

DELTA WINDS

A Magazine of Student Essays

Volume 15

2002



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from the past ...
Editors' Choice

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Letter from the Editors:

We are proud to be celebrating the 15th volume of Delta Winds, a magazine originally intended to share student writing with Delta College and the community. Over the years, this magazine has served in various capacities, one of which is the English 79 mastery process. But the magazine has also affected the lives of the students themselves. Students have seen their work in printed form and have become familiar names in classroom discussion. One student mentioned how she was a celebrity of sorts at her hairdressing salon since the management kept a copy for clients to read. Other students have had their work published in college textbooks to model exemplary writing for college students around the country. Through continued appreciation of their writing, these students leave a part of themselves on campus even years after they have left.

In this commemorative volume, we wish to recognize three previously printed essays that the editors feel worthy of another read. These essays — featured as Editors' Choice — give us once again perspectives on our lives and our society. The voices of past Delta College students describe the joy of meeting a

lifelong companion and guide, criticize the advertising industry for perpetuating the use of stereotypes, and depict the price of conformity. Part of the excitement for us, the editors, is to contact past students to learn about their lives since leaving Delta College; this information we are pleased to share in the updated biographical statements that accompany the essays. These writers have continued on with their education and are now well into challenging career paths.

As you can see by the inside cover, we have come a long way in our layout, from a plain brown cover to a multi-colored glossy one. Authors' pictures have been added, the use of graphics has been expanded, and an online version is available. While our appearance has changed, our commitment to sharing student views and stories still guides our efforts; the willingness of students to share ideas and to work at the craft of writing still encourages us; the pride of accomplishment that student writers exude upon publication still thrills and rewards us. In this volume, we print what the students have chosen to write about. So it's a bit of nostalgia mixed with the new perspectives in Volume 15.

Would you like to be a part of Delta Winds?

Take an English Class and submit essays to your instructor, or contact the editors.



William Agopsowicz



Robert Bini

Memories

Her hands and face were like leather from the constant hard work in the salty air while the sun beat down all day. Born in 1888 on Pico in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, she did not encounter me until 1951. Pico is one of nine islands in the Azorean archipelago, 900 miles west of Portugal. Living on the island, we could always see the towering volcanic peak, which stood 7,000 feet, the highest point of Portugal. My memories of those times are vague for I was a young boy then.

We could always see the towering volcanic peak which stood 7,000 feet, the highest point of Portugal.

The most prominent memory is that she was an extremely hard-working person trying to make ends meet. Widowed at the young age of forty-four, she found life presented a difficult challenge.

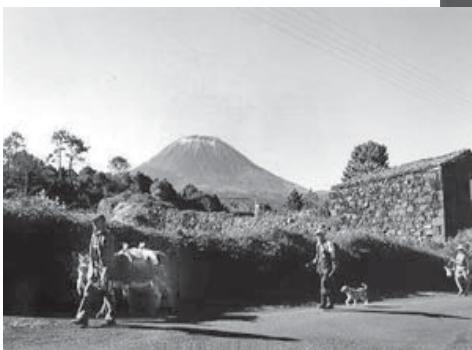
There were no modern day conveniences, such as electricity or gas where one could turn a knob or flip a switch to cook a meal for the family. With neither a refrigerator to store food nor a store to grab a snack, everything was done from scratch. If she needed milk to drink or cook with, milking the cow was the only solution. Wine to drink with dinner had to be made at the end of summer and stored in barrels. In order to have meat on the table, the family had to raise and



Honorato Menezes, a student at Delta College, became disabled at the age of 47, and life seemed to stand still. His wife was attending classes at Delta College, trying to finish her degree in Print Technology and asked, "Would you like to attend some fun classes with me?" The answer was "yes" and thus began the return to school and an attempt to get the degree he'd never tried to finish before. His goal is to graduate and find some meaningful work.



butcher it themselves. It was the same thing with any crops, such as potatoes, corn, beans and so forth. All the things we seem to take for granted these days had to be planted



Once home, she would tend to the chores that needed to be done before it was time to hit the hay. I do mean hay because her lumpy mattress was stuffed with hay.

and grown by the family; the only other way to attain these things was by bartering for them.

Typical days in her life consisted of rising at sunup, building a fire in the fireplace or the wood-burning stove, some days both in order to cook breakfast for the family. On other days, in order to earn a little money for the family, she had to grow a crop that would pay off in the end. One crop that provided a little bit of money was tobacco, which had been grown by her husband and now her. Tobacco had to be raised, and when mature it was picked and hung up to dry before it could be used. Once dry, the leaves would be twisted together into a pigtail. Then it was ready for sale. One may be wondering how the tobacco was ready for use at this point; those who smoked would take these twists of tobacco and, with a pocketknife, slice some of it into paper to roll up into a cigarette.

After preparing the tobacco for sale, she would load up a hand-made basket and set it by the door. Next morning she would rise in the wee hours of the morning. At 4:00 am, she would set the loaded basket on her head and begin walking the fifteen miles to catch the ferry to Faial, the next island. The ferry left at 7:00 am, arriving thirty minutes later at Faial.

Once at the next island, the job of selling the tobacco on the streets or door-to-door would begin. By late afternoon, it was time for the journey back home. With whatever money made from the sale of the tobacco, she could now buy clothing or some food to take back home. The return trip arrived at her island at 5:00 p.m. Now, she still faced a 15-mile walk

back home. She would arrive between 7:30 and 8:00 p.m. Once home, she would tend to the chores that needed to be done before it was time to hit the hay. I do mean hay because her lumpy mattress was stuffed with hay. Get some rest now, Grandma. Tomorrow at sunup starts a new day.

On this day, after the family has breakfast, it is time to work the fields. She takes a moment to look at the turquoise waters of the channel between the islands. The waters are calm; off in the distance she sees what appears to be the spout of a whale as it lets out air in order to take a breath of fresh air. The crackles of small bamboo rockets are going off like firecrackers in the still air of the morning.



The whale watchers sitting with powerful binoculars in their watchtowers must have spotted those spouts from the whales. When whales are spotted, the whale watchers set off the rockets to alert the whale hunters. My grandmother's neighbor sets his farming tools down and begins running toward the whale factory. All the whale hunters gather, boarding seven to a whaleboat. Now they are towed out to where the whales were spotted. Soon one of the leviathans is harpooned. The sailors hold on for dear life as the whale swims for its life and gives them what is known as a "Nantucket Sleigh Ride." After tiring, the whale surfaces and is lanced until the life-giving crimson runs out of her.

Now, with the killing done, the hunters raise the sail on the

whaleboat and return to port, leaving the dead whale to be towed to the factory by the motor launch. The farmers, fishermen, and others return to their chores. Soon the rancid odor of whale blubber cooking down fills the air. There is a flurry of activity now until all the whales caught are cooked down for their various products, mainly oil.

September has arrived and the grapes are ready for harvest. Warm sun, cool foggy, mornings and salty ocean breezes have produced a wonderful crop of grapes. Wine made from these grapes was served at the Czar's table in Russia. All friends and family pitch in to help with the harvest and to make the wine. These days stretch well into the warm nights until the work is done.

Life never seems to stop; there is always something else to be done. The end of the year is upon her now and the holidays are here. It is time for the festivities of killing the hog she raised throughout the year. Over a period of two weeks, the pig is prepared in many different ways and a different part eaten each of those days. These are wonderful times of family and friends gathering to share in the bounty.

