



The Nitrometer – Narratives of Note

Glendale Senior High School Glendale, CA English, Grades 10-12 Ms. Kittelson Issue No. 1 November 13, 2008

The Nitrometer

Glendale, CA At Glendale Senior High School, in Glendale, CA, students in Ms. Kittelson's English classes are offering insights into various worldly concerns via a myriad of media – from poetry to prose to puzzles.

On subsequent pages, you may enjoy essays, stories, sonnets and more. These writings reflect a range of ideas that are not meant to represent the opinions of any one entity, namely the Glendale Unified School District; they are meant instead to be merely an opportunity for students to have their work published and their voices heard.

As you peruse the pages, feel free to ponder your own ideas and the various methods by which you might like to express them. Also, consider the importance of such freedom of expression as it is essential to the development of the critical mind, which is the cornerstone of any democracy.

Poignant Persuasion

Flexible School Scheduling by Chris Barerra

As of now there are no rules, regulations or laws that mandate flexible scheduling of schools from elementary through high school. Almost every student in America starts school at eight o'clock in the morning and ends school at three o'clock in the afternoon. Flexible scheduling of the school system would let students choose their school hours so they may start as early as seven o'clock or as late as ten o'clock in the morning.

Students in most schools act very grumpy and misbehave because they do not get enough sleep. They are very tired and cannot do the work correctly, which makes them fail their classes and not learn anything. When students are tired and when they fail, they tend to get into more fights with fellow

classmates. A law that would allow students to go to school later should be created because it would help people get more sleep and arrive at better health.

Flexible scheduling of school would allow students to get more rest, which would improve their academic performance. A study done in 2000 by UIC San Diego reported that a lack of sleep causes bad memory performance. Students who don't get enough sleep have poor memory, so they forget what they learn in school. For tests and to pass classes, students need to remember what they learn. Adults also benefit from having more rest because they get into fewer accidents and get to work more safely. Not having enough sleep is just as bad as being drunk because the brain does not function well. A sleepy person's reflexes and awareness levels are not working as well as they should. One report says that 24 % of fatal crashes are due to a lack of sleep and drowsiness. Also, sleep loss causes mental problems like depression and even bipolar disorder. Because of the effects of mental issues like depression and bipolar disorder, students are even less able to focus on their education. Students who are not happy will have poor academic performance.

Flexible scheduling of classes would help decrease stress for students and also school employees. Animal studies show that a lack of sleep can increase stress and make the brain not produce new cells. This lack of new cells can keep somebody from retaining new information and remembering new skills. Stress may also affect teachers' performance and may shorten their life span. For students, flexible scheduling would decrease stress because it lets them go to school on their own time. Some students tend to be early-risers and some tend to like waking up later. Because they have a choice to attend school their comfortable time they want to go, it may improve attendance. When student attendance improves, they will improve their learning, too.

people might argue that flexible scheduling would be too difficult to manage and too expensive. I say that the costs of a rigid schedule are far greater.

Flexible scheduling can have a positive impact on the problem of obesity. Studies show that overweight people who get fewer hours of sleep than average tend to have problems with the hormones that aid in the digestion of food. Many people who are obese are young children. Flexible scheduling may help these children get more sleep and hence maintain a healthier weight. With more sleep, their bodies would be able to produce normal, healthy hormones to help with their metabolisms.

A good metabolism helps to maintain a person's normal body weight and prevents diseases like Diabetes and high cholesterol.

This new law mandating flexible school scheduling would provide many good health benefits for students and teachers. Allowing students flexible scheduling would help students get the rest they need to enhance their performance in school. It would also help students with their memory and give them a better attitude toward learning. Furthermore, students who have more rest have reduced stress levels, which yields healthier brain function and better school attendance. Finally, flexible scheduling may help fight diseases such as Diabetes, high cholesterol, heart problems and weight issues.

Novel Analysis

Of Mice and Men by Gyra Hernandez

Of Mice and Men is a very moving novel by John Steinbeck about two men who travel together working and chasing the elusive American dream. Together, George and Lennie show us the true meaning of friendship through troubling times. John Steinbeck displays his imagination and uses vivid vocabulary so well that the readers might be thinking they were watching the movie and not actually reading the book. The dialogue he uses is unique to each character and brings each and every one of them to life. We as the readers can feel what the characters feel, see what they see, and relate to them in real life.

This short novel is about two men, one of them being mentally handicapped, traveling around looking for work to make money. This odd pair tirelessly travels around California diligently searching for ways to bring in money to buy their own property and live in peace and equanimity. They find work at a ranch near Salinas, California, but what they don't expect to find is trouble. The whole time George and Lennie have been traveling around from town to town doing work, they have run into trouble, mainly due to Lennie being mentally handicapped. As a matter of fact, Lennie is the main reason they can't hold a steady job in one town. Lennie keeps getting them

into some kind of trouble, and George always has to cover for him. The pair always ends up getting chased out of town and having to relocate and find new jobs. Although Lennie is a simple soul whose intentions are good, he's just misunderstood. So George and Lennie meet some bright characters at the ranch in Salinas. Along with these characters, they are faced with an intense dilemma.

John Steinbeck's mastery of detailed storytelling is placed under the spotlight in this short novel. Every roof shingle and blade of grass is described so well that the readers are able to picture them without using much imagination. Some stories require people to imagine the characters and setting the way they themselves picture them because of lack of imagery. This isn't a bad thing, but Steinbeck dominates how the reader pictures things by describing every little thing in the story in great detail. You would probably feel like you were at the ranch working the fields with George and Lennie if you stepped into the pages of this book.

The characters in this novel are brought to life not only through precise description but also through unique dialogue. Most authors make their characters seem monotonous and boring by not endowing them with distinguishing dialogue. We would be able to tell which character said what without it being mentioned, though. The dialogue is unique because each character has their own way of speaking. They're all given different accents and ways of talking such as using slang. This keeps the story interesting and memorable. [Excerpt]

Along with dialogue, the peculiar cast of characters in this novel is given life through illuminating depiction. Each character is unique and special to the plot. If Curley's wife weren't so libidinous, if Curley weren't so belligerent, and if Lennie weren't so dimwitted, then there wouldn't be a story. The whole cast plays a significant role in the story, whether it be substantial or not.

In a way, I can sort of relate to what George and Lennie went through. When I was in the 3rd Grade, I had a younger friend who always got into little scrapes here and there. He was a little hothead, so he always started trouble with the other kids. The teachers saw him as a troublemaker, which he was, but I saw something different. My friend's situation wasn't as bad as Lennie's; he wasn't mentally handicapped. He was just lonely and wanted attention, as most of us do. Of course I didn't understand all this when I was a little kid. I just thought he was a generally sad kid.

In conclusion, *Of Mice and Men* is a great story about life and sticking together through adversity and rough times. The reoccurring theme in this story is friendship, which we all need. The vivid, bright details paint a brilliant picture on the blank canvas of the reader's mind. Steinbeck breathes life into

each of us characters by bestowing upon them rich dialogue and equipping them with unique individual traits. Authors today can learn from Steinbeck and should take notes because he can write one heck of a story.

Hope is the Thing with Feathers by Cristina Awadalla

Hope is something that can't be seen or touched, but everyone wants to grasp it. Hope is what keeps us going. Without it we would just be standing still. Hope is something that is so dear to us all. Everyone needs it, and we all use it. "Hope is the thing with feathers" by Emily Dickinson portrays the necessity of hope. Her tone, use of figurative language, imagery and symbolism all work to expose the beauty and importance of hope to the reader.

The tone of this poem demonstrates Dickinson's feelings towards hope. "And sweetest in the gale is heard," is an example of her positive tone. The gale is a symbol of hope and she is talking about how sweet it is. The way she wrote the poem, is graceful and sweet. There is no negativity at all. She writes how it is always there, which proves her positive tone.

