeth and Lady Macbeth also exchange roles in terms of their expression of guilt. Initially, Lady Macbeth is completely unaffected by the prospect of murder, and even directly following the killing of Duncan she remains unmoved by the act. This is established through the manner in which she handles Macbeth when he forgets to leave the gory daggers at the scene of the crime:

Infirm of purpose!
Give me the daggers. The sleeping and the dead
Are but as pictures. 'Tis the eye of childhood
That fears a painted devil. (2.2. 68-71)

In contrast, Macbeth is portrayed as a physical and emotional mess, so much so that he refuses to re-enter the room in which the murder took place, "I'll go no more./I am afraid to think what I have done./Look on't again I dare not" (2.2. 65-67). Macbeth is clearly disturbed by the killing and is troubled by the thought even before executing the plan. When considering Duncan he states,

He's here in double trust:
First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,
Who should against his murderer shut the door,
Not bear the knife myself. (1.7. 12-16)

Macbeth's expression of reluctance exists in contrast to his impending guiltless conscience.

Conversely, as the play begins to reach its conclusion, Lady Macbeth finds herself plagued by guilt. She has become delusional, and she is so upset that, in her sleep, she relives Duncan's murder each night, rambling to herself:

Why then, 'tis time to do't. Hell is murky. Fie, my Lord, fie, a soldier and afeard? What need we fear who knows it, when none can call our power to account? Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him? (5.1. 37-42)

and then,

To bed, to bed. There's a knocking at the gate. Come, come, come, come. Give me your hand. What's done cannot be undone. To bed, to bed, to bed. (5.1. 69-72)

Macbeth, however, is no longer distressed by the guilt of murder, which he makes clear through the increasing number of people he has slain, including Macduff's entire family:

The castle of Macduff I will surprise,
Seize upon Fife, give to th' sword
His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls
That trace him in his line. No boasting like a fool;
This deed I'll do before this purpose cool. (4.1. 171-175)

This depiction of Macbeth's evident lack of guilt directly corresponds to Lady Macbeth's prior attitudes at the opening of the play.

The completeness of the Macbeths' reversal is apparent in the degree to which the depiction of guilt corresponds with the matter of clearing their consciences, or rather, conscience. Immediately following Duncan's murder, Lady Macbeth is untroubled, while her husband is visibly distraught, declaring, "Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood/Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather/The multitudinous seas incarnadine,/Making the green one red" (2.2. 78-81). Not quite comprehending Macbeth's anguish at his deed, Lady Macbeth responds simply, "A little water clears us of this deed./How easy it is, then!" (2.2. 86-87). Her statement is, therefore, quite ironic, for by the end of the play, while Macbeth continues his massacre free of guilt, Lady Macbeth finds herself, at least in her mind, unable to remove the blood from her hands, muttering, "Out, damned spot, out I say! One. Two" (5.1. 37) and "Here's the smell of the blood still. All/the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little/hand. O, o, o!" (5.1. 53-55). Williams interprets this modification in Lady Macbeth as a woman "whose madness is the heart-rending devastation brought about by the remorse

whose access and passage she was unable to stop up as she had anticipated. Her despair that her hands will 'ne'er be clean,' her whimsical moment of tenderness for the dead Lady Fife, her longing to 'sweeten this little hand' speak of a conscience far from dead" (Williams 222). Thus, as the play begins to conclude, Lady Macbeth is no longer capable of restraining her guilt-ridden conscience.

Throughout *Macbeth*, William Shakespeare chronicles the drive for power and the lengths one is willing to go through in order to obtain it. Upon reviewing the plot more closely, however, a concise relationship among the play's pivotal characters is evident. Shakespeare creates a fascinating link within the significant alterations of the Macbeths, and this link serves to reinforce the balance that is carefully maintained throughout the play. As a shift is evident in Macbeth, a shift must occur in Lady Macbeth in order to sustain the equilibrium. By the conclusion of *Macbeth*, it is clear that the title character and his wife have exchanged roles, and by doing so, the sinister balance is preserved.

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Douglas Webster
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What Are We Fighting For?

Amendment I

“CONGRESS SHALL MAKE no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the

people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.”

This is the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America. This is the contract we have with our leaders to ensure that tyranny and injustice never take the power away from the people. This is the *freedom* we fight for when we send our military into foreign countries to overthrow oppressive regimes. And this is the soul of the nation which we must protect from anyone or anything that stands in its way. Recently, events have united the nation in a way that has not been seen in several years. We often take for granted how good we have it here. To be an American is a privilege that many fight for and never have. We are the most diverse country in the world. We have African Americans, Latin Americans, Asian Americans Christians, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Scientologists; you name it, we've got it. Consisting of people of every background, race, ethnicity, and religion, often we do not have a single thing in common, except for one thing: we're all Americans. We all live here with the trust that we have as much freedom as our neighbors to do what we want and live how we want. However, we still have obstacles we must overcome to fully achieve this freedom. Throughout our history, short as it may be, Americans have overcome many social obstacles that would diminish our human rights. We have given women equal rights, a concept that many nations would scoff at. We have fought a war to abolish slavery, an institution that would hold whites over blacks. We continue to fight for our Declaration of Independence, which states, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all People are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the

Pursuit of Happiness.” How soon we forget what all the fighting is for.