Oh, what great memories I have of those days! This is the life I come from; the person I have been writing about was my grandmother. Even though life was unusually difficult, she was extremely happy and thankful for what she had. She was a great inspiration in my life. I only wish I had half the strength that she had.

She takes
a moment
to look at
the
turquoise
waters of
the
channel
between
the
islands.



Winnie-the-Pooh and My Tummy Too

Sarah Pope is studying to become a mechanical engineer. She hopes to graduate from Delta College and then attend the University of California at Davis. She has been married for four years, and she has two children.

“When I up-down, touch the ground, it puts me in the mood Up-down, touch the ground, in the mood . . . for food! I am stout, round, and I have found, speaking poundage-wise I improve my appetite, when I exercise” (Milne).

I have awakened each morning for the past three years and have hated my reflection in the mirror, because of my weight. I do not look like the person I picture in my head (thin and pretty); instead I look like a younger parody of my mother. Fat thighs, stretch marks, droopy places and rolls in a stomach that used to be flat.

My experience is not unusual. I am just another faceless woman who has given birth and paid for it with my body, and just like every other woman on the planet who cannot look at herself in the mirror with her glasses on, I have been searching for a way out of this 168 pound fat suit. Yesterday morning I

thought I saw hope in my fight for my weight. Yesterday morning I thought I saw a kindred spirit speaking to me out of the pages of O magazine; instead I started on the pathway to an epiphany.

The day started normally. I got the kids up, got them dressed and packed off to school. I almost drove past the McDonald's but my terrible eating habits and fatigue got the best of me and I stopped for my usual bad-for-me breakfast. During my meal of a sausage

biscuit with egg and a coke I found an article in the Stockton Record, my favorite daily breakfast companion.

The article had an extremely long title that caught my attention immediately:

“Finally, new research uncovers the five causes of lower abdominal bulge and how to flatten it like a board; excess fat is not the biggest cause” (Soper).

I began to read the article



enthusiastically. After all the Stockton Record is not like The National Enquirer, a newspaper that thrives on misinterpreting facts and creating outrageous lies. It is a serious newspaper, with careful reporters dedicated to producing serious works. The article looked very promising. It had many examples of beautiful people who used to look like me along the right hand side of the column, and it was laid out to look like a normal newspaper article. The author of the article is Larry Soper, editor of the Sun Journal of Canton, Ohio. It is about two men, Frank Campitelli, a certified personal trainer and nutritionist, and his colleague David Dearth. These two men appear to be giving advice about losing weight using a product called BioGenesis. After reading the article, I was disappointed to realize that it was not a regular article but in fact an advertisement endorsed by these two men.

The advertisement angered me in several ways: I did not like the fact that it was disguised as a real article; it was also fundamentally unhelpful. Larry Soper first reports that special nutrients could help an obese person lose weight:

“University and biogenesis studies found that most overweight people do not take in any more calories than those people who are not overweight. It was found that most overweight people can be deficient in the following eight nutrients that enable the body to burn fat: L-carnitine, chromium picolinate, choline, inositol, biotin, pancreatin enzyme, betaine enzyme and vitamin B6. These nutrients are only found in certain foods and you must get enough of these nutrients to properly burn fat. These 8 critical fat burning nutrients are provided for BioGenesis in capsule form.”

Soper also writes that exercise is necessary for weight loss. Campitelli and Dearth then reveal that, in order to flatten the abdominal area, a number of things have to be done that are very specific and require expert advice. Much of it actually requires doing little-known exercises to other parts of the body to flatten the lower abdominal area.

I don't know about you, but if I need to buy pills and do the correct exercises to lose weight, then I am back to the beginning of my problem. I still had no time and no self-control, except now I have to remember to take medication. I threw that depressing article in the trash, along with the rest of my meal, and I left the McDonald's to pick up my kids from school.

Later that same afternoon I was going through some magazines from my grandmother-in-law when I came across a headline on the front of Q magazine: “Feel Good Naked: a fabulous 10-point plan, no diet required” (Redmond 236). I decided to read the article. “No diet” sounds pretty good. The Lord knows that I do not have any measure of self-control. Oprah wouldn't put an advertisement for diet pills disguised as a medical breakthrough in her magazine, and I had put my kids down for a nap, so I did not have anything better to do. I opened up to page 236 to read about the life of Laure Redmond. Laure began with an appeal to the heart, about how she always remembered being heavy, and she followed with the statement, “I know the pain of

It had many examples of beautiful people who used to look like me.



despising one's body. It's rampant, it's debilitating, and it's not limited to those who are clinically overweight" (Redmond 236).

I completely agreed with her. I am tired of hating my body because I am forty pounds overweight, so I was relieved to read about someone who knew about self-hatred, instead of somebody who had had a perfect life. Laure began to detail her life: her childhood around New Orleans cooking, her mother's remarriage at 14 and then her mother's death when Laure turned 15, and some of the hurtful comments she endured from her grandmother and her stepfa-

Well, wonderful. All the votes are in. I have to have a dream job and be beautiful to feel better about myself. It won't happen. I am not a single co-ed, but the very busy mother of two kids, with a body that has been stretched out like a balloon. Do I sound bitter? Maybe I am, but I trusted Q magazine. I would think that Oprah would put the limelight on a woman who is fat and loves herself (somehow). Instead I get another healthy person telling me how to feel good. Laure's ten steps on feeling better (highlighted in the center of the article) were predictably the things I already knew. If I could just

I would think that Oprah would put the limelight on a woman who is fat *and* loves herself (somehow).

ther; they said things such as "Damn, Laure, with thighs the size of yours you could play football for the Miami Dolphins" (Redmond 237).

I began to sympathize with Laure more and more. I have been called a "fat bitch" when I wasn't moving fast enough in the line at a grocery store, and I was told recently by a clerk at the lingerie store "Victoria's Secret" that "maybe I wasn't meant to wear lingerie."

By now I was halfway through the article, and halfway in love with Laure. She was ugly, I was ugly, she had had a hard life, and I had had a hard life. Anything she could say to help me love myself would be appreciated. However, my illusions of kinship were quickly shattered as she described how she gained her self-confidence with good friends and an exercise regimen. She found a girl who appreciated her as a person and together they exercised until Laure felt good enough about herself to get her dream job. Redmond writes, "Because on July 7, 1984, right after I graduated from college, Gilda hired me to run her Upper West Side studio. The 'heifer' from New Orleans had finally arrived" (238).

find the willpower to exercise and eat right, I would be fine.

I put down Q magazine, and as I sat on my ugly blue couch I became mildly depressed. I do not know what I was expecting from the newspaper and magazine ads I had read that day, but I did not feel better at all about myself. Now, I look back and think how silly it is to expect a magazine or an article in a newspaper to fix all my problems with my self-image, especially since most articles dealing with weight loss are designed as advertisements to prompt the reader to spend money, or self-help articles that highlight the life of someone the average low income mother of two cannot even begin to copy.