Emily Dickinson uses figurative language throughout this poem. She personifies hope. In line 2-4, she says "That perches in the soul, and sings the tune—without the words, and never stops at all." Only an animal can perch on something. Also, humans sing a tune. The singing, gives Hope a soothing characteristic. Later in the poem she says "Yet, never, in extremity, It asked a crumb of me." Since hope is not a living thing, it can never ask for something. This also shows that hope is something that is not greedy. It always helps, but never asks for something in return. In my opinion, that makes hope all the more pure and free. She also uses metaphors. She says "Hope is the thing with feathers," where she is comparing it to a bird. Her use of figurative language really helps the reader understand what she is trying to convey.

Many images are conjured up in the mind of the reader while reading this poem. She says "That perches in the soul," which creates the image of Hope resting upon ones soul which is the home for hope. She writes about a bird's song as eternal hope. A bird always sings, and hope is always in one's soul. In the second stanza an image of a destroyer of hope is conveyed. She describes the feelings of what they must feel by saying that they kill the bird that warms keeps many warm. The second and third line of the last stanza create a very vivid image. When reading those two lines, I pictured a desolate land and a lonesome person. But this person is still hopeful because hope reaches everyone.

A key to Emily Dickinson's poem is symbolism. She uses birds to describe hope. I believe she uses birds because they are fretting, and in a way so is hope. She uses feathers to conjure up an image of hope because feathers let us fly. Being able to fly is freedom.

Hope sets us free from our problems and it relieves us from them too. In her poem she writes about how there is a bird that keeps so many people warm. Hope does this; it keeps us warm when things around us are all cold. In the poem she writes, "And sore must be the storm..." I believe she is using the storm as the hard things that people face. The storm also shows that this is when hope is most important. Hope is most important during hard times because without it, we wouldn't make it through the "storm."

This poem can relate to everyone. Hope is in everyone's heart, and it is used daily. I can relate to this poem because I have gone through hard times. Hope is what gets me through it. In the world, hope is desperately needed, and at times it is scarce. But when something devastating happens, it is what we all turn to. For example, when genocides or natural disasters happen, hope is what we all turn to. Why do we turn to it? Because it is soothing and calming. We can all relate to it because all of us have relied on it at one point in our lives. Hope is eternal and everlasting. It reaches to the farthest people. Hope is something that we all depend on. We cannot live without it.

Hope is a figurative savior which can always be counted on. It never denies anyone. Hope is as strong as the beholder's belief. Emily Dickinson's poem illustrates this. She uses a positive tone, figurative language, imagery, and symbolism to show Hope's importance and necessity. Emily Dickinson portrays hope as a bird that always stays perched in our souls.

Compare and Contrast

Shakespeare Vs. Dickinson by Andrew Thompson

Of the many works of literature that discuss our humanity, there are some that differ so much in their execution that they may at first seem unrelated. William Shakespeare's famous "To be or not to be" soliloquy from *Hamlet* and Emily Dickinson's poem "This is My Letter to the World" are two such pieces.

Shakespeare's soliloquy and Dickinson's poem have distinctly different tones and themes, although both authors make use of metaphors to discuss struggles and faults with human life.

Certain trends can be seen in the use of literary devices in each passage. The most striking aspect common to each piece is the heavy use of metaphors. In Shakespeare's soliloquy, the character Hamlet speaks of "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" (Shakespeare line 58), "a sea of troubles" (Shakespeare 59), and "that sleep of death" (Shakespeare 66). Dickinson's poem is almost entirely made up of metaphors, such as "my letter to the world" (Dickinson 1), "the simple news that nature told" (Dickinson 3), and "hands I cannot see" (Dickinson 6). The two pieces use their metaphors differently, however. Shakespeare clearly states what each portrays (for instance, "sleep" means

with"), and he uses them to add flavor to the soliloquy and flesh out his descriptions. Given that his writing is in the context of a drama, this is appropriate. Dickinson, on the other hand, does not overtly state what her metaphors mean and leaves the poem open to interpretation. One can guess what her message to the world is, but there is no single correct answer. This is typical of poetry, just as Shakespeare's metaphors are characteristic of drama.

Overall, the two passages really diverge in terms of literary devices in their tones. Shakespeare's pessimism starkly contrasts with Dickinson's optimism. The diction of the two writers reveals this. Shakespeare chooses to use words with negative connotations, such as "suffer" (Shakespeare 57), "die" (Shakespeare 60), "calamity" (Shakespeare 69), and "weary" (Shakespeare 77) in nearly every line, while Dickinson fills her poem with words like "simple" (Dickinson 3), "tender" (Dickinson 4), and "love" (Dickinson 7), all of which convey positive emotions. There are, however, two exceptions in Dickinson's poem in the second and sixth lines. The words "never" (Dickinson 2) and "cannot" (Dickinson 6) appear - the only two words in the poem that add a splash of pessimism to its tone. While overall the tones of the writers contrast each other, these exceptions hint at another similarity between the passages.

The themes of the two excerpts are founded on the same subject matter. That is not say that the passages contain identically themes, but they definitely express similar concerns.

Shakespeare and Dickinson both describe the struggle with life. In the case of the Hamlet excerpt, this is a literal struggle between life and death. The character Hamlet muses about why one would "bear the whips and scorns of time" (Shakespeare 70) when one instead could "his quietus make / with a bare bodkin" (Shakespeare 75-76). That is, he wonders why we don't commit suicide to move on from the endless hardships of life. He concludes that man is too afraid of the uncertainty of death, and therefore chooses to bear the familiar troubles of life. Dickinson describes a much different kind of struggle. She is desperately trying to find acceptance among her fellow man (Indeed, by the time she wrote "This is My Letter to the World," she had locked herself in her room, rarely seeking company). She claims that the world "never wrote to me" (Dickinson 2), and then begs the world to "judge tenderly of me!" (Dickinson 8). Her theme of searching for acceptance is much different from Shakespeare's theme of the fear of death, but both themes are rooted in the subject of life struggles.

The two passages also convey more general themes on top of the previous ones. In this case, both passages imply that there are faults in the human condition. Shakespeare's soliloquy does not even suggest that there is anything to be gained from living. His writing implies that mankind is irreversibly flawed, evident by the fact that the only alternative he brings up to living a troubled life is death. The Dickinson poem also expresses the defects with mankind, albeit to a lesser degree. She says in her poem that her

letter to the world contains "the simplest news that Nature told" (Dickinson 3), implying that mankind lacks this news and needs to be informed. What this news is, exactly, isn't stated, but we can assume that it would benefit humanity because Dickinson was known to have held nature in high regard. However, she does not condemn the human condition, as the Hamlet passage does; Dickinson's positive tone and her quest for acceptance suggest that there is at least some redeeming quality to life.

Overall, the two passages do not present the same themes, but they continue to express similar concerns.

Shakespeare and Dickinson address the issues with life from opposite directions - Shakespeare's pessimism leads him to extreme conclusions, while Dickinson's optimism leads her to more hopeful conclusions. Furthermore, the excerpts exhibit the same prominent literary devices, but employ them differently. What Shakespeare and Dickinson create are two pieces of literature that are distinct and independent, but comparable in general terms.

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Unfettered Fiction

Lead the Way by Kristine Harutyunyan

I looked out my window and saw the endless ocean. Everywhere I looked we were surrounded by water. I had never really thought about how massive the Ocean was. I knew it was gigantic but never really realized how enormous until now when I realized I couldn't even see the ends.

My name is Greg, and I am the CEO of a financial company. Lately I have been traveling a lot and I actually really enjoy it. Being in charge of a company is a lot of hard work. But I am not complaining, of course. I am actually pretty good at my job. But lately I have dedicated so much time for work I forgot all about my social life. I am twenty-five, and I am not married yet. Somehow I have never been so great at the whole meeting someone and falling in love thing. Really, all I have to care about in this world is work. After graduating High School my love life was generally in the same place: SINGLE. I was in deep thought when I heard a flight attendant.