While blacks have their rights, and women can vote, our nation is beginning to realize that there is a new minority slowly emerging into the public view. By now, most of the younger generation has come to accept the fact that homosexuals are here with us for good. They live in our neighborhoods, they go to school and work with us, they eat at the same restaurants as we do, they love they love each other, like us. In fact, they are us. We are Americans. We are all created equal. We may not have the same beliefs, traditions, or values, but we all stand for one unity of people. President George W. Bush has announced a campaign to make an Amendment to our Constitution banning the right of marriage between gays. He announced his beliefs on the issue in the 2004 State of the Union Address:

A strong America must also value the institution of marriage. I believe we should respect individuals as we take a principled stand for one of the most fundamental, enduring institutions of our civilization. Congress has already taken a stand on this issue by passing the Defense of Marriage Act, signed in 1996 by President Clinton. That statute defines marriage under federal law as the union of a man and a woman, and declares that one state may not redefine marriage for other states. Activist judges, however, have begun redefining marriage by court order, without regard for the will of this President and his loyal coterie of Christian evangelical congressmen and senators. On an issue of such great consequence, our Administrations voice must be heard. If judges insist on opening up the floodgates for homosexual marriage through their arbitrary albeit Constitutional decisions, the only alternative left for any God-fearing politician would

be the constitutional process. Our nation must defend the sanctity of marriage, protect its status as a holy union entered into through the blessings of the Almighty, and stand firm and erect against those who undercut the monopoly heterosexual people enjoy as the only folks marriage in the eyes of God.

The President is standing up for his beliefs. However, there must be a separation of church and state. We do not make any laws respecting an establishment of religion. To do so would go against the First Amendment. His God may look down on homosexuals, but his God does not govern America. Americans govern America. People have been getting married long before the Defense of Marriage Act of 1996, a bill signed by President Clinton, who obviously did not know the first thing about protecting marriage. What about the Defense of Love? Isn't that what marriage is really about? If two people love each other, and they want to be bound together for the rest of their days, shouldn't they be given that right? Isn't that the Pursuit of Happiness? The institution of marriage in America has a 50 percent divorce rate. Why should we disallow two people who truly love each other to make the commitment and hold it until death do them part?

The ban on same-sex marriages is unconstitutional. It goes against everything Americans have ever fought for. The motives behind the amendment are prejudiced, bigoted, and narrow-minded. They take the beliefs of one man's religion and apply them to everybody. The separation of church and state must be upheld or else we will fall backwards to a time of tyranny and oppression. Our Constitution is the body and soul of our nation. We must stand up for our rights and the rights of our neighbor, or we will never be free.

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John P Netterwald, Jr
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The Frogs

THE FROGS were singing again. I had heard them all night through the thin membrane of my tent. Their songs had died down with the rising sun, but now they picked up again

with a fervor that sounded not unlike desperation to my teenage ears. I rested in the tent only a few moments before clearing the sleep from my eyes and springing out of my sleeping bag to greet the mourning. Dew droplets still covered everything, and the mourning seemed as magical as any other morning does to a young person of sixteen, camping in the woods.

My brother had already awakened. He was sitting on a rock waiting for other people to wake up and smiling happily to see that it was me first and not one of the other kids from our group. They were all pretty boring, and we had no interest in their stories of adolescent rebellion. I slipped my feet into my hiking boots and looked at my watch. It was just after seven, and I knew that the two counselors who were with us wouldn't wake up till at least eight. We had time to play before they did.

"The lake or the cliffs?" I asked, gesturing to the singing frogs behind me and the rocky face that we had nestled our tent under the previous night. We had been hiking a long time the night before, at least twelve miles. We still had a long way to go too. The stretch that we were completing started just at the Connecticut border and wound its way down through the mountains of New York and into New Jersey before finally ending at the border in Pennsylvania, the most famous of East Coast trails.

"The cliffs!" he said keeping his voice to a hushed shout as not to wake the others. There were adventures to be had, and it just wouldn't fit to have anyone wake up and tell us to do something and spoil our excitement. He was just a bit shorter than me, but his frame was already starting to develop into something wider and heavier than mine. I, two years his senior, wouldn't allow him to beat me in a sprint. I easily bounded up to the face of the mountain ahead of him. To our delight, at the base of the cliff was a trail that zigzagged its way right up the side of the cliff. We

knew that we would probably have been chastised for running off without telling anyone where we were going, but we could easily see the tents from just about any spot on the cliff side.

Our exploration had begun. There was life teaming in the niches of rock and trees. Flowers were everywhere and a delightful green moss that coated all of the shady sections of the path. Looking over the edge, in some places the vertigo of the height kept us cautious, but like mountain goats we bounded further and further up.

I stopped for a second, surveying our little valley and its beautiful pond, the sun shining off of the water with a brilliance so strong one had to avert one's eyes to avoid squinting. Today would be a nice day, and our hike would be without rain or mud like the previous two days.

Broken from my trance, I turned to the sound of my brother's voice, calling me over to see his latest magnificent discovery. As I jumped to run to him, something changed. The bed of moss that I had been standing on had slipped away with the sudden change in the weight of my body. I was falling, and in this one brief instant I knew that I had made a horrible miscalculation. My chest smashed into the slanted rock and my hands dug deep into the dirt, trying to grab for life granting hold. It wasn't enough, though, and I felt myself sliding backwards towards the edge, towards the perfect camp so far below.

All senses alert and scrambling for an escape, a rope to grab, a hand to hold, I found only that my voice was not with me. The fear had gripped my throat and rendered my voice box useless. I could not call for help. Had Chris heard me fall? Did he know I needed his help? I tried to think of anything but how far the fall would be. Anything but how high we had climbed or where I would land. If I survived the fall would they be able to carry me out of the woods to a road where they could get me to a

hospital? How long would I be mangled and broken? Was I 40 feet up from the bottom? Maybe more like 100 feet? Was there anything between me and the bottom that would break my fall, or me? I smelled the earth now, where the moss had pulled away fresh and hearty. So clean this smell of dirt. Unlike the smell of sweat which was pouring from my body now. The sweat was burning my eyes and making my already unsure grip on the smooth rock lip even more precarious.