My pondering was interrupted by my children waking up from their naps, so I got them up and put a "Winnie-the-Pooh" movie in the VCR and sat down with them to watch. The epiphany I had been working on all day finally arrived while I was watching the movie. I watched Pooh Bear go inside and exercise, then lose self-control and go to his pantry to have a little snack. He found that there was no more

honey left so he took his pursuit of honey to his friend Rabbit's house and proceeded to eat so much that he got stuck in Rabbit's door trying to leave. All his friends came to help him out. After starving him for a few days, they popped him out of Rabbit's hole and he flew directly into the hollow of a tree. His friends immediately ran to help him.

Winnie-the-Pooh wasn't in a hurry; the hollow in the tree was full of honey, which was exactly what he wanted.

I realized that the silly old bear created by A. A. Milne had the life that I really needed to be concerned about, a life filled with the enjoyment of the things you love best and with friends that still love you — even if you can't fit through their doorways. Throw away your self-help magazine ladies; burn up all those advertisements on how to look perfect for the low price of \$200 a month and your firstborn child. Ignore your sister when she says, "No offense but you may be able to look like that naked, but I am never going to have kids if I have to look like that."

No offense taken. Really.

It is strange to find a kindred spirit in a cartoon animal, that sweet yellow bear with the ill-fitting red t-shirt and the unquenchable need for honey. I too practice my "stoutness" exercises in the morning, sometimes sit-ups, sometimes just a quick jog around the house. My unquenchable need may be for cheeseburgers but I

am just as single-minded in the pursuit of my comfort food. For all you moms out there, or you unhappy wide-loads who try to stay adrift in your high schools and your jobs, I am proud to join your ranks, your pity parties, your Saturday night binges, because I have earned it. I have two children, the love of a good man and my mother, and my health. I should not waste my life obsessing over a few extra pounds, or try to find peace in the written opinions of people making money off of mothers with weight problems. Winnie-the-Pooh and I have a place for you. The exercise isn't

hard and the food is good, and our friends never try to make us join health clubs. The only password to our club is self-esteem. Find yours and join me. I am the fat girl on the old blue couch.



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Throw away your self-help magazine, ladies; burn up all those advertisements on how to look perfect for the low price of \$200 a month and your first-born child.



The Story of Juan Sánchez



Branimir Ciric is an international student from Serbia. At the University of Belgrade, he studied engineering and psychology. He also took some private lessons in acting, and he has performed in several drama/opera productions in Serbia. In spring 2001, he appeared in a drama production "Prelude To A Kiss" at Delta College. Branimir is now majoring in computer science, but after undergraduate school he intends to pursue the field of cognitive science. This is his last semester at Delta, and he plans to transfer to either UC Berkeley or UCLA.

Even without the struggle caused by external factors, every human being faces issues of death, loneliness, and meaninglessness of human existence.

This essay is a response to the short story "Sánchez," written by Delta's philosophy teacher Richard Dokey. Branimir has taken a couple of courses with Mr. Dokey, and he regards those classes as some of the most interesting he has ever attended. He says that interpreting the story was a challenging task, particularly because of the personal attitude he has toward the writer, but he underlines that the experience was after all ultimately joyful. "The Story of Juan Sánchez" is Branimir's first published essay.

In his short story "Sánchez," Richard Dokey tickles some of the fundamental questions of the human existence. In a manner so peculiar to philosophers, through the main character of the story the author vividly depicts the essence of the human condition. The story of Juan Sánchez describes his wandering through life in search for happiness. On a symbolic level, Juan's journey is a dramatization of evolution of human consciousness, from instinctual-habitual to rational-intuitive stages.

All human beings instinctively strive for pleasure and happiness. However, they often face objective restrictions imposed on their will by the surrounding environment. Unfavorable circumstances may include natural conditions as well as pressure exerted by society. Even without the struggle caused by external factors, every human being faces issues of death, loneliness, and meaninglessness of human existence. Juan Sánchez is acutely aware of the hostile environment in his village in

Mexico. “He feared the land, believed almost that it possessed the power to kill him -- as it had killed his mother and father” (Dokey 30). After the death of his mother, Juan feels ultimate loneliness, and his agony becomes chronic when he loses his second child. He curses himself, his village, and even God, and he definitely gets disillusioned about his life.

As a response to such an unbearable state of affairs, Juan decides to move away, hoping that physical distance may help him forget the pain associated with his homeland. He moves to California with his wife La Belleza in an attempt to start a new life. At this point of the story, Dokey describes one of the most frequent instinctual ways people attempt to deal with their existential problems — they try to run away from them. Although Juan still works hard, for not enough money, he feels that his life gets a new meaning. He discovers love and the flourishing effects it has on him. He feels that his relationship to his wife and the mountains is enlarging him, and he starts to believe that he has found a

secret of happiness. The newly acquired feeling of union with nature convinces him that he has achieved full reconciliation with his true self and the environment. He feels that he has found his true home.

However, Juan slowly starts to sense the presence of “fear and dread about such love” (Dokey 33). He understands the impermanent character of his relationships, and he suspects that the love he has acquired is a kind of blindness. He also discovers a new kind of loneliness, which he experiences when La Belleza is away. Although Juan’s life becomes more pleasant, the issues of death and impermanence still remain unresolved. This fact becomes painfully obvious when La Belleza dies, demonstrating to Juan his inability to avoid suffering. At this point the author insinuates that human beings cannot escape from their own nature and that all their attempts to conquer pain and death are futile.

Despite the depressive character of the events, however, Juan does not become desperate. On the contrary, he realizes that fight was in vain, and he finally accepts the human condi

At this point of the story, Dokey describes one of the most frequent instinctual ways people attempt to deal with their existential problems — they try to run away from them.



On a symbolic level, the story of Juan Sánchez is the story of all human beings and the development of their self-awareness toward self-actualization.

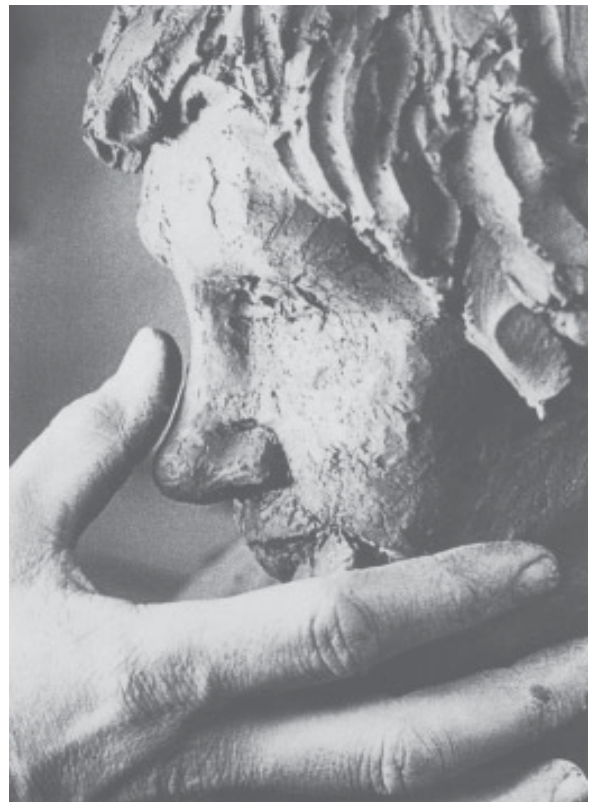
tion as it is -- pain, loneliness, suffering, and death are integral and inseparable parts of the life process. Acceptance of life "as it is" brings peace to Juan, and for the first time he becomes capable of discovering an intuitive sense of belonging -- an ultimate sense of unity with the entire Cosmos. Juan understands that his previous state of bliss was "man-made," induced by his own consciousness. On the other hand, in his newly acquired, almost religious-like experience, he feels that he is and has always been unconditionally connected to the entire existence. Juan gets exposed to the blowing of the "south winds," and he recaptures his original sense of self-identity. He burns all of his dear belongings, including his house, before he returns to his village in Mexico. The burning symbolizes an act of detachment from the illusory nature of the manifest world. In the end, Juan goes through a stage of self-realization and enlightenment.