"Sir, would you like a drink?" she said.

"Yes please" I answered with a grin.

I watched her walk away behind the curtain. I tried returning to my train of thought but it was gone. So I looked out of the window at the endless blue. It still amazed me. I was returning to my thoughtful state of mind when the plane shook and knocked me toward the window. My head hit the wall with so much force that for a second I thought I was knocked out. I pulled myself back to my seat, not giving it much thought since a little turbulence was usual during any flight. I looked around to the few other passengers in our little first class section and saw their worried faces. I heard panic from the other sections of the plane. Maybe something was going on that I didn't know about. I was halfway up to go check out what was happening when I hear the loudspeaker. It was the pilot. This scared me a little.

"Ladies and Gentlemen please calm down. We are experiencing technical difficulties. Please stay in your seats and stay calm. Further instructions will be given."

Okay now I WAS panicking. I looked out my window and saw the endless ocean again. Probably a hundred thoughts raced through my head. There was nothing but water surrounding us, and we were all trapped in this small plane that was having a hard time keeping itself in the air. This was not good. Not good for sure. I felt something coming. Something big and my heart was racing in my chest. I thought it would burst. Our lives were on the line. Right when this thought filled my head the flight attendant appeared with about 15 life jackets. This was so not good and I knew it. Suddenly my childhood flashed before my eyes. I remembered my parents and I felt so much sorrow. I loved my parents and they were the only people in this world that cares about me.

I was interrupted by the flight attendant who told us to all put them on. I did as she asked and looked around at the worried faces of the others, except they were not worried anymore, they were full of fear. I tried to calm down convincing myself that nothing was wrong. But deep down I felt something bad coming. I knew I had to do something. But what? If there is something to be done best believe I will be the first to jump in and do it. It's just the way I am.

I was hardly able to think. I ran across the aisle to the curtains. The plane shook really hard this time and I went flying to the seats on the opposite side. I tried to pick myself up but the plane kept shaking nonstop for about two minutes straight causing me to lose balance. My head kept spinning, and I was starting to feel nauseous.

I suddenly heard screaming coming from the other side of the plane. Then I heard frantic footsteps in my direction. I saw the curtain open and a big group of people ran in my direction.

"FIRE! Its on fire!" I heard them scream.

I took me a second to digest the information. I froze and my mind blocked out the noises around me. It felt like I was watching a movie on mute. Another hard shake brought me back to reality where my plain was burning and I was standing there doing nothing like an idiot. I felt so alone at that moment. I realized that there was no one could think about before I died. There was no significant other. No one cared if I loved or died. But I cared about these people on the plane. Poor, innocent people. It was my duty to at least try to help those people; they had families and friends that loved them. I at least had to do something good for others once in my life. I pulled myself together and ran to the front of the plane. I looked around anxiously for something without knowing what until I found it. A DOOR. Of course. I threw myself toward it and tried to turn the big handle. I pushed with all my strength but the handle didn't budge. Irritated, I kicked the door really hard. Okay so my force wasn't enough. I needed help. I turned around and went toward all the passengers who all looked scared and lost in need of guidance. At that moment I felt so useful and proud of myself. I yelled to one of the buff guys in the corner who was talking to four other men.

"I found an emergency exit. I need help opening it. We are going to have to make a jump for it!" The roaring noise of the plane clogged my ears so I yelled as loud as I could. The guys just stared at me for a second as if they were trying to understand what I was saying. Then the big one looked at the other who gave him a nod. He looked back to me and said.

"Lead the way."

I turned around and ran toward the door again. The guys followed me and so did everyone else that heard us. I think thought most people were just going with the crowd in desperate need of guidance. All five of us grabbed the handle and counted to three.

"One, two, three, push!" The door swung open and a rush of air sucked me outside. Thank god I held on from the door swinging on the side and reared myself back to the plane. They guys pulled me in. That had to be the most dangerous thing I have EVER, I mean EVER done in my entire life. I felt an adrenaline rush through my whole body.

"Now what?" said the big guy staring at me with desperate eyes. I could barely concentrate with all that noise from the plane but I managed to mumble "We jump." He looked at me with a confused look and said "What??" I looked out the door and saw a little piece of land. An island. Hope filled me. Maybe we did have a chance of surviving after all. I looked back at the passengers.

Everyone was looking toward me. I realized I was their guidance and they were all expecting me to say something. This was no time to chicken out. I had to pull myself back together. I forced out the loudest scream I could summon and said "WE JUMP!!!!!!!"

The buff man looked at me for a second as if approving my response and looked back at the passengers and said "You heard the

I was so caught up in the moment I totally forgot about the plane shaking. I looked at the big guy and nodded in approval. I held out my hand for the first person wearing a life jacket. It was a girl. She was a attractive girl. I froze, looking at her incredible beauty. I looked right into her extraordinary blue eyes. She gave me her hand and that's when I broke out of the spell. This wasn't a moment to be stupid. I pulled her gently next to me and said, "Okay so all you have to do is jump. Don't look down." She looked at me and nodded with a gentle smile that was the most enchanting thing I had ever seen. Suddenly, the plane shuddered and I pulled her close to me for protection. I could feel her tiny body next to mine. She was so delicate and fragile. After the shaking stopped, I let go of her, gave her a nod and next thing I knew she was gone. I looked back at the buff guy, and he looked back. One by one everyone lined up and jumped. The plane shook again and skewed to the front. At this point I knew the plane was going to fall. I looked down at the ocean and the passengers like little ants trying to stay on top of the water. I looked at the little island to the left and examined it. It wasn't that far. We could probably swim to shore. I took a step back and jumped off the plane. I hit the water hard. It felt like fifty needles were plunged to my back. I went underwater for about 30 seconds and my lifejacket brought me back up.

I looked around and I saw the familiar faces of the people on the plane. They were splashing everywhere trying to keep on top of the water. They water was not that cold. I looked around frantically to find the beautiful girl that jumped in a few minutes before me. Finally I caught her gaze. She was looking at me, and I thought I saw a little grin. I started swimming in her direction. I reached her and said, "Are you okay?"

"I'm fine. You hurt?"

"No" I grinned at her with amazement of how caring and sensitive she was.

I realized I cared for her too, more than any other stranger. She was a special kind of stranger. I took her hand and said.

"Lets go. There is an island near us. We can at least shelter there until the rescue team arrives."

"Okay" was all she said and nodded.

We started swimming left to the island. Thank God our life jackets were keeping us on top of the water or else we would be very tired after swimming a mile. We swam, and swam, and everyone followed. We looked like a bunch of birds migrating together. Finally about a 100 yard away I saw the beautiful golden sand. I laughed at myself. Never in my life had I thought I would be this happy to see sand.

Everyone was very happy. This of course meant that we could

survive for at least three more days. Everyone was very eager to see solid land. It was like heaven on earth. We swam harder and harder and finally reached the shore. I was so tired I crashed onto the sand and I knocked out.

I woke up hours later to the voice of the beautiful girl. I opened my eyes and saw her charming smile.. I was so happy to be alive. I adjusted myself to a sitting position and looked back at the girl. I suddenly realized that I didn't know her name.

"Thanks! Am sorry but umm... I didn't catch your name."

"My name is Emily. Nice to meet you." she gave me a big smile.

"Nice to meet you too."

We sat there for hours and talked. She told me everything about her life, her family, and herself. The next time I looked away from her face I noticed that the sun was setting.