I was slipping more. In a last ditch effort to live, I dug my nails into the rock face that was dumping me to the ground below. Instead of feeling, I heard the nail tear from my finger like wet paper, and felt the gravity grab hold of me. Time stopped. I felt myself stretching infinitely towards the sky and earth at the same time. I let go of the fear that had been ripping my intestines apart up until then, felt the warmth of the sun and listened to the symphony of frogs at my back. I knew I was falling, but for how long I could not have said. I did not look down as it would only have required me to contort my body in order to do so. The ground met me and caught me. It cushioned my fall and deposited me in a crumpled heap next to a wizened tree.

In that moment between realization and obscurity, pain crashed down onto me hard like a truck. I felt my chest where it had been scraped by the rocks, my poor fingernail that had been torn, and my head that had been knocked into the tree ever so gently as I crumpled to the ground. The pain was dull, like the ache one feels with great loss. It did, however, remind me of one very important detail—I was still alive.

My brother peeked over the edge then. Drawn by the noise of my fall or my absence, he had come to investigate. Smiling down at me he had no idea of the horror that had gripped me only moments ago. He had no idea of how close I thought I had come to walking an entirely different path without him. I smiled back at his innocence.

The ledge that I had fallen from was only ten feet from the ledge that I was on and the trail that I had been on connected to the trail that I was now on. I had not been in any great danger. Lying there listening to the frogs and calming myself a bit before attempting to stand, I realized how important the smallest things really are, that mortality was very real, and that each moment needed to be relished. In one brief moment a child of only sixteen had learned

how magical life really can be, and how happy he was to be a part of it.



Joy Marshall
Hazleton – English 15

The Case of Billy Frank Vickers

ACCORDING TO THE ARTICLE, *Prosecutors Doubt Inmate Confession True*, by Angela K. Brown, Billy Frank Vickers, condemned inmate, received a lethal injection on Wednes-

day night January 28, 2004 for a 1993 murder after confessing that he was involved in about a dozen other crimes, including the shootings that placed a cloud of suspicion over Davis for three decades (Brown). Jack Strickland, a former prosecutor in the Davis case, said he had never heard of Vickers and that his claims were a last-ditch attempt to get attention and monkey around with the system. Now the question arises of whether lethal injection was the best option for punishing Billy Frank Vickers, not because he is innocent, but because of the question of whether it is humane to take away someone's life by inserting chemicals into his or her body that may cause more pain than can ever be imagined. I personally believe that there is no justifiable reason to give someone the death penalty as a form of punishment.

In the minds of the American public and jurors in capital cases the perception of lethal injection is of a clean, clinical, and painless end. As stated in the article, *Lethal Injection*, seventy-one percent of those responding to a 2001 survey considered injection to be the least cruel form of execution (*Lethal Injection*). This perception is an advantage to the state because the public is much more willing to accept execution in this form and jurors are more willing to convict and pass the death sentence. At times it is understood why the death penalty would be considered in cases. Maybe the people are a threat to not only society but also to themselves, and need to be put to death so they can do no harm to anyone. Vickers gunned down a grocery store owner who was probably trying to make a living for himself and his family. Now this man is gone; his family is left in agony, and maybe Vickers deserves to die. Some people may say an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, but do two wrongs make a right?

Some people may consider the death penalty as inhumane. As stated in the article, *Naked City*, by Rita Radostitz, Texas uses three chemicals in the le-

thal injection process: sodium thiopental (an extremely short-term anesthetic), pancuronium bromide (which paralyzes the diaphragm and other muscles so the inmate is unable to move or speak, even if he is in pain), and potassium chloride (which stops the heart). It has been argued that the short-term anesthetic may wear off while the paralyzing agent continues to paralyze the prisoner and that he or she dies an agonizing death through slow suffocation while fully conscious. For this reason, the use of paralyzing agents for the veterinary killing of animals has been made illegal in at least one state. However, according to the article, *Lethal Injection* (Wikipedia), the use of these agents for killing human beings continues. Although Vickers took someone's life away, it is not our right to choose to take Vickers life away. Whose to say that Vickers does not have a conscience and spending the rest of his natural life in prison is not enough suffering, knowing that he killed someone who was perhaps expecting a child and will never get to see that child or someone whose child has been left abandoned now because Vickers took away his or her only living parent?

I believe that it is never humane to kill another human being because murder is murder whether it is committed by an individual or the state. According to the article, *Lethal Injection: The medical technology of execution*, the execution of prisoners, even on charges of murder, appear to suggest that killing is acceptable as long as it is the state which carries out the killing. In my opinion, it should be against the law to give someone the death penalty that is insane, and someone who kills another person for any reason other than self-defense is obviously insane. These people should be treated and given psychological help rather than just put to death. In all honesty, what purpose would it serve to give these people the death pen-

alty? Billy Frank Vickers is dead now but does this bring back the grocery store owner? Now two men are dead, and all for what reason? At first, I thought maybe the family of the grocery store owner is at ease, knowing that Vickers suffered, because as stated in the article, *Inmate Claims Murders During His Execution*, by Michael Graczyk, Vickers states that he would like to clear up some things (speaking of his involvement in more than a dozen murder cases, including the Cullen Davis case) while strapped to the Texas death chamber gurney, which illustrates his fear of death, and fear itself is enough suffering.

I personally have strong feelings against the inhumane form of death by lethal injection because I recently watched a complete murder case of a mentally insane woman who was put to death because she murdered a couple of people. While watching this case, I began to see inside this lady's life and as bright and intelligent as she seemed, it was obvious that something was wrong. I began to think to myself that there is no way that they can put this lady to death because she needs psychiatric help; she does not even realize that what she did was wrong. It was then that I began to become emotional for this woman's family because I knew that they would feel more pain than the criminal. In all actuality, that is who is being punished, the family. Once the criminal is dead, he or she feels no more pain and suffering; it is the families that are left in deep despair.