The story of Juan Sánchez describes some of the existential problems of human existence -- feelings of separation from nature and fear of death and loneliness, as well as human attempts to reconcile with the universe. In the tradition of existential philosophy, Dokey suggests that there are no simple answers to the problem; moreover, human attempts to escape from conflicts can only create an illusion of salvation. The author insinuates that the only

way to transcend the human condition is to fully and honestly accept it and to learn how to live with it -- only then, a true, intuitive sense of fulfillment may appear. In the final analysis, according to the writer, the meaning of one's life and the sense of true self-identity can only be rediscovered, since they are present all the time. On a symbolic level, the story of Juan Sánchez is the story of all human beings and the development of their self-awareness toward self-actualization.

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AIDS IN AFRICA

In some African societies ... if a woman suggests a condom, or avoids high-risk sexual behavior, she is immediately accused of adultery and promiscuity and suspected of having been infected



Raulyne Kenfack came from Cameroon, Central Africa, in 2000. This is her first college experience. Her goal is to graduate in 2004 from the nursing program. She enjoys reading and spending time with her family.

Twenty years ago, the disease now known as the Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) was first recognized. AIDS represents a late stage of infection by a retrovirus called Human Immuno Deficiency Virus (HIV) of which there are two types: HIV1 and HIV2. The first one is associated with the epidemic in Central, East, and Southern Africa, and the rest of the world. The second one has been associated with people from several West African countries. In Africa, low education, especially among women, is one of the many causes behind the epidemic.

In some African societies, a woman is relegated to a position of secondary importance. While the years pass by, her life remains under the authority of her husband or son: she has little or no say in decisions concerning her sexual life. If a woman suggests a condom, or avoids high-risk sexual behavior, she is immediately accused of

adultery and promiscuity and suspected of having been infected with a Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) by a man other than her husband. On the other hand, a man enjoys greater sexual freedom. It is acceptable for him to be sexually active; he can have more than one wife, and he can maintain many sexual relationships. In most African cultures, there is a code that has allowed and encouraged a man to have more than one wife. Therefore, the woman's inferior position regarding the couple's sexual life added to poverty does not permit dialogue about STDs and AIDS.

More than two-thirds of the families in Africa live on less than two dollars a day. Most families don't even have enough money to pay for their children's first step of education in elementary school. The new protease inhibitors, necessary to turn AIDS

My task was to make the villagers realize that AIDS existed.

from a death path to a chronic disease, cost at least \$12,000 per person each year. The average African nation spends less than \$10 per person each year on health care. It is not uncommon to have more than ten people living in a three-bedroom house with a tiny income. Poorer families have a greater tendency to die from AIDS than do richer ones for very obvious reasons. In poverty, there are no money savings or other assets to bring relief to the impact of illnesses. Of the global total of 30 million people living with HIV worldwide, about two-thirds are in sub-Saharan Africa. It is estimated that of the 12 million people who have died from HIV-related illnesses since the start of the epidemic worldwide, about 9 million have been Africans. Those who



are poor in Africa and are infected with HIV live for a shorter time than those in developed countries. With those conditions helping the spread of the disease in Africa, a small group of professional women met in Stockholm, Sweden, in June 1988, and created the Society for Women and AIDS in Africa (SWAA). The women were concerned with the growing incidences of HIV infection, particularly in women and children.

In 1994, the SWAA needed to reach the heart of the uninformed population. And because the SWAA didn't have enough money or resources to do so, the organization asked for help. I volunteered for a campaign of information for one month in a village named Tsinkop, located in Cameroon, West Africa. My task was to make the villagers realize that AIDS existed, and to convince them to use the simplest protection available — which is the use of a condom. Even though the inhabitants of that village were dying of AIDS, they were still in denial. The villagers believed it was a malediction from the gods. Because the villagers hadn't made enough sacrifices to their ancestors, the gods were angry. According to their traditional or cultural belief, the villagers — after every happy or sad moment — had to share most of their belongings by putting them next to huge waterfalls of the village to honor their gods and ancestors, or to seek some answers to questions from them. The waterfalls were supposed to have some sort of connection with the gods and the village's sorcerer. Everybody was very anxious as they waited three days before the sorcerer came out of his meditation and encounters with the spirits to announce that the gods only told him there would be more death! This type of practice to seek some answers is often used in Africa. Anyway, I couldn't wait to get my mission started, and to give them answers they didn't have from the gods.

I started by showing every villager pictures of men, women, and children who had died from AIDS in the cities. These people had died in ways similar to how villagers had died. As I said before, AIDS has emerged as another disease of disadvantage and deprivation

linked to social factors such as poverty, social status, and urbanization. After showing the inhabitants of that village pictures, I first talked to the men because they didn't want their wives to learn anything from the western world; in many rural areas in Africa, people are very conservative. They consider everything coming from the outside as sacrilegious or ominous. They are especially suspicious of, as they said, "white civilizations where women are involved with everything." Some of them even told me that they didn't want me to "modernize their wives!" Their restrictions with the outside world made it even harder for me to lay down some explanations about the disease. As I mentioned before, men in Tsinkop like to be very sexually active; therefore, I knew that

very reticent; some men even threatened to get a divorce if they had to wear protection to have sex. In other ways, a small number of men were very favorable to the situation. I had already spent two weeks there and the outcome was not remarkable.

Then I realized that the village's sorcerer was the man everybody would listen to since he is considered the representative of the gods in the village. I spoke to him for more than an hour and answered many questions from him, trying to convince him about the power of the deadly virus. At the end of the conversation, his only reaction was "I will give you an answer tomorrow." I never knew what happened that night; I guess he consulted the spirits. Nevertheless, early the following morning, he gathered the entire village and

What gave me enough courage was the look on those women's faces; they were desperate for a solution, and they didn't want to bury any more relatives.

their biggest concern was my putting a brake in their sexual lives. After showing them pictures, I started to explain how the disease is contracted sexually.

I knew deeply that something had to be done; I had to get those men concerned one way or another. At that particular moment, I decided to have a meeting with the women behind their husbands' backs. It was not very fair to them, but I felt it necessary to do something in order to save that small village. What gave me enough courage was the look on those women's faces; they were desperate for a solution, and they didn't want to bury any more relatives. Every day for two weeks, while the women were working, we talked about their sexuality related to the disease. I taught them different ways to get protection, but what mattered the most was to communicate with their mates and to reach their hearts and souls. At first the men were



asked everybody to follow my advice without objection. I was thrilled and once again explained step by step what I knew about AIDS. The SWAA was providing the simplest protection for the men in the village: condoms for every man, with the help of a small hospital nearby. After one month of counseling, everybody in the village agreed to fight against the disease.