One of the guys had a lighter and lit a fire while five others went to collect wood. It was getting pretty cold. We made a big fire and sat around it. We didn't have much food other then a few candy bars. We all got cozy around the fire and tried to make the best of all the time we had together. In this situation anyone else would think this was the most horrible day of their life, but ironically I thought it was the best. It was perfect. I was sitting around a camp fire with an awesome girl listening to funny stories people told us about their lives. I didn't see anything wrong with my day as far as I was concerned.. I was pretty sure I was in love with Emily. She was so perfect. If this was a dream, I didn't want to wake up. We passed most of the night around the fire. When everyone seemed to be tired, we all found a little place around the fire and got comfortable for the night. In the morning, I got up and went to the shore for a while. I looked at the ocean and thought for a long while. When I went to join the others everyone was awake. Well almost everyone. I made my way over to where Emily was sleeping like an angel. I thought I would let her sleep a little more. I sat next to her and waited. When she finally woke up she flashed a quick smile at me.

"Hey there sleepy" I said.

"Hi." She answered.

We got up and joined the others.

The plan for the day was to go searching for anything we could eat and wait until the rescue team arrived. We went into the woods together to gather wood. We walked and talked about the things we liked to do in our free time. We talked about random topics and answered each other's questions. I felt so happy with her. It was like she completed me. We finished each other's sentences and had so much in common. We finally made our way back to the camp area. We looked around and saw people running in one directions. I froze at that moment.

WE WERE SAVED!! THE RESCUE TEAM ARRIVED!!!!!!

I felt so happy, and I grabbed Emily's hand and dragged her after me as I ran toward the ship that came to our rescue.

I made a silent promise to myself to never let go of Emily's hand after that.

Death Watch by Jessie Van Amburg

The man's face had been crushed by the cruel butt of a rifle, the bones shattered, crimson trailing down his pale cheek. He stared up at me like an animal, hungry for warmth, starving for compassion. I tore off his bloodstained, ragged shirt and was greeted by his ribcage, protruding from his sunken chest, a ghastly vision of Death. Scars and bruises marked his arm like tattoos, leaving a map of pain and sorrow on the frail flesh, dry and brittle like cheap paper. Only a year ago, I would have been horrified at this sight. I would have been shocked at the extent of violence on this man. I would have looked into his soulless eyes and wept.

But nothing shocked me anymore. I was at Auschwitz.

The man screamed and wept at the pain while I dabbed antiseptic on his wounds, but I was deaf to his cries. I was ice; I was stone. I had to be, unless I wanted to go insane in this hell on Earth, this veritable underworld of human despair. The salt of his tears burned into his broken face, and still he wept, begging me to kill him; to spare him from the misery, and I still did nothing, just continued to sew up his shattered face.

On the inside my heart was breaking.

Eventually he succumbed to the pain and fell unconscious, leaving me to my work in peace. I finished cleaning and stitching his face, and covered him with the white hospital sheet like I would cover a child, his waxy skin contrasting sharply with the blanched blanket.

I was on what the others called 'Death Watch', where I would sit with the patients through the night, and prepare the dead bodies for burning. It was a grim, sinister task, and I hated it, but I was junior to the camp and thus expected to have the worst tasks. I kept vigil in a hard wooden chair and tried to comfort my wards and keep their spirits up, although they had no spirit left. One elderly woman pleaded to her God to take away her pain. A French man sobbed silently in his bed. The man with the broken face could say nothing, but groans would occasionally escape from his cracked lips while he slept. The tiny room was a Purgatory, and life kept these poor souls enslaved and chained in their own pain and suffering. I gave them small amounts of water, though I knew it would kill them faster, and they thanked me with hoarse voices. The little boy who had miraculously survived selection was now stricken with a raging fever that made him hallucinate. He pointed

to my blonde hair and said he could see a halo.

I hardly felt like an angel.

Night crept on, making the sickroom as dark as the patients' despair. I held the little boy's hand while he was violently sick into a pail, sobbing and calling for his mother. I trickled water in the French man's mouth, and wiped sweat from the German woman's brow while she tossed in her sleep.

The broken man lay silent, in a state between sleep and death, his unseeing eyes staring at the clean white ceiling. When I went to his bed to check on him, I saw a single tear suspended on his shattered face, perfect as a pearl on a woman's necklace. It was a symbol of sorrowful beauty; it was miniature Taj Mahal; it was grief on the face of a broken world. It was Auschwitz.

And looking at him, I knew he would not be alive in the morning.

There was a surprise selection in the morning. I was not prepared for it; my patients were unprepared for it. When the Kapo swept in, the bowl of soup I was feeding to the little boy nearly clattered on the floor.

"What's this?" I asked. "What's going on?" The old woman cried out in fear.

"Selection, Fraulein," he said, his thin lips forming a cruel smile. "We can't keep around dying Jews forever."

I bit my lips to hold back my anger. "There is no need for that in here," I said in an undertone, not wanting them to hear.

The Kapo scanned the room, smirking at the patients who were struggling to sit up in bed, who were trying to look alive. The broken man lay silent in his bed. The Kapo smelled the stench of fear and loss, and laughed.

"There is every need for that here," he said. "In fact, more than ever. The only people who go to this hospital are the ones who are already half dead. There's no point in keeping them for long. Besides, we need space. Half the lazy Jews here go to the hospital just to get out of work."

"But I can have most of these people up and out of the hospital if you just give me more time. They can be back working again within the week." I was clutching at straws, trying my best not to let them down.

He laughed again. "We don't need workers, we want them dead. And if they don't die from disease, or from the work, it's off to the chimneys they go."

ill. But the *kapo* was looking at me; I had to die. I swallowed hard.

"Which ones are you taking today?" I said in a whisper.

"All of them. None of them are worth keeping around, my dear Frauline, so why waste space?" He laughed at his own joke, like a hyena laughs before it kills. I choked back bile and turned to my poor patients.

"Our kind *kapo* has ordered showers for you all," I said, hating myself for the lies. They all looked at me expectantly. "Hygiene is important to getting better, and it is his belief that it will make you well."

So they all shuffled out, my dear patients, as well as they could, and smiled wearily at me, a small hope shining in their glassy eyes. They trusted me that I would lead them to no harm. I tried to wave back and could not, and instead only prayed that they would understand that I had no choice. The *kapo* followed them out, looking over his shoulder at me at the doorway. He smiled a knowing smile and then, to my horror, winked.

He winked. Winked, as if the game of death was a joke and I was a willing partner.

I could feel my breakfast coming up into my mouth at the sight of his complicit cruelty and turned away. He shut the door behind them, leaving the room filled with a terrible, knowledgeable silence.

The broken man stayed on his bed, a silent witness to the horrible affair, and was moved out to the crematories in the late afternoon. The tear on his cheek did not last much longer after his body had become cold and stiff. But the memory of it was burned into my mind forever, that single pear of absolute sorrow and despair, a child of disaster, the most tragically beautiful thing that I had ever seen in my life.

It was Auschwitz.

Rain by Han Sol Choi

The rain is falling. As if God Himself has punched a hole through the sky, big droplets of dark, murky water are spiraling towards the ground mercilessly, splattering on streets, people, umbrellas, cars. You look out your window and something feels unsettling in the pit of your stomach. Here you are again, trapped inside this musty one room apartment, cramped in the middle of a block too small to hold all its inhabitants inside, stuck in a city that's too busy and too big to notice your frail and weary existence reflected on the rain tainted window. You sigh as you direct your gaze away from the chaos 12 floors below – chaos that had no beginning; that will never have an ending.

It was only supposed to be a short, rejuvenating, 10-minute break, but somehow you find the minute hand has cheated you once again. The constant tick of the second hand drives your mind insane as the minute hand shifts yet again to mark the 34th minute of your "short" break. The mundane repertoire of your life has caught you in a strong and unforgiving bind, and your once jubilant and dazzling persona has faded away to something less bold, less dramatic, less interesting, less... you. Somewhere between your high school graduation and junior year in college, you've changed. As the clear, transparent jewels of rain that seemed to glitter with the bright city lights dirtied into gray swirls of nothingness, the excitement of college life has melted away with the seasons, each time more quickly and much easily than the last. You try to think back into the past to conjure up something – anything – and you feel as though your brain is flailing, its little arms waving frantically around to grab unto some kind of answer; some kind of epiphany.