Although Vickers did murder someone, I believe that no one should be put to death, not even Vickers. Everyone will eventually die someday so why not allow him or her to die naturally and leave it up to God to punish him or her? God is who gave him life and God should be the only One who has the right to take it away. Maybe some might say that there is no God. Well, how much suffering are they doing if they are killed anyway? They are actually taking out of their misery of having to spend their lives behind bars, never seeing the light of day, and having to replay the situation over and over in their minds. Also if it has been made illegal to kill animals by lethal injection, then why is it okay to still use it for human beings?

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Kenneth Cara
Hazleton – English 15

Joe Paterno: *He Is Penn State*

THE COLLEGE football world has gone mad. Conferences are doing battle in courtrooms instead of on the football field. Teams are leaving their conferences and throwing tradition

and loyalty out the window for a bigger paycheck. The Bowl Championship Series was supposed to end the confusion in the college football post season. It was supposed to crown a true champion. Instead, the B.C.S. has only brought more light to the fact that in college football it is all about money and TV contracts. Teams that have no right going to a major bowl game go because of who they are and, more importantly, who their fans are and how much money the fans are will to spend. Players are failing classes, stealing, doing drugs, breaking almost every law imaginable, and they are still suiting up to play on Saturday. In this new age of college football, there is a man who is as old school as having goal posts right on the goal line. He is short in stature, but he is larger than life. He has given millions of dollars back to his university, and he has put his heart and his soul into molding young me. Joe Paterno has become an icon of college football. In these modern times, however, his morals and his coaching style seem outdated. Now, in the twilight of his career, he has to battle a grueling Big Ten schedule, the media who made him a legend and who are now looking to make him into a fool, and even his once loyal fans who have turned their backs on him. Joe Paterno has his back against the wall; it seems everything is working against him. He could walk away now and forever be remembered as a great football coach, or he can keep running out of that tunnel and work on putting Penn State football back on the map. He can take back the title that is rightfully his, the greatest college football coach of all time. Joe Paterno should remain in charge of the Penn State football program. Along the way, he deserves every Penn State fans support, win or lose.

Joe Paterno has found a way to win in college football. More importantly, he has found a way to win and keep his morals and the morals of the University. Paterno could have retired two years ago, after

he reached victory number 324. Paul Bear Bryant had 323 wins, and he held the all-time record for wins among major college football coaches. He held that record until a cold day at University Park, Pennsylvania in 2001.

The dull metal bleachers were freezing, but that was not the reason that 109,000 fans were not sitting on them. It was so cold that it was hard to breathe, but it was easy to cheer at the top of your lungs. Penn State had struggled the previous season, and they would finish this season with another losing record, but that didn't matter at the moment. Joe Paterno was seconds away from having more wins than any other Division I-A coach in the history of college football. Time ran out and Joe Paterno had finally passed the Bear. The stadium shook from the noise of the cheering fans. It was still light out, but the scoreboard illuminated the sky; it read 324. One hundred and nine thousand voices came together to chant two simple words, Joe Pa, Joe Pa, Joe Pa. The chant grew louder and louder. You could see Joe Paterno and his wife, Sue, on the big screen hugging each other. It was then Joe Paterno spoke. He thanked the fans and the University. What he said next was so simple and yet so complex. He finished his speech by saying, We are over 100,000 responded, Penn State! I felt a tear roll down my cheek. I looked around the stadium. I saw old men cheering for a man who was their long time hero, a man whom they watched win all 324 record breaking games. I saw the student section cheering on a man who was a worthy sports role-model. The student section looked like a big blue wave with their pom-poms going back and forth in unison with the Joe Pa chant. I saw children cheering happily, looking at a man they probably considered a superhero, or someone who reminded them of their grandfathers. I realized then how many people Joe Paterno has touched, and he

probably never met half of them. Then I looked up to the beautiful fall sky in Pennsylvania; I knew my father was watching his hero from somewhere. That day 109,000 people cheered for Joe Paterno. Who knew that just two years later some of them would turn their backs on the man who was just able to move over 100,000 people with two simple words? They seemed to forget that just twenty some years earlier, he had his chance to turn his back on them.

Joe Paterno had been coach at Penn State for only seven years, and he already had two undefeated teams, and had played in four bowl games. It was the winter of 1972 and Joe Pa and his Nittany Lions were in New Orleans, getting ready for the Sugar Bowl. Joe asked his brother George to come for a walk with him one night while in New Orleans. Joe told George that a man named Billy Sullivan, from the New England patriots, had offered him a long-term contract for big money. Joe then asked his brother if he would be an assistant coach in New England with him. George took the offer. Joe went back to State College, Pennsylvania, to talk the decision over with his wife, Sue. Billy Sullivan told a reporter that Paterno was on his way to New England and Dick Young of the *New York Daily News* had the story already written. Sometime after that Joe called Mr. Sullivan and told him he had to turn down his million-dollar offer. Throughout his career Joe has been offered NFL jobs with the New England Patriots, the Pittsburgh Steelers, the Cleveland Browns, and the New York Giants. Throughout his career Joe has seemed happy right where he is in Happy Valle. Joe didnt become a coach to make money, he became a coach to educate young men (Paterno 73-75). That is what separates Joe Paterno from any other coach in the game. He is not only interested in football or in advancing his own interests; he is interested in his players and the men they become. Anyone can win a college football game with the right players, but who can put those players on the field and in the classroom and make them succeed in both environments? Joe Paterno has proven he can do just that.

Joe Paterno found out early he had what it takes to be a good head football coach. In his third and fourth year at the helm, his team did not lose a single game. It was then that he decided he had a much bigger responsibility. He announced to the

media that he was going to conduct the Grand Experiment. His idea was to not only make a good football player, but also a good student, and a good man. Joe continues to work at his Grand Experiment over thirty years later. His coaching record speaks for itself. He has two National Championships, five undefeated teams, and 239 all-time victories (second in Division I-A history). Love him or hate him, he is one of the best coaches ever. So what sets him apart? What makes Joe Paterno the greatest coach of all time? The answer to this question lies in what Joe Pa has done off the field.