Deep inside, I know that there are still many things that need to be done for those villagers and for the whole world. But in my heart, I could not help but have a little satisfaction that maybe I saved one life. That's what was all-important to me. We know that scientists are still working on possible ways to find a vaccine. With a true partnership, in the form of a grand coalition of leaders, organizations and individuals at any level, everybody is working in different ways towards the common goal: the conquest of HIV/AIDS.

Workplace Policies:

Dictator or Protector?



Steven Price lives in Lodi with his wife of 20 years and their two children. Steven has a career in law enforcement and has worked for the City of Lodi for 18 years. He enjoys golf, water-skiing, and travelling.

Everywhere you go today there are rules to follow. If you want to drive a car, go to the movies, use the library, or simply walk down the street, a rule or law must be adhered to.

Even in the workplace there are rules, generally referred to as policies. Are policies in place to prevent employees from enjoying their work or to protect the employer from litigation? While most people readily accept the fact that there are rules and regulations within their workplace, do they really know what purpose policies serve?

Often employees feel that the policies of their company are in place to give the boss some leverage over them or to give the boss a reason to “headhunt.” However, most of the time policies and rules are there to protect both the employee and the employer.

In the law enforcement profession, rules and policies are set forth by both the employer and the justice system. In some cases the employer makes policy in response to a particular court decision. For instance,

police pursuits are handled today in response to civil suits that have been filed because innocent people have been injured during pursuits of criminals. I’ve heard some officers complain that these decisions prevent them from doing their job of chasing and catching bad guys, but in reality the decisions are there to protect not only the citizens but also the officers. The policy of pursuing violators only when certain criteria are met helps prevent innocent people from being injured, thereby protecting the officer from civil litigation, if the policy is adhered to.

A policy that requires employees to wear seat belts when operating a company’s vehicle not only protects the employer from damages incurred by the employee when he is involved in a collision, but it also protects the employee. An employee who is not wearing a seat belt during a collision can only receive damages for injuries less the percentage deemed his own cause for not wearing the seat belt. Also, consider the lost work time that is paid through worker’s compensation for the injury sustained by the employee while not wearing a seat

[I]f an employee acts outside the established policies of the employer and is injured or killed, then it is the employee's responsibility to show that the policy was faulty or created an unsafe condition.

belt in a collision. Employees tend to feel this type of policy infringes on their personal choice of whether or not to wear a seat belt. Some employees might even feel that the employer is following them around to see if they are wearing the seat belt. Don't you think that employers have more important things to do than follow their employees around? The policy is in place to insure that both the employee and employer are protected.

Consider a policy involving sexual harassment. Today this type of policy is fairly common among employers, both in public and private sectors. Is this type of policy adopted to prevent employees from enjoying themselves at work and to keep jokes among friends from happening? The federal government mandates such rules in most cases. In addition, the employer wants to be certain that everyone working for him has a safe, non-threatening place to work. Isn't that something we would all like to have? If some people haven't moved into the 21st century and still think it is okay to treat others with little or no respect, does it mean the rest of us have to live with it at work? By adopting and enforcing a sexual harassment policy in the workplace, the employer can protect himself from civil damages, which today can be in the millions of dollars, and it protects employees from uncomfortable behavior. If an employee chooses to act contrary to the policy, then he must suffer the consequences. However, this does not mean that the policy is in place to undermine a person's right to an opinion or to give the employer leverage to remove someone from a position. If that happens, it is most likely due to the employee's overt actions or open defiance of policy.

I have worked for the same employer for the last 18 1/2 years. During that time many policies have been adopted and changed, and not once have I seen my boss intentionally go after another employee for a policy violation. The employee did suffer the consequences of his actions, but my employer didn't seek out violations of its policies.

Policies in the workplace can be very liberal, and they can be extremely restrictive. No matter the level of policies adopted, I believe that in most cases they are there for the protection of both the employer and the employee. If one acts within the policy of the employer and becomes injured or killed, then it can be argued that the employer can be held responsible. However, if an employee acts outside the established policies of the employer and is injured or killed, then it is the employee's responsibility to show that the policy was faulty or created an unsafe condition which caused the employee to operate outside of the policy. Failing to do that, the employee must live with his error and the consequences thereof.

Without workplace policies or procedures, there would be no uniformity. Workers would be out for themselves and co-workers could be at risk of injury or death. I personally prefer to work for a company where all persons adhere to established policies. This gives me peace of mind, knowing that everyone involved in a situation or task will use proven procedures. The risk of injury or death goes down. But if there is an injury or death, I can feel secure that my employer's policies and guidelines will be there to protect me from future litigation.



Jennifer Hallum has attended Delta College since 1998 and is working towards her general education. She works full-time and enjoys spending time off with her husband of three years. She also likes working in her flower and vegetable garden in her spare time. She is pursuing a degree in physical science.

Four Walls

This is the establishment of good news and bad. This is the locale of the ailments of the mind, the body, and the soul.

This is the healing ground for all the troubles that knock on the door. This is the place I call home.

These are the days when there are coffee grounds in the bottom of the coffee cup and the cream is curdled. These are the days when the car battery is dead, and I think to myself it can't get any worse. Nevertheless, these are the days perpetual motion takes hold; I arrive late for work and the boss is out to get anyone who has a hair out of place. Money is tight, and I have three bills that are due tomorrow; it feels like this saga will never end. My breaking point is near, but I know relief is in sight. Secure surroundings await me. An immense peace and harmonious feeling leaps out from within when I see the front

of my house. This is the place I call home.

Thoughts of joy race through my mind because I know I have a garden that needs tending to. There is nothing more soothing than the feel of

There is nothing more soothing than the feel of warm dirt between my fingers as I work the earth.

warm dirt between my fingers as I work the earth. If it is the time of the year that Mother Nature does not permit working her grounds, I find tranquillity seeing the couch as I walk through the door. It is as if a warm tropical waterfall gently flows over me and washes the worries of the day

downstream. I will settle into the couch where the plush pillows will absorb my sorrows. I wrap myself in an afghan that was knitted by Grandma; I can hear her loving voice reassuring me that everything will work out. Soon, I know my best

friend will arrive with a smile to give to me. This is the place I call home.

These are the days when a letter arrives in the mail reading of prosperous outcomes, the phone rings with joyous words to be told, and the house is filled with beaming rays of sunlight. By my side (never in front, never behind) is my husband, my best friend, and my provider, all of whom are one. We share with each other in the merriment of the day.

Looking around, I see my garden that I nurtured and tended to throughout the troubled times. The garden is bursting with life and life itself is blooming. Time is on my side. The worries of everyday life are nonexistent. I feel revived and full of exuberant energy with every breath I take. I am breathing the freshness of life, shielded from the stress that has a tendency to consume. Wrapped around me is a sense of serenity and accomplishment. These are the days I look around and know that I have accomplished a healthy living environment for my garden, my love, and myself. This is the place I call home.