And then – a burst of light. It's short, and it's small, but it's significant. You feel those short arms of your mind reaching toward the small piece of memory that set it ablaze for a fraction of a second. And then, you see. You remember. The summer before your freshman year in college. How glorious it was. The warm Californian sun caressing your peaceful body as you wiggle between the individual blades of grass, whose sweet dewy scent drifts up your nose, sucks into your pores, and intoxicates your soul. You're in your own world now. You almost feel invincible, as your army of grass and your shield of light rays defend your body. You drown out the callings of your name by familiar voices, traced with an undertone of panic, as you take in another deep breath. It's so sweet – too sweet. You close your eyes and you're instantly carried swiftly away to pure bliss, the sky your blanket, the field your bed. But Life swoops back in to claim your heart as the earth shakes and trembles below you. Threatening footsteps encircle the perimeter around you, forcing you to tear open your eyes and groggily focus your attention to the world at hand. And its mouth opens. Closes. And opens some more. Something about Mom. And your kid brother. Dead. Accident. Blood. Cars. Words are forcefully jammed through your ears but you don't listen – you only hear. Nothing is registering, and you panic, as you notice the sun hiding behind a cloud, casting a shadow upon your small body, now defenseless and bare. The grass smells bittersweet. And all of a sudden, just like that, you don't want to be here anymore. Your world has been ripped away from you, and you know, it's never coming back. And the small little arms of your mind fall limply at its sides, letting go of this flash of light.

The wailing of the umpteenth ambulance as it whizzes past your window in the murky night is deaf to your ears. You feel nothing, you see nothing, you hear nothing. Somewhere in the back of your mind, squished between the layers of algebraic functions and literary terms, a mental alarm goes off, reminding you of your class in an hour. Your head robotically turns to look out the window... only to find that it's still raining. And that unsettling feeling becomes your friend, as you watch the cars race by, the

people scurry forward, and the lights flash bright – all the while the murky globs of rain plunge down from the big hole in the sky.

Soulful Sonnet

A sonnet is a poem written in 14 lines, each consisting of 10 syllables and following the rhyme scheme ABAB, CDCD, EFEF, GG. The word sonnet means "little song." Sonnets are often about love, but they can certainly be about anything.

The Secret Meet by Jessica Rodriguez

Behold! Two lovers who secretly meet:
Joining each other in soft embraces,
Their greetings are smiles and kisses sweet
With caution and joy mixed in their faces.
No matter what goes or what they endure
Through thick and thin and through brick and feather;
Their love for each other is strong and pure,
They'd do anything to be together.
You see how the girl leans on the boy's chest?
You see how the boy softly strokes her hair?
And both of them seem to be at calm rest,
Even though much suspense is in the air.
After a while, their "good-bye's" they say
And again they will meet another day.

Heralding Haikus

A haiku is a traditional Japanese poem consisting of 17 syllables spread out over three lines following the pattern 5, 7, 5. While haikus have typically been about nature, because of the evolution of various human societies, they may now be about anything that one deems central to the human experience.

Little Leaf by Ivana Velez

Little leaf floats down
Is caught by furious wind
'Til gone forever

Foot Prints by Ivana Velez

Footprints mark the ground
Soon they fade away for good
Until new ones come

Demons by Oscar Jimenez

Demons that once spoke
Have been vanquished from my realm
As I sleep again

Ring by Haik Oroudjian

The big circle moon
Looks like a giant gray lake
I hope to go there

War by Angelica Gonzalez

War keeps us apart
It's like a transparent shield –
Move away from shield

Sunset by Kathy Recinos

It is to die for
Over mountains there it goes
bright'ning up the night

Free Verse

The Wind is My Friend by Adriana Aguilera

The wind is my friend
Blowing kisses to me

When I'm cold, she gives me warmth
When I'm not she gives me a breeze

She'll do anything I ask as long as I say "please."

She plays with the trees
Dances with the leaves
Whispers secrets in my ear
And hums a sweet tune
For only me to hear

She travels everywhere
And tells me of her tales
She offers adventure
And delivers without fail
Even though she's just air
I love her

Again and again
Because she is the wind

And the wind is my friend.

America's Choice by Alicia Defoe

I sit here wondering
How the world is today...
Did we make the right choice
Or are we going to pay?

Now that we made history
Will the racism end...
Or did we open the door
For another war to begin?

the faith and hope for the best.
Now that America's decision is done...
For our world to become a better place
We will all unite as one.

being accepted by being you and no one else.
— Cassandra Villela

Defining Moments

What is friendship?

Friendship is My Friend Sean by Yesenia Ramirez

Friendship is my friend Sean Kyle Padden. He is one of the most amazing people in my life. We've been there for each other through thick and thin. I just want other people to know about Sean. I met him one year ago on November 3, 2007. My sister Nicole introduced me to him on a camping trip in Santa Barbara. I knew from the second that we made eye contact that we would get along and become great friends. Sean came off as a sweet, caring and outgoing person.

Here are some facts about him: He was born on Christmas, 1986. He is both Irish and Filipino. He attended high school in Granada Hills. After he graduated, he went to college to become a respiratory therapist. He now works at Harbor UCLA Medical Center. I asked him if he likes his job and he says that even though he deals with some scary stuff, he does.

In addition to working as a respiratory therapist, he co-owns with his brother a company called RPM. RPM stands for Racing Performance Motorsport. Sean owns a Honda s2000. It's a sick ride. Well, on Sean's free time he likes to workout, play basketball, skate and go for fun rides all around the beautiful town of Huntington Beach.

I got Sean into skating. We always enjoy having skate lessons together and being silly. Sean and I have many good memories together. We have only known each other for one year, but it feels like we have known each other for so much longer. He is a great person to talk to if you ever need someone to talk to or if you are having a rough day. He always makes my day the best. I can always count on him.

Sean is a good, loving person. We both believe in God, which is another reason why our bond is so strong.

Sean is an amazing friend. I consider him to be a gift from God. I know for a fact that we will continue our friendship and we will always be there for each other no matter what. I just wanted people to know about him. Sean leads a happy, busy, adventurous and healthy life. He is a friend who is very dear to me. I'm glad that we are friends.

What is love?

Love is not what you see in movies or read in books. It's not about bells and whistles or butterflies in your stomach. It's about

What is hope?

Hope makes us stronger
A bridge that connects people –
Do you want to cross?
— Laurence Reyes

What do you hope for?

In what has been the most important year of high school, I've been doing a lot of hoping. I've been mainly hoping for my future, which at times appears so murky and unsure, while there are other times I feel as if I can see it so clearly. After working hard for three long years, I can only hope that every AP class I have taken, every club that I have joined, and every extra hour I have spent studying will pay off. As I fill out my application to my dream school, New York University, I hope that my words convey all my strengths. I have dreamed about that day sometime in April when I receive a creamy envelope with NYU's purple logo embossed on it. I'll open it and hopefully it'll read something like: "New York University is glad to announce your acceptance into its College of Arts and Sciences."

*Dreams that become hope
Revealing the hidden wants
Will they become real?*

- Maria Robelo

What do you hope for?

I hope to do really well in high school and to graduate from high school and to move on to college and to graduate from college and to then become a vet. I hope my mom becomes a registered nurse and that she spends more time with me. I hope Obama can fix the problems we're having and get everyone back on their feet again. I hope my dad's cancer goes away and that he feels new again. — Zella Achdjian

What do you hope for?

I hope that next year I will still be at GHS. I hope to not go to Daily. I hope to find a good job and move out of the house. But for that to happen, the stock market needs to go up and our economy needs to get better. Hopefully our new president can help with that. — Omar Romero

What do you hope for?