Joe Paternos legacy isnt his won-lost record at Penn State. His legacy is himself. His impact on his players. His integrity. His instinct. His guts to do the right thing (Bynum 15). Steve Smear lost his father when he was a little boy. He grew up and became the only member of his family to go to college. Steve was also a defensive lineman for Joe Paterno. Steve got behind in school and started to struggle in his classes. Coach Paterno found out and called Steve into his office. Joe Paterno told Steve, I promised your mother that you would get an education. Dont disappoint her. Dont disappoint me. Straighten it out or youll never play here. Steve Smear did do better in school and became a co-captain of the football team (OBrian x-xi). Penn State is a better place for having Joe Paterno as a football coach. His football team continually has the highest graduation rate of any public institution in the country. You want something more concrete? Take a walk through Penn State Universitys Paterno Library. Joe and Sue Paterno poured millions into the library on campus at University Park. Today their kids can do research at one of the best college libraries in the nation.

Being a good person does not win football games. That is the bottom line. Just because Joe Paterno has had a legendary past, does not mean he will have a legendary future. Penn State football is struggling, and the end of Joe Paternos coaching career is not that far away. However, I still wonder why people are rushing him out of the door. Imagine for a moment your good-hearted father. Picture him, his intense eyes, his strong voice: you have looked up to him all of your life. Now picture him a few years from now. He is the same person, he is just a little weaker and a little bit more vulnerable. Picture him struggling to do the things he once loved. Picture him asking you for one last day at work, one last shot at putting a new tire on the family car. What do you tell him? Do you tell him he is too

old, or do you tell him that you still have faith in him? What would you tell Joe Paterno if he said to you he wanted to coach for a few more seasons? If he told you he wanted to finish his job at Penn State the right way? Regardless of your answer, Joe Paterno is the greatest college coach. Correct that, Joe Paterno is the greatest coach of all time. He has done everything a coach is supposed to. He won, he inspired, he took the boys he had and turned them into successful men. To the media, to the people who post on www.joepamustgo.com and constantly bash Joe Paterno, this might not mean a whole lot, but I am behind Joe Paterno. He is a light of hope in the dark world of money-hungry college football. He is a living legend. Joe Paterno stands for more than wins and losses, he stands for hard work, discipline, and strong moral character. Let those who stand against him close their eyes and picture that day in Beaver Stadium. Let them hear the 109,000 voices yelling, Joe Pa! Joe Pa! Let them see the tears and the emotion of that day. Let them see my father cheering from heaven, and let them still stand against Joe Paterno. For only a true Penn State fan can reach down to the bottom of his or her heart and with enthusiasm finish Joe Paterno's statement made on that cold day in 2001 and truly mean their response: We are!

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Matt Meckey
Du Bois – English 15

Fishing—The Best Hobby

WORK—just the word is enough to make me nauseous sometimes. Look at the definition of the word: work—effort exerted to do or make something; labor, toil. It isn't

exactly the definition of fun. Okay, granted work isn't always awful. There are plenty of people who like their jobs, and work can even be fun. But for the most part, we all know that we'd rather be doing just about anything other than working. Luckily for us, we don't work all the time. No, we sleep, eat, drink, and have fun. How do we have fun? Well, some of us might get our pleasure from eating or drinking, sometimes a little too often. Others of us might have fun spending time with our companions or family, but usually when we think of having fun, we think of actually doing something: playing a game, reading a book, going swimming, whatever it may be. We call these ways that we have fun our hobbies. There are quite possibly an infinite number of hobbies. Who knows how many different ways there are for people to have fun. When it comes to me and my hobbies, however, there is one in particular that stands out above the rest. Fishing is definitely the best way to have fun. Fishing is the best hobby there is.

Why am I so excited about fishing? Why am I so certain that it is my favorite hobby? While I could go on and on about the joys of fishing, there are three major reasons why I think it's so great. They are that it is a relatively inexpensive hobby, it is very easy, and, most importantly, there are so many ways, and so many people who can have fun doing it.

Fishing is cheap. If you've ever looked at a bait and tackle magazine, you might be thinking, yeah, right. You know, you've looked in one of those magazines and seen rods and reels that cost over a thousand dollars and lures that are upwards of twenty bucks, just for one lure. If you are thinking this, then you're right. If you want to fish with professional quality equipment, you are going to spend those kinds of prices. But that's true for any hobby; professional-grade equipment is going to be very ex-

pensive. An official major league baseball, identical to the ones they use in games, costs over ten dollars. When was the last time any of you went out and spent ten dollars for a baseball to play catch with. No, I'm not talking about being a professional fisherman; admittedly, that isn't cheap. What I'm talking about is buying a quality rod and reel and taking it to a nearby pond, casting it, and catching fish. That, you will find, is cheaper than just about any hobby there is.

Let's talk about what you actually have to spend to fish. In Pennsylvania, if you're over sixteen you have to buy a fishing license to fish. These cost you \$22.50 if you're going to fish for trout, and \$17.00 if you're not. We'll split the difference and say that a license costs twenty bucks. Next is a rod and reel. Go to any sporting goods store, and you'll be able to find a quality rod and reel combination for about twenty-five dollars. Fishing line and a few lures will probably run you about ten bucks, and that's it. You are ready to fish. You've spent what? A grand total of \$55.00 to fish. Take into account that if you're careful, you'll get multiple years of use out of your rod, reel, and lures, and you might end up spending as little as \$30.00 a year fishing. Not too bad. Let's compare this to, say, hunting, another popular hobby in Pennsylvania. Obviously, you're going to need a gun to hunt. A quality rifle is going to run you at least three hundred dollars. Just like fishing, you need a rifle to hunt. I'm not a hunter myself, but I'm pretty sure a deer license is about thirty dollars, and that only allows you to hunt one species, whereas a fishing license allows you to fish for all species. In addition to your gun and license, you're going to have to buy your hunter orange clothing, and ammunition for your gun. This will cost at least fifty dollars. Three hundred and eight dollars to hunt only deer for one season. Wow! Compared to fifty-five dollars to fish for any species, this seems a little steep. So, as you can see, fishing is a very economical hobby.