For all the days that fall in between the good and the bad, the days that just

I am breathing the
freshness of life,
shielded from the
stress that has a
tendency to consume.

seem to exist, there still is a yearning and a pull to be at my sanctuary. When grocery shopping needs to be done and errands (that seem to be never ending) need to be taken care of, a tug this way and a tug that way, these are the days of the in between. They are neither good nor bad days, but I can sense something lurking, something deep down, something that is unknown. I feel within myself the ominous sound of a storm brewing, even though I can see that the sun is shining brightly. I feel clouded with confusion and cannot ignore that there is an insatiable feeling to find safety. I know that no harm can come from the place I am envisioning. Once I arrive at this place, the storm will be out to sea and the sun will continue to shine. Love calms all fears of what the storm may bring. This is the place I call home.

This is the
place
I call home.

LIES AND FUZZY LEGS

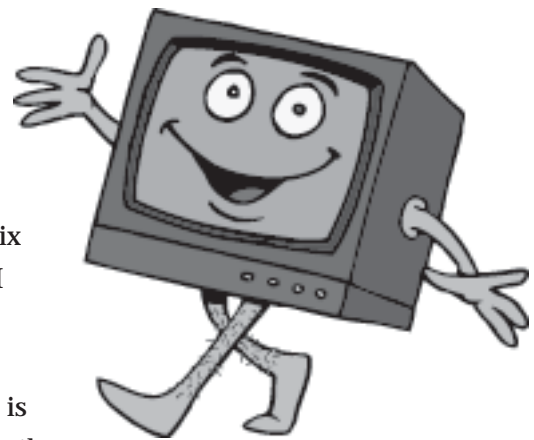
Sarah Pope is studying to become a mechanical engineer. She hopes to graduate from Delta College and then attend the University of California at Davis. She has been married for four years, and she has two children.

—
Yes, sad to say, I was suckered by an infomercial.
—

Not so long ago, perhaps six months, I was robbed in my own living room; I was watching television. The thief did not have a gun or a knife, and she wasn't wearing a mask. Instead she used a message of hope and six lucky volunteers. Yes, sad to say, I was suckered by an infomercial.

Now I consider myself an intellectual person, someone who is not fooled by psychics and snake-oil peddlers; but this was painless hair removal! I am that woman with the razor burn, the princess of pain, the maestro of shrill screams and swear words. I can draw and paint in intricate detail, but apparently that gift does not extend to shaving. This evil commercial appealed to me on the most basic level. No pain . . . with gain.

The commercial started off with six average, smooth-legged women, sitting on a raised platform, smiling. Their messiah walks in and sits next to them in a short skirt and bleached blond hair. She says her name is Sue Ismiel and she has a wonderful



product that she wants to share with the world named "Nads." (Nads, by the way, is named after Sue's oldest daughter Nadine. I never saw her in the commercial, possibly because she didn't survive the testing process;



yes, I thought the wax was named after another shavable body part too.) This fabulous product started because Sue's darling little angel was a wolverine, so

"Mommy Dearest" decided that little Natalie (the wolverine) needed to shave. Or something to that effect. To quote our sweet, lying promoter, "She could see in Natalie's eyes how much the excess body hair distressed

Good job, Sue. Great way to get customers — exploit your own children.

the pretty girl.” Poor fuzzy child.

Sue also says, “Although she said she was never teased at school, I knew she had low self-esteem She wanted to be a model, but I knew how self-conscious she was. She insisted on wearing long-sleeved clothing.” My favorite misleading statement is, after Mommy Dearest experiments on her child, “That didn’t hurt at all, Mummy,” a delighted Natalie told Sue. “Her arm was lovely and smooth,” Sue says. “We did it every three to four weeks to start with. We used it all over the body and soon her hair growth was less strong. It worked marvelously.”

Good job, Sue. Great way to get customers — exploit your own children. What a wonderful mother to rip the body hair off of your little darling so that the kids at school stop making milk-bone jokes.

However, at the time I was watching the Nads commercial, I was touched at Natalie’s mother’s selfless behavior. I watched the entire commercial without turning the channel back to “Ricki Lake’s 101 Ways To Ruin Your Marriage.” I was mesmerized by endless models ripping white cloths off of their legs and proclaim-

ing it painless. I was enchanted by the little wolverine thanking her mother. I was brought to my knees with the “Super low price.” I was bludgeoned to death with rhetoric and sent to call the Nads’ hotline instead of 911.

I made my fantastic purchase in thirty seconds, completely secure in the knowledge that I would be fuzzi- less and fancy free in only six short weeks. And then Satan’s package arrived. Innocuous in a brown cardboard box, it was only about one foot cubed, and it weighed less than a pound. It could have been a bomb, but I ripped it open anyway. Inside was a small round plastic jar with “Nads” proclaimed proudly on the front, a set of white cloth strips, (the better to show the blood, my dear) and an instructional video.

Uh oh. An instructional video. The first red flag. An instructional video means that A) I am about to embark on a journey that is akin to brain surgery, or B) the Nads’ executives assume that I’m not the swiftest Greyhound in the pack, so I need them to spell it out for me. Well, I was only going to watch “Ricki Lake” anyway, so I plugged in the video and got ready to be tortured.

As I sat on the couch watching the video, I began to get worried. There was only one lady demonstrat



The models
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morphine.

Once the video was over, it was time to try my new modern miracle.

ing, and she kept saying little things like, “Now if you don’t get all the hair at one time, reapply the cloth.” What? Reapply? That doesn’t sound like the commercial, but then I thought, maybe some people just have really thick hair, and she has to say that.

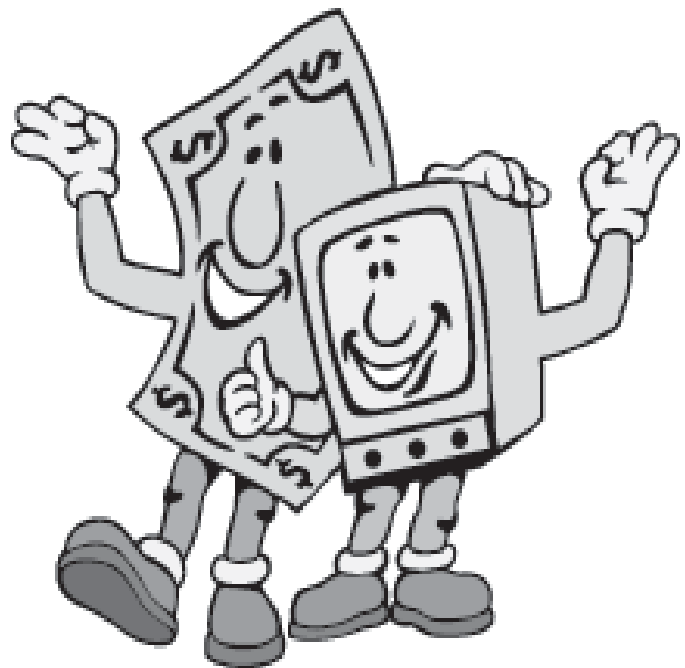
Second red flag, making excuses for the product. If you have to make excuses to justify what the instructional video says, as opposed to what the commercial said, you are in denial. You were sold a bad product.

Once the video was over it was time to try my new modern miracle. I followed the instructions exactly. First, I spread the goo on my leg in a small patch. Second, I pressed the cloth firmly onto the goo. Third, I smoothed out the cloth for optimal hair removal. Fourth, I took hold of the far corners of the cloth and ripped it off with a quick jerk. Last, (once my vision cleared and I stopped screaming) I realized three things: The models on the commercial were on morphine. Sue Ismeil needs to be paid a visit from Child Protective Services. I did not check to see if there was a “Money Back Guarantee.”