I hope and believe that Barack Obama will make the U.S. a better country to live in and that he will accept the Armenian Genocide as he promised. — Anna Abovyan

What do you hope for?

I hope this world changes like it never did before – that it erases all the problems that are being caused in this world; I hope that everyone has the same rights and equal respect. I can't even see the different skin colors; all I see are people who want to live like everyone else. – Phien Le

What do you hope for?

I hope for peace for everyone. I hope we can all start to come together instead of having war. I hope that our new president has the strength to change our world's chaos. I hope he can make things better between our people and the government. I know that people all around hope for a better day where certain products won't be so expensive and that our men and women make it home from the war. I am hopeful. I feel that more people should have hope in their hearts because it is what keeps us going. – Miranda Aguirre

Time Travel

What if you could mix and match world leaders, fictional characters and time spans? What if Sarah Palin were the main character in a Shakespeare play?

Well, here is one student's *Hamlet* soliloquy rewritten as though from the pen of Governor Palin.

To be or not to be... by Kirsten Cangco

To live or to die? That's what I'm wonderin'.
Should I keep sufferin'
With all them nasty shenanigans
Or should I be a maverick
And end 'em instead? Dyin,' sleepin' –
There ain't no difference in dyin' we just end
All a them heartaches and other troubles
That we're forced to live with – and that's something
We all wish for. Dyin,' Sleepin'
Sleepin,' maybe to dream – now that must be the catch.
Since who knows what we'll dream of
After our lives are done.
Darlin' that's somethin' to worry about. It's no wonder
Why we decide to prolong our sufferin'.
After all, does anybody really wanna deal with what life throws
at us?
There's elites who'll manipulate you, concited people who'll
insult you...
Love cannot always be returned, you know; justice has slow
wheels.
Those in office show disrespect, and Joe the Plumber is being
taken advantage of...
Would it be easier to just call it quits? You betcha!

Who would want to endure such a life?

Unless they were afraid of somethin' after death
Maybe of that untraveled place I can see
Where no one has returned from. It puzzles us
And makes us stick to our own faults
Instead of creatin' more.

Our conscience makes us cowards
And all our decisions
Are ruined by too much thinkin'.
The spontaneity in the moment
Is ruined by this same, you know,
And it fails to become action.
[Wink.]

Mind Travel

Akin to stretching for the farthest reaches of time is stretching to the ends of our imagination – and our skill. Here are some tips on how to make it to the next level of a popular game.

The Key to Act 5 of *Gears of War* by Jose Zafra

First off, you and Delta Squad start off at Timgad Station. This part is relatively simple, eliminate the Locust threat and wait for the hijacked train to pass by. The only challenges to this chapter are the random Emergence Holes and Locust Snipers who take position on top of buildings in the surrounding area. You will fight and fight and then after a while you hear the train approaching. When the train is coming go the platform and the cute scene will play. Baird and Cole will be left behind amongst all the chaos. The next part is simple too, the main threat here are Theron Guards with torque bows and Drones with Lancers equipped with the chainsaw bayonet. As you fight your way through, you will climb to the top of one of the train cars where the Reavers start to attack you. To survive, gun the Reavers down and the door will unlock. This next part is simple. Fight through waves of wretches and get to the main car before they cut you loose. Once you get to the front car, there will be weapons and ammunition to replenish your arsenal. The weapons there are: a sniper rifle, torque bow, and fragmentation grenades. I suggest you get torque and lancer because these are the most useful weapons General Ram. Finally, you made it! Oh no, it's General Raam, to defeat him use torque to take down his Kryll shield and the lancer to hit his body. Just remember to stay in the light or you may be devoured. Repeat torque and lancer until he falls. Once he is defeated, you will get a cutscene and you will get an achievement telling you that you have beaten the game. Enjoy and I hope that this tutorial helps you beat the greatest game *Gears of War*.

Lights, No Camera, Action

"The Belle of Amherst" by Vanuhi Karanetan

... literature's most famous poet comes to life in the play "The Belle of Amherst" by William Luce at the Actors Forum Theater in Hollywood. The play centers on the life and works of Emily Dickinson, who is beautifully portrayed by Kate Randolph Burns. The play in itself is an amazing representation of Emily's daily life and inspiration for her poetry; however, when performed by Kate it turns into a one woman spectacular. Her acting skills not only portray Emily in a historically accurate manner, but they do so in a luring, captivating manner. Kate's ability to guide the reader into understanding the archaic language of Emily's time further reinstates her as an amazing actress.

Another factor that added to the play's success was the setting. The Actors Forum Theater created an atmosphere where the audience could feel- almost touch the life of Emily Dickinson. The close knit space was a beautiful way to capture the audiences' attention and keep the play interesting.

In all, "The Belle of Amherst" could not have been better performed had Emily Dickinson herself taken center stage.

Reel Reviews

The Princess and the Barrio Boy by Laura Alvarez

The Princess and the Barrio Boy was written by Steven Paul and Tony Plana. Tony Plana directed the movie. It is an excellent movie because it has a little bit of each genre. It has romance, comedy and a whole lot of drama. I really enjoy watching this movie because the actors do an excellent job. The movie is so real and there are so many things that a person can get out of this movie. One of the most important themes of this movie is that you should never judge anyone because of how they dress, where they live, etc. That's what the main character, Sirena, played by Marisol Nichols, learns. So does her father. At first, when Sirena sees Sol, played by Nicholas Gonzalez, and hears that he's from

Alarming Anecdotes

Day at the Polls by Suren Aydinyan

Not knowing what to expect, I woke up on the morning of November 4, 2008 at 5:30 and started to get ready to work the polls. I ate a bowl of cereal and a few granola bars before heading off in the cold to Maple Park. I arrived to see that I was the first one there. I waited patiently outside. Before long, the rest of the poll workers showed up - all except the main person, our inspector.

With 7:00 AM nearing and our inspector nowhere in sight, we began to panic, thinking that maybe something had happened to

East LA, she thinks he's a bad boy who gets bad grades. As she gets to know him she sees how she is wrong. Sol turns out to be the sweetest person who works hard in and out of school, and he helps Sirena find the person she really is. There is so much more to the movie, but the central theme is why I think it's a great movie.

The Dark Knight by Aram Hakpian

The Dark Knight is part of the new series of Batman movies directed by Christopher Nolan. It stars Christian Bale as Batman and Heath Ledger as the Joker. The plot takes the viewer through a roller coaster of twists and turns. The movie could have easily ended in three places. The repetition of the three potential climaxes adds to the intense suspense and makes the ending almost impossible to predict. When compared to previous installments of Batman, this one clearly stands out - not only because of the brilliantly crafted action sequences that consist of minimal CG, but also the exceptional acting by the late Heath Ledger. Over all, this is a very well-made movie and definitely worth \$11 and a Friday night.

I Am Sam by Joseph Choi

I Am Sam, directed by Jessie Nelson, is a very delicate and beautiful film. Sean Penn plays the part of Sam Dawson a man who has the mental capacity of a seven year old and who has to raise his child Lucy, played by Dakota Fanning. The story involves the relationship between Sam and his daughter Lucy and how emotional it becomes when Lucy is smarter than her father. Throughout the movie, Sam battles for custody of Lucy, and it is very heartbreaking to watch as the love between Sam and Lucy grows and how it affects them. Michelle Pfeiffer plays the lawyer who sees this love and decides to defend Sam for custody of his daughter. Her involvement also plays a big role as Sam develops an attraction towards her. This movie will leave you speechless with its intricate plot and amazing soundtrack by the Beatles.

her. Already a line of patriotic voters ready to cast their votes for the next president had formed. It was 7:00 AM and still our inspector is lost. With no ballots, booths or machines it would be impossible for these people to vote.