Another reason that I love fishing so much is that it is easy. By easy I mean that the actual process of fishing is easily learned and that if you want, there is almost always somewhere you can go to catch fish.

The actual method of fishing is very simple. You cast your line into the water, wait for your line to move, and reel in. This is greatly simplified, as there are dozens of different types of casts, and just because your line moves doesn't mean you're going to catch a fish, but this is the basic technique of it. This technique can be learned by anyone within a day's time. How many hobbies are there that you try for the first time in the morning and by the end of the day are competent in? Probably not too many. Look at golf, another very popular hobby. You are lucky to be able to even hit a golf ball well after a day's practice, let alone actually play a round. It takes the average person years just to be an adequate golfer, and many people never even get that good. On the other hand, the average person can easily become an adequate fisherman in a day's time.

Considering the easiness of catching fish, let me use myself as an example. The first time I ever fished for trout, the first time I'd ever had a trout rod in my hand, I caught four fish. A total rookie, and I was catching fish like a seasoned veteran. Now, I am not saying that after that first day I was as good a fisherman as a seasoned veteran, and I'm certainly not saying you will catch a fish every time you go out. Believe me, I've spent many a day with a fishing rod in my hand for hours without so much as a bite. However, had I wanted to I can almost guarantee that I could have moved to another location that I knew held fish and caught a fish. It might not have been the fish I wanted, but I would have caught a fish just the same. What I'm trying to say is that there are always places where you can go to fish and be virtually guaranteed of being successful. They may not be big fish or the fish you like to catch, but if you go fishing with the sole goal of catching any kind of fish, then there is almost certainly a place you can go.

The last, and probably biggest reason I think fishing is the best hobby out there, is the fact that it can be enjoyed in so many ways by so many people. When you think of fishing, you probably picture a pristine mountain stream, with an angler standing by himself, surrounded by a picturesque landscape, without another soul to be seen. Oftentimes this is the case, and this is one of the great things about fishing, it allows you to experience nature. For some people,

this is the greatest joy that fishing brings. Forget about catching fish; just going out in the woods and enjoying the scenery is enough to make them happy. However, fishing doesn't have to take place miles from civilization. As America becomes more and more environmentally conscious, rivers that flow through some of our largest cities are becoming clean and healthy and holding plenty of fish. So maybe for a New York suburbanite it means walking down to the Hudson River and tossing a line in. Or maybe you have a completely different view of fishing, and you think of riding a fishing charter to an offshore reef and pulling giant blue marlin out of the ocean. Perhaps this is your view of fishing, but maybe you have as much fun just riding in the boat as you do catching fish. Another person might think of fishing from a boat, but that person's perfect fishing trip might be floating in a canoe down a country river. Believe it or not, fishing can even be fun for people who are petrified of the water. Some of the biggest fish ever caught are hooked from riverbanks, fishing piers, or bridges, without the fisherman getting so much as a toe wet. This is why fishing is so great, and I'm not going to even bother comparing it to another hobby, because there is none like it. No, there is no other hobby that can be enjoyed by so many people, in so many places, for so many reasons.

As I said before, there are an infinite number of hobbies that people have and it's very unlikely fishing is your favorite hobby. I'm sure you can spit right back in my face any number of reasons why your hobby is so great, and you'd probably be right. But before you do that, stop and think about this. Is your hobby or any other hobby you can think of as inexpensive, as easy to learn, or as enjoyed by so many different people as fishing? I doubt it. That is why I love fishing so much; that is why fishing is the best.



Michael Butler
Wilkes-Barre – English 15

Pop

IT IS 6:59 in the morning on a nice fall day. The sun is out; the leaves have already begun falling and the temperature is in the mid 50s. It is Saturday and the weekend is

already looking bright. A minute later there is an alarm clock blast and Richard quickly turns it off. His room is always cold but for some reason that's the way he likes to sleep. It could be the middle of winter and he will have the fan on. He sits on the edge of his bed, puts his glasses on and stays there for a few minutes—patiently waiting for the cobwebs to leave his tired, aching head. Finally he gets up and gets dressed, putting on a pair of clean, faded jeans, a T-shirt and a zippered hooded sweater. Richard then proceeds to go downstairs to the kitchen, where his wife of 47 years, Vera, already has pot of coffee brewing. The strong, rich aroma has quickly enveloped the room. “Dick, did you sleep well last night?” Vera asks. As Richard reaches for the medicine cabinet, he replies, “No, all night long my allergies felt like a locomotive was running through my head.” Richard starts swallowing some pills, some for his allergies and some for his diabetes, slightly throwing his head back with each pill as if to insure it would go down quickly. Richard talks to Vera for a few more minutes, small talk, nothing much. He is a man of few words.

He walks outside to feed his horses. The air is crisp and as he strolls he can hear the crunching of leaves beneath his feet. In the barn, the sun is shining through the cracks in the roof. This makes him feel good and alive, knowing it is a great day to view the country on horseback. Richard comes back in the house, sits down at the kitchen counter and starts watching the news. “Hey Dick, do you want to wake Michael and ask him if he wants to go with us to Darrell's for breakfast?” “Yeah, I'll just finish my cup of coffee.” It is now close to 8 o'clock and Richard goes and wakes Michael and asks him.