I staggered over from the sink to the toilet and sat down to contemplate my folly. Even if I could take the pain of completing the procedure for both legs, I would have to be a masochist to use it on my bikini area. I did not really need it for anything else; who actually spends thirty-four dollars to wax their eyebrows? I looked down to make sure my leg was all right and discovered the next unpleasant surprise. That evil wax had only removed a little of the hair under the patch. I think I had a psychotic episode at that point, but I don’t remember much.

Needless to say, I am never going to buy anything from the television again, unless GOD endorses it. I mean, how can people get away with ripping off the consumer like that? Even after all my attempts, it still would not remove my hair.

So I ask you this: Don’t the people who place these commercials on television ever use these products? Can you, as a consumer, really believe that at least one corporate executive has not tried something of what they sell? Of course they have. But they are not responsible for the product on their shows. So as long the networks that broadcast these infomercials get paid, who cares? Well, someone needs to, but not I. I’m going to call my sister and see if she needs a “fantastic new way to remove hair.” After all, Misery loves company, especially if Misery charges the mark-up price of forty-four dollars.



Days Gone By

The teacher was related to approximately ninety percent of the students; in fact, she was my grandmother.

There was a special place that I remember as I was growing up. We would go outside to play in the fresh clean air where the birds were singing all around us, making us feel safe and secure. We attended a small, red, one-room school. The school went from first grade through the eighth grade. Everybody knew everybody and would help each other out whenever it was needed. The teacher was related to approximately ninety percent of the students; in fact, she was my grandmother. It was a wonderful place to grow up, feel safe, and possibly raise a family. After I turned eighteen, I decided to move to the Bay Area, hoping to find work to support myself.

In 1952, I was born in my grandmother's house, way up on the top of the mountain. My grandparents owned a small three-bedroom house on one acre of ground. The closest neighbor was one mile away. The small schoolhouse was five miles from her house and seven miles from the house where I grew up. The small community had many wonderful features. Everybody was considered family, related or not. The population was below one thousand people. As you drove through my hometown, there was a single frosty shop — famous for its five-cent chocolate-dipped ice cream cones — one grocery store, a parts store, and a five-and-dime



Linda Mangrum, raised in Sonora, California, is a wife, a mother of three, a grandmother of six and a foster mom. She likes to crochet and work in her garden in her spare time. She says, "Being raised in a small town almost always makes you want to hurry and grow up and leave. Then once you are gone, you realize just what you have left. Sonora is still a very friendly, cozy, slow-paced town. True, it has grown into a thriving middle sized town."



I remember
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friend.

store, which we loved to visit! Visiting the five-and-dime was like Christmas year-round! We loved going into the small town, running across friends and neighbors, catching up on all the local news while getting the necessary chores done.

Things in our small town started changing a little at a time. As we started to grow with the new people moving up from the Bay Area, a few more restaurants, a couple frosty shops, and several department stores joined our small town. The five-cent chocolate-dipped ice cream cones went up to eighty-five cents. As time progressed the streets were getting more crowded with all the people that moved to the mountains. Our small community of a thousand changed to three thousand. The stores were getting too small to fit the size of the community. I remember the sadness when the five-and-dime closed its doors. We had lost a friend. The local owners couldn't compete with the bigger chain stores that came to the community. The beautiful trees, shrubs and vacant lots started filling up.

Our small town had one stop sign; you could go from one end of Sonora to the next. You were able to drive straight through, without having to put up with a lot of traffic. The store owners knew you by name. If you needed something, they were more than happy to get it for you. The streams were sparkling clear, full of fish. We had two high schools, and three elementary

schools, which were large enough to accommodate the community.

As the people from all over started moving in, the town started growing. No longer were two high schools big enough. The elementary schools had to be expanded from the one room. The children now required more than one teacher. Again we were saddened to see our classmates move into different classrooms. Eventually, they had to add more buildings on the property, just to accommodate the population that was moving up into our clean, friendly town.

Our community was growing to the point where the traffic was too heavy through town. Soon the bypass was added, so the traffic could be rerouted. You could just bypass the town or you could take the exit,



As we started to grow with the new people moving up from the Bay Area, a few more restaurants, a couple frosty shops, and several department stores joined our small town.

which would put you into the main part of town. There were four more stoplights added due to the amount of traffic. They are building a new, bigger hospital to accommodate the community.

Back then, you could walk down the street and feel safe and comfortable. You did not have to worry about locking your doors. You did not have to think that someone would hurt you, or bother any of your belongings. The small police station in our community had only a few officers to handle any problem that might come up; crime was minimal.

Then, as the community started expanding, so did the roads, stores and the crime. The traffic was getting heavier, and the patience of the community was getting smaller. We no longer had time to visit and catch up with the news of family and friends. The population grew, which brought in shopping malls, bigger grocery stores, and more people. The town grew; no longer was there only one stop sign. The streets became more crowded, and the crime started growing. The police station had to expand, and the new jail started filling up. Now you have to take time to make sure all your belongings are locked up. There is no longer a feeling of security.

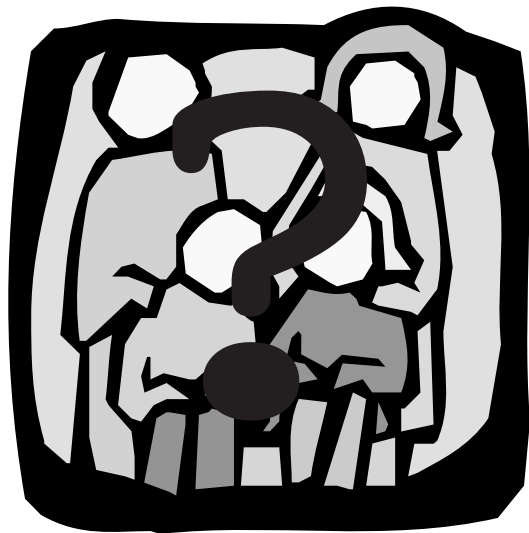
I moved back up here in 1996; there was a lot of change that took place over the years I was gone. We now have to make sure our windows and doors are locked. We can no longer walk down the street and feel as safe and secure as it once was. The streams are not full of fish like they used to be. The animals are still around, but not as many as before. Now you have to drive a little farther to fish, camp and enjoy the fresh clean air.

I loved this town when I was younger. I still love it up here. Do I like the change? Not really. I liked knowing my neighbor. I liked visiting while shopping. I liked the lazy overall atmosphere of our town. Still I realize that change must come. Not all change is bad. Yes, there are a lot more people; the town has more than tripled in size. We now have a movie theater with more than one show playing at a time. If you want to see the forest, you need to get in your car and drive. We get better prices on some of our merchandise. If I had to choose, I would

go back to the “old days,” but overall I still feel this is the best place for me.



In Defense of the *Real* American Family



Kenneth D. Valdez is 23 years old and a native Californian. He has lived in Rio Vista for most of his life. He completed his courses at Delta College last semester and he has since transferred to U.C. Irvine. He is pursuing a degree in Computer Science and hopes to go on to graduate school.

The non-traditional family structure can be shown to have a potential for success that is comparable to that of the two-parent family.