We called the superior district, and within minutes emergency ballots were brought in. By now, the line outside has extended to the end of the street with maybe 75 anxious voters. As they saw that the line was not moving, they began to ask questions and to get cranky. They had to go to work in a manner of minutes. Multiple people asked me for the voter hotline to complain about this disaster. I began to walk through the line and ask the voters if they would like to use the emergency ballots. Many were hesitant and chose instead to wait for the actual ballots to arrive.

With the inspector not picking up her phone and nowhere to be found, the city offices promised to bring new equipment within the next hour.

At 7:30, after hearing numerous complaints, the Election Protection people arrived. They began to question voters, and they asked me questions as well. "How many voters have left because of your mistake?"

I got on the defensive and said that this was not my fault. "I am only a student clerk." If there was anyone to blame, it would be the inspector. Well, 8:00 came around and the line had not lessened. Only a few voters had chosen to use the emergency ballots.

At 8:30, the inspector showed up with her car completely totaled. It turns out that in her rush to get everything set up, she was in an accident downtown.

We went to open her trunk and saw that the equipment was pinned against the walls. A park ranger working nearby saw us struggling with the equipment. He pulled out a crowbar and continued to try to pry out the boxes. After about 15 minutes of struggling and chaos, we got the equipment out and sprinted to get everything set up. By 9:15 AM voters were beginning to vote. My co-workers seemed clueless about the process. I had to spend ten minutes describing how it all works to them. Here I was a 17 year-old who cannot vote explaining to men and women more than twice my age how the voting process works.

Death At My Feet by Suren Aydinyan

Nearly two weeks ago I attended Monster Massive, one of the biggest raves of the year. After hours on the dance floor, my friend and I made the long journey back to the entrance to use the restroom. Little did I know that it would be the weirdest and scariest restroom experience of my life. Expecting to do business as usual then wash my hands and leave, I entered to find filth everywhere. The urine-soaked floor, the hundreds of men under the influence, and the near lethal stench of feces was too much to handle. I tried my best to be as quick and effective as possible. After waiting in line and using the urinal, I turned around to wash my hands and suddenly the man in front of me collapsed. He went face first into a pool of urine. He lay there motionless. So, there I stood, expecting the countless other people in the bathroom to rush to help the man. But all that happened was the turn of a few heads. *A MAN IS DYING ON THE BATHROOM FLOOR AND NO ONE IS DOING ANYTHING ABOUT IT* I thought. Thinking that I must act in some way, I ran out and grabbed one of the event supervisors. The man used his walkie-talkie, and within minutes paramedics arrives with a stretcher.

The man was pronounced dead and was rolled off through the crowd into an ambulance.

When I went home that morning, I reflected on my experience at the concert. I realized that I had witnessed a man die in front of a crowd of people, and I was the only one in the right state of mind to seek help. Though my efforts were not ultimately successful, I know in my heart that I at least tried in some way to help. I could have gone further perhaps and maybe given CPR, but then again, how many people in this world would actually go through thick and thin (and urine and feces) to save the life of a complete drug-infused stranger? While it is easy for me to say I could have done more, when you are caught in the moment, the emotional strain on your body and mind make it extremely difficult to act.

Jet Ski Scare by Jonathan Rodriguez

For the past five years, there has been a tradition going on in my family. Every Memorial weekend my whole family gathers up and travels to Laughlin, Nevada for a family vacation. We hook up the boat and jet-skis to the trucks and take them to the Colorado River. This tradition had been something I always looked for. But on my third year of going to Laughlin, Nevada our family vacation was not as pretty as it seemed.

As we left early in the morning for the long weekend to Laughlin, we all were excited about the trip. It was our first year going with our jet-skis so we did not have much experience in them, but all we cared about was putting them in the river and riding them. So after five hours of a long drive we finally got to our hotel and casino. We registered for the rooms, got an hour of rest and ate some breakfast. After that we took the boat and jet-skis to the loading zone, my brother and I soon rode off, and enjoyed every single moment of it. The river had a fast current, but it did not really matter to us. As we were all the way down the river passed all the casinos, I decided to turn at a rapid paste. As soon as I knew it, my jet-ski was flipped over, and my life jacket was loose on me. The current of the river kept dragging me yards away from the jet-ski. My brother in the other hand was not in sight, and it was hard to swim with a loose life jacket on. Luckily my brother had spotted me and came to get me. I then got onto my jet-ski and rode to shore.

During this whole incident, so many thoughts had run through my mind. I didn't know what might have happened had my brother not been there to rescue me. I never imagined that something terrible as that would ever happen, but I guess I just simply let my excitement control me. I didn't bother to check my safety requirements. On the way back, as I loaded the jet-skis on the trailer, I told my parents what had happened. They were upset at me for not being more careful in checking my equipment before leaving for the river. After that incident, my parents sold the jet-skis and told us to just remain with the boat. We did as we were ordered, and, well, you can say I learned a valuable lesson.

Conclusion, I never forget it at third year in our family vacation. It truly was one vacation to remember and learn from. After that whole incident, the other vacations were not the same again. I always had in mind that time when I was close to drowning. I am very thankful everything went how it did.

Amusing Anecdotes

Life Can Be Embarrassing by Joe Martorana

Have you ever been embarrassed? Well, two of the most memorable embarrassments happened to me at the same place – Michael's craft store. So, I was there with my sister buying stuff for a project. We finally got all that we needed and started heading for the line. While we were in line, I decided to give my sister a hug to thank her for buying me supplies. Little did I know: my sister and I were in separate lines. I ended up giving this random lady a big hug! I hugged her until I heard my sister say, "Joe! What are you doing?!" After that, I just hid behind my sister until we left.

The second most memorably embarrassing moment was also at Michael's. My mom and little sister were in a long line buying some stuff for my sister's project. I went and sat on a bench in the front of the store. At this point I was getting pretty impatient and bored, so I rested my arm on the glass shelf...then all of a sudden: CRASH! The glass shelf slid off the frame and shattered along with everything on it. All of the talking and beeping from the ringing up of the items stopped, and all eyes were on me. I just felt my stomach sink. I walked out until my mom and little sister were done.

More Memorable Moments

Us vs. the Pasadena Bulldogs by Simon Pascher

Last week, we played the Pasadena bulldogs in a gridiron game. We played at home on Moyses Field. It was a very interesting game because it was really close in the beginning, but then, after a while, things became much different. The final score was 35-6 Glendale. It was a hard-fought battle.

This was the first game since my injury where I got to start on defense. I had to sit out until I healed. This was the game where I got my spot back. On defense, I got twelve tackles and one sack. On offense, I scored one touchdown with two carries for fifty yards. I also had one reception for about thirty-five yards.

On defense, our team did pretty well. We only let Pasadena score on us once. Our defense held ground throughout the game. It was a collective team effort that allowed us to win the game. We were popping people throughout the whole game. Pasadena's quarterback could not get any yards on us. He was

pretty skilled, though. He just didn't really have any idea that would give him any time. I actually felt bad for him because we kept on hitting him like a dummy.

On offense, I finally got to play again since my injury. Last year I won "Offensive Player of the Year," but my new coach doesn't really know how I play, so he hasn't let me play that much. But after this game he has started me more often.

In this game I only got two carries, but I made the most of the while I could. On my first carry I scored a nine yard touchdown. My second carry was like forty yards. Then I had a reception of thirty-five yards. It was a hard catch because I had to catch the ball off balance, and I stumbled. I then broke through tackle but couldn't reach the end zone.

This game was entertaining because it was high scoring and because there were numerous contact hits. This game was the best game so far for me because I got to play again after my injury. It was definitely a confidence booster. It was also a great game for the team because everyone got to contribute to the victory. The Pasadena Bulldogs put on a pretty good game, but we came out on top.

Science Snippet

To the Stars by Gohar Khechumyan

I absolutely love astronomy, and so I decided to write my Science Snippet on Voyagers 1 & 2. Though this may not sound interesting to some, it fascinates me. I would love to see what becomes of the two spacecrafts in my lifetime.