Michael replies, “No, Pop, I'm tired and I have a football game later.” As Michael is saying this, he reaches over to make sure his alarm clock is off, and as he does, his sleeve comes up on his arm, clearly showing a tattoo. “What is that on your arm?” Richard got no response; he didn't say anything more to his grandson, but gave him a disappointed look and walked out of the room. Richard walked back downstairs, “Vera, Michael doesn't want to go; I'll get the car started.” “Okay, Dick, I'll be right out.” He knows that she won't be right out; she'll be looking for her purse or something else she misplaced. Richard isn't about to tell his wife that their grandson has gotten a tattoo; he knows better than that. He knows that Vera often makes a mole hill into a mountain and that some things are better off left unsaid.

Richard Cunningham, the second youngest of five children was born December 16, 1931 in Buffalo, N. Y. to Irish immigrants. Richard's family couldn't afford to put him through college. This didn't bother him much. He was not fazed by the idea that you had to have a degree to make a respectable living. Richard enlisted in the Coast Guard shortly after completing high school and was a veteran in the Korean War. For the most part his family would tell you he enjoyed his time in the military. He seemed very enthusiastic when his oldest grandson, Michael, wanted to enlist in the military. Shortly after being honorably discharged from the Service he met Vera, and they married in 1957. They have two daughters and one son, whom he named after himself. He also has seven grandchildren and one great-grandchild. Each one of the grandchildren calls Richard “Papa” instead of Grandpa. Richard is very close to his grandson, Michael, who has been living with them for the last couple of years. When Michael started grade school, Richard had a Transformer or some other toy waiting for his grandson every time he would come to visit. It wasn't long before Michael began to look

up to his grandfather as role model figure. Richard worked for the A T & T telephone company as a Telephone Office Installer and later became a Technician. He retired from A T & T at age 59.

Richard is liked and respected by many for being calm, competent, determined, reliable, and well-read. He reads daily: books, fiction, non-fiction, and newspapers. This gives him competency in talking to others. Most of his friends like him for his humor; sometimes dry; sometimes, cutting. A few don't understand it. For those, it just goes over their heads.

Richard, however, isn't without faults, according to his wife. Richard uses logical reasoning and Vera relies on mood and feeling when dealing with certain situations. Vera often complains that he does not really understand her. His wife has come to realize that she cannot change his persona, after all. Men are from Mars and women are from Venus, she says. It is six o'clock in the evening. The sun has already started to set, the temperature outside has dipped down the low 50s and there is a slight gust of wind blowing in Richard face. Richard has just finished unloading the horses from a long horseback ride with his wife and few close friends. Even though Richard has an exhausted look on his face, he lets Vera know that he is leaving to go to Michael's football game. "Oh Dick, be careful driving in the dark." "I'll probably only stay until half time depending on how close the game is." Richard is not too fond of driving in the dark, especially during this time of year when deer seem to run rapidly in front of cars.

Richard arrives just in time for Mike's football game. He never has seen so many people at a high school football game before. Richard sees his grandson just finishing warming up and calls over to him. "Hey Michael, good luck tonight; if you guys start blowing them out I'm going to leave at half time." "That's fine Pop, thanks for making it out here." Richard and Michael finish up the conversation with a handshake; he is not big on hugs.

Michael's team, the Barker Raiders, was up 14-0 at halftime. The game was actually closer than what the score indicated. Richard knew this and decided to stay for the whole game. Richard was already proud of his grandson for scoring one of the touchdowns and it wasn't before long that he saw his grandson score another one. Michael returned the opening kickoff in the second half for a 90 yard touchdown run. Richard was one of many cheering his grandson on as Michael raced down his team's sideline for the score.

As soon as his grandson steps into the end zone, Richard noticed that one of the refs threw a yellow flag. It's getting called back, a clipping penalty.

Richard was in disbelief and knew somehow that this was going to affect the outcome of the game. He was right. The Raiders lost in overtime 23-20. The Barker Raiders perfect season is no more. Immediately after the game, Richard sees his grandson walking over towards him holding back tears. Richard embraces Michael with a hug "Pop, I gave it my all tonight." "I know you did, I'm proud of you."

Richard's continuing support for his Grandson means a great deal to Michael. Michael knows his grandfather is always going to be there for him. He knows that his grandfather will never holler at him, or judge him. Richard will always be there to support his grandson whether it's for football, for body building, and especially his car problems.



Michael Norris
Delaware County – English 15

Wings

CALVIN COOLIDGE once said, The chief business of the American people is business. This statement is as true today as it was when Coolidge said it because America is largely defined

by the nature of the businesses that drive its economy. One of the major economy driving businesses in America is Boeing, an aircraft production company with plants all over the United States. The aircraft produced by Boeing are used for military and commuter services. The Boeing 747 commuter jet has become the symbol of the company, and a great symbol of what America is all about. Diversity, efficiency, and creativity are terms used to describe America, but now they are being used by the Boeing Company to describe the Boeing 747.

Nothing on the surface of the Boeing 747 would lead one to believe diversity could be related to it in any way at all, but if one considers the production and the materials of the airplane itself, it is easy to realize that the Boeing 747 is, in fact, diverse. People from all over the world with parts from all over the world produce the Boeing 747 in factories located throughout the United States. Just like America, the Boeing 747 has a tradition of resiliency because of the hard work and dedication of the people who fuel its production. Diversity allows continual change for the better to take place; America and the Boeing 747 are no exception to the rule.

Speed and efficiency have been the most important attributes of any means of transportation produced in the United States since the Industrial Revolution, and considering the fact that the Boeing 747 is capable of delivering hundreds of passengers to a desired location on time, one could safely say that the Boeing 747 is quick and efficient. For the most part, people in America and on the Boeing 747 are there because they have goals and destinations that they want to reach as quickly as possible. The Boeing 747 and America provide Americans and foreigners alike with the opportunity to get where they want to go without wasting

time. Any decrease in the speed and efficiency Americans have come to expect from the Boeing 747 would mark the beginning of the end of its wide spread use and existence.