The shape of the American family has undergone a dramatic change over the last several decades. The once dominant “traditional nuclear family” is now accompanied by a variety of other familial forms. Sociologists, psychologists, and politicians, among others, have all offered their opinions on the subject and many studies have been put forth to demonstrate the adverse effects of these situations on children and on the society as a whole. While these studies have resulted in conclusions that perpetuate the myth that single-parent and blended families are aberrations from the norm, other researchers take the position that these groups are just new and viable

variations on the idea of what constitutes a family. The results of many of the studies done in the past have been flawed, but there is mounting evidence that if researchers control for a wide spectrum of influences, they will arrive at a more accurate and positive assessment of the situation. If many different variables are taken into consideration, the non-traditional family structure can be shown to have a potential for success that is comparable to that of the two-parent family.

Those who advocate the “traditional” family as the only acceptable model base their claims on the interconnectedness of the structure of the family and its probability of

success. In order to arrive at a realistic assessment of the merits and pitfalls of the various family groups, one must separate family interactions from family composition. Too often love and support are promoted as inherent qualities of the family that has both a mother and a father. This is a simplistic notion that does not acknowledge the reality of the dysfunctional two-parent family. As Alesia Montgomery and Robert Rossi, from the American Institute for Research, point out, in their 1994 report to the US Department of Education, “two-parent households are not always stable and supportive and single-parent households are not always isolated and overwhelmed” (par. 4). They cite many factors other than family structure which might influence a child’s probability of success in life including strong family cohesiveness, positive parental guidance, and supportive community networks. Some negative factors which are separate from the composition of the family and which could lead to problems are lack of parental warmth, neglect, and high levels of conflict within the family (par. 5).

Many studies substantiate the conclusion that family climate has the most direct effect on child development. Although single-parent and blended families are presented with a unique set of challenges, stress occurs in all family groupings. Harmful home environments contribute to a variety of problems. Alesia Montgomery and Robert Rossi cite a study that correlates the risk of substance abuse with unstable home environments and the parents’

permissive views on alcohol use (par. 13). The negative factors of physical or sexual abuse have been shown to contribute to depression and antisocial behavior in children. Severe abuse or neglect often results in self-destructive behavior (par. 6). These are extreme examples of damaging influences, but there are also many less obvious factors which instigate behavioral problems.

Often studies which examine children’s behavior focus on school readiness and success. In the past, these types of studies have been limited and they have had mixed results (“Single” par. 2). However, several recent studies that have looked at how well-prepared young children are when they enter school, have revealed encouraging findings. A study cited in Montgomery and Rossi’s report concluded that “there is no significant relation between ‘family intactness’ and degree of risk for educational failure.” In this study low-income children with divorced parents are shown to be slightly less likely than low-income children from two-parent homes to be categorized as high risk (par. 1). Another large multi-ethnic study conducted at Cornell University has found that children from homes with a single mother as the head of the household had no significant disadvantage in school performance solely because of their family structure (“Single” par. 1). Henry Ricciuti, professor emeritus of human development at Cornell, states that “although one-parent families had lower incomes, what mattered most for kids’ school readiness was the mothers’ ability and educational levels.” He also

Another large multi-ethnic study conducted at Cornell University has found that children from homes with a single mother as the head of the household had no significant disadvantage in school performance solely because of their family structure.

indicates that these levels of education and abilities were approximately the same in both of the large samples of single and two-parent families that were analyzed (par. 2). The conclusions of this study suggest that when favorable maternal and household characteristics are present, “single parenthood, in and of itself, is not necessarily a risk factor for children’s school readiness” (par. 8).

in making broad generalizations about the severely negative effects of divorce or single-parenthood on children (Montgomery par. 3). It is also counterproductive to cling to an idealized vision of the “traditional family” (Coontz par. 3). Peter Benson and Eugene Roehlkepartain state in their background paper on youth in single-parent families that “two-parent families have an edge, but being in one is

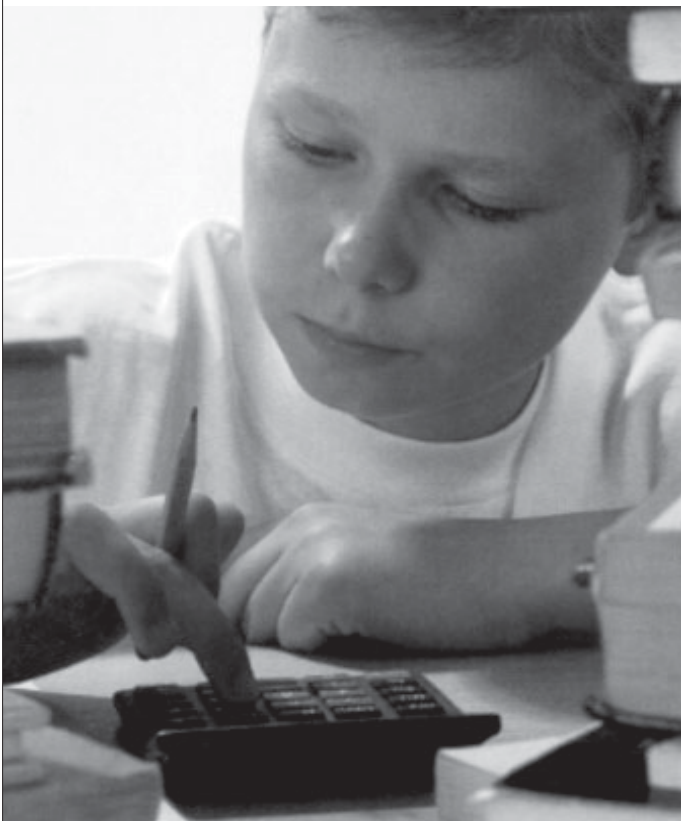
Harmful home environments contribute to a variety of problems.

Research which does not take into account some of these other background factors will not yield accurate results in studies comparing different family types. It would be difficult to argue against the premise that if all other influences are equal, two-parent homes might have a basic advantage in that they could provide more resources and support than single-parent homes. However, the danger lies

no guarantee that a young person will have the nurture, control, and guidance needed to grow up healthy” (par. 2).

Another concept that has been unfairly linked to the structure of the family is “family values.” It is often assumed that only two-parent families embody true moral values. As a result this assumption creates a stigma that could have a negative impact on families that do not fit this mold. Again, this oversimplification has no basis in reality. There is no assurance that someone from a family with two-parents will meet the moral standards set by those who promote these “traditional family values.” As Stephanie Coontz points out in her article entitled “The Futility of Teaching Family Values,” if one strictly defines “traditional family morality, Mafia families, which condemn premarital sex, abortion, and divorce and value intergenerational loyalty, would score higher than single-parent families or couples with a working mother” (par. 12).

The focus on one family type as the only viable solution to society’s problems leads to the misguided assumption that the increase in non-traditional families is a primary cause of these problems. In implying that single-parent and blended families are contributing to the



It is often assumed that only two-parent families embody true moral values.

degradation of society instead of merely being subject to socioeconomic forces like every other group, political spokespeople are ignoring the real causal factors. Many sociologists and moral leaders have pointed out the flawed reasoning in this supposition. Marian Wright Eldelman voices strong criticism of a society whose leaders “mouth family values they do not practice” (43). Policy-makers consistently vote against legislation which supports the family even though they claim that it is their top priority. It is