Both Voyager 1 and 2 were launched in 1977 a month apart. Their mission was to explore the outer planets, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune. The second Voyager left Uranus' orbit in 1989 and both are now headed through the terminal shock and into interstellar space. There is enough power supply in the two Voyagers to continue to successfully guide the missions until about 2020.

The first Voyager spacecraft was launched on September 5, 1977 to discover the solar system. The spacecraft has not only explored our solar system, but it has gone beyond our galaxy. It initially left our galaxy in 2004 and is now in the heliosphere. The heliosphere is a bubble in space which exists between the galaxy and the stars and the sun's heat is unable to reach this point. Our scientists have not been able to stay updated in the spacecraft's journey because the solar-wind detector from the spacecraft stopped working in 1990. According to Wikipedia, the Voyager 1, as of September 26, 2008 (31 years since the launch), the Voyager is 9.94 billion miles away from the sun.

The Voyager 2, sister to the original Voyager 1, was initially launched on August 20, 1977 to explore Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune. The success of the second voyager lies in its record of being the first ever spacecraft to travel near Uranus and Neptune, subsequently completing the Planetary Grand Tour. The Planetary Grand Tour is a plan to send spacecrafts/probes to the far planets. This plan is rare because in order for the spacecraft to reach all the outer planets, they [the outer planets] need to be arranged in a certain way, and this arrangement that is convenient for the spacecraft merely occurs every 176 years. During its journey, the Voyager 2 came really close to Jupiter in the summer of 1979. With its high-tech cameras and other scientific instruments, the spacecraft discovered liquid water on one of Jupiter's moons. It was additionally able to determine that the Great Red Spot moves in a counterclockwise direction. Although, finding volcanic activity on the satellite Io was probably the greatest and unexpected discovery Jupiter.

Dinner Directions

Lemon and Salmon by Mikaiah Lei

My father and I enjoy making this dish. Take one boneless piece of wild salmon, wash it and cover it with sea salt, parsley, paprika, black pepper, garlic and dill. Use whatever measurements you wish. Then make the lemon sauce. Take one big lemon and cut it in half. Juice the lemon. Add to the juice one egg yolk (no whites) and a half cube of butter. Mix and cook over a low fire until you have a beautiful salmon dinner you can eat with rice.

Gogli by Adrine Babakhanyan

Ingredients for one serving:

1-2 eggs
1-2 tablespoons of sugar
½ teaspoon of vanilla extract or cocoa

Directions:

In a bowl, break the egg(s) and put the yolks in a bowl. You do not need the egg whites to make gogli.

Add the tablespoons of sugar and mix with a mixer for 7 to 10 minutes. Mix until it hardens.

Add the ½ teaspoon of vanilla or cocoa and mix for about 1 minute.

Finally, enjoy the gogli with barbari bread.

Guest Guide

A Night Out in Hollywood by Eun Sun Cho

Pre-Planning:

- Make sure to purchase some tickets for the show *Wicked*, or whatever show is playing, at the Pantages Theater in Hollywood
- If you have been spoiled by California weather, prepare some warm clothing for a brisk, chilly California night.
- Get your comfy walking shoes ready!

That Night:

Start off the night by finding a nice Thai restaurant for an early dinner. The recommended restaurant would be Pailin Thai Cuisine (of no relation to Ms. Sarah Palin) on the corner of Hollywood and Gramercy; it offers a quaint atmosphere with great food, killer prices, and great service that includes: Thai dramas played on television, a cup of water that never seems to empty, and food brought to you by an adorable Thai youngster. Street parking is available, but if it is a busy night, feel free to park at the mini-plaza on the corner of Hollywood and Western. It is a walk of merely couple blocks. Once you walk back to your car, feel free to purchase a freshly blended, delicious, refreshing, fruit smoothie from Jamba Juice which provides you with some sustenance for your night-o-fun.

From there, drive west on Hollywood Blvd until you pass Vine St. and the Pantages Theater. Then begin to search for street parking. Then say goodbye to your car and prepare for some healthy walking. Make sure you do a lot of wandering- the more you wander, the better the experience will be. Wander west on Hollywood Blvd for several blocks. There are various stores to look at and explore- vintage stores, vinyl stores, shoe stores, costume stores, food stores, gift shops. As you are wandering, keep an eye out for a newsstand of *The Onion* because they are very common in Hollywood, and this is the best part of town to snag a copy.

A necessary stop on the itinerary should be Amoeba Music. If you walk south on Ivar, you will reach Amoeba on Sunset Blvd. It is the world's largest independently owned record store! It buys and sells records, DVDs, and CDs. The prices are amazing, and there's an unbelievable variety of music offered in CDs, albums, and cassettes. The ambience of the store is quite unique. Its tall walls are covered from floor to ceiling with band posters. Its outside walls are covered by indie murals. Sometimes there are live performances happening in the store, and there is

complimentary merchandise, such as buttons, bumper stickers, calendars, stickers, magnets, and other such characteristics that make this store so unique. There is something for everyone at Amoeba!

As it nears the time of your show at the Pantages, start making your way back to the theater. Prepare yourself for a very entertaining few hours of singing and dancing, even if you usually do not enjoy singing and dancing.

After the show has ended, marvel at its wonder. If you are interested in visiting Guitar Center, an enormous musical instrument store, AKA a haven for all musicians, or long to attend a show at a classic Hollywood venue, tune in for the next update on Guest Guide!

Puzzling Puzzles

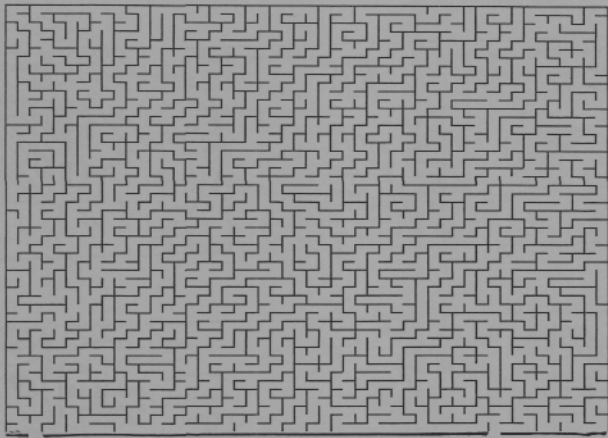
Messed-Up Headlines by Andrew Thompson

Find the 10 real news headlines mixed in with 15 fake ones. Bonus: figure out what they are trying to say.

1. Football Caught During Stadium Robbery
2. Man Killed Over Phone
3. Man Robs Convenience Store With Lottery Tickets
4. Bird Helps Basketball Team Recover From Losing Streak
5. Bonus Permits Enable 809 Hunters to Kill Two Deer
6. Woman Recycles Books on Famous Scientists
7. Frustrated Mother Leaves Delivery Room With Two Kids
8. Skier Trips On Mountain
9. Teacher Strikes Idle Kids
10. Punk Beats Rock on latest charts
11. Material in Diapers Could Help Make the Deserts Bloom
12. Miners Refuse to Work After Death
13. Car Accident Deemed Intentional
14. Policeman Shoots Man With Knife
15. Innocent Man Found Guilty
16. Artist Realizes Fantastic Idea
17. Toronto Suspects Hate Crime
18. Attorney Defends Attacks
19. Widows Greet Husbands at Church Service
20. Dog Trainer Teaches Children At Assembly
21. Hospital Sued By Seven Foot Doctors
22. Music Industry Meets on Drugs
23. Citizen Feels For Workers in Cubicles
24. Police Charge Operator With Battery
25. Judge Not Convinced Murder Victim is Alive

The real headlines may be divulged in the next edition of the *Nitrometer*.





From: www.mazes.org.uk