Perhaps the most important factor going in to creating something like the Boeing 747 is creativity itself. People have been coming to the United States for over one hundred years because they have dreams and ideas. Dreams and ideas they could make a profit from if they were free and could work hard in America. It took many years of hard work and technological advancements to take what the Wright Brothers created in Ohio and turn it into the Boeing 747. The bottom line is, without creativity and dedication, the wheel, the hammer, and the Boeing 747 would be nothing more than unrealized potential.

It is likely that America and the Boeing 747 would never have existed had it not been for the hard work and dedication of the American people. The American people are diverse, efficient, and creative enough to have this country be recognized as the most powerful nation in the world with only 228 years of existence to its credit. America is in something of an international crisis right now, and its government is looking to Boeing to produce the helicopters and military jets that are going to carry them out of it. As for the Boeing 747, it has earned the trust of the American people with perhaps the one thing they respect the most, consistency.



Mike Schueftan
Delaware County – English 15

Capital Punishment

The death penalty is the most severe penalty in the United States judicial system. It is administered only for the most brutal of crimes. Three out of every four Americans are

in favor of the death penalty. Opponents believe that the death penalty constitutes cruel and unusual punishment. Because the death penalty engenders such fervid debate among interested individuals, politicians often use the controversy to garner public support. There are many pros and cons pertaining to capital punishment.

In 1972, the Supreme Court abolished the death penalty because it inflicted cruel and unusual punishment in violation of the Eighth Amendment of the Constitution. The number of people executed and later found to be innocent disturbed the Court. The Court also felt that the death penalty was being unfairly applied to minorities and poor people. In 1976, after the advent of lethal injection and additional laws to protect the innocent, the Supreme Court reversed its decision and reinstated the death penalty. Many of the same arguments that were used to abolish the death penalty are still being asserted today.

People favor capital punishment for numerous reasons. First, capital punishment is believed to deter crime. Criminals may think twice before committing crimes, knowing that their actions could cost them their lives. Second, the victims relatives and friends may feel greater relief and closure if the perpetrator pays for the crime with his or her own life. People close to a victim are often upset by the fact that someone who took away a loved one can continue to live and even inflict more pain by being outspoken and unapologetic. Capital punishment can relieve fears that a killer will escape or be granted parole and return to harm someone else. Third, the death penalty saves money. Why should taxpayers support vicious criminals throughout their incarceration? Why should these criminals add to the serious problem of prison overcrowding which forces less serious violators to be released before their full sentences is served? Lastly, rough justice demands that

someone who takes a life should not be allowed to live his or her own life. This principle dates back to the Bible, which provides an eye for an eye.

The arguments against capital punishment are equally compelling. For one, the death penalty is biased against African Americans. Statistical evidence shows that African Americans are four times more likely to receive the death penalty than Caucasians. African Americans comprise only 13 percent of the U. S. population, but 40 percent of the inmates on death row. Another argument against the death penalty is the fact that our judicial system can and does make mistakes, so no punishment should be irreversible. Scientific advances in, for example, DNA and other forensic testing provide new evidence that can exonerate suspects previously unable to establish their innocence. A final argument is based on the fact that the United States is the only developed nation that still uses the death penalty. This creates difficulties for the U. S. in its international dealings, particularly in connection with the extradition of fugitives.

The death penalty is a controversial issue and often the subject of public and political debate. There are sound arguments for and against the death penalty, which may account for the change in the Supreme Courts decision. As long as it is not possible to objectively weigh the risk of irreversible harm caused by the improper administration of the death penalty against the burdens borne by the victim's friends and family and society at large of sustaining brutal criminals, the debate will rage on.



A Note on Documentation:

Some of the essays contained in this year's edition of *Best of Freshman Writing* contain documentation. The editors assume that the students' instructors have verified the authenticity of this documentation. It is important to note that we have not been able to do so in all instances ourselves. In addition, we would like to call to everyone's attention that, in the past, we received some papers that did not follow standard MLA parenthetical style formatting of documentation. We assume that this format is taught in all sections of English 15 and 30 throughout the university and that it is an important aspect of these two courses. Having received such instruction is a prerequisite for entrance into two hundred level courses within the English Department, most especially the 202 courses.

However, knowing the proper format for documenting papers is only part of what is necessary in learning to document college level writing. Students also need to know when to document and what are considered proper sources. Use of quotes, paraphrases, summaries, and statistics is most often a matter of demonstrating to an audience the validity of the writer's argument and a mastery of the materials pertinent to making such an argument. Good sources make writing persuasive—certainly more so than impassioned speech—with the audience that college writing is intended to reach. Language such as “I think” or “I believe” has little resonance with educated readers unless the writer's point is a lack of total conviction. In order to validate one's convictions (*assertions* in writing terms) one needs to provide evidence in a highly logical fashion. This includes providing the reader with the very best sources possible.

Since 1995, students have been availing themselves of the Internet and most especially the

World Wide Web as a primary source of secondary information. The university has been highly supportive, even in some sense insistent, on the use of electronic source material. It has provided students, as well as faculty, with perhaps the best database of on-line secondary source material available anywhere in the world. (Actually this “database” consists of numerous databases.) The editors have found that local librarians on our campuses have been most helpful in providing instruction in methods of accessing this information; however, it is our job as instructors to help students understand the differences in the quality of information they have at their disposal.

In short, we, the editors, would like to strongly suggest at this time that instructors across the Commonwealth College take a strident position within their classrooms toward the proper use of secondary source materials. It is not our place, obviously, to implement policy; however, *Best of Freshman Writing* is in a singular position to spread the word in cold print. We would like to know what you, the instructors, think. Please Email or write us at your convenience.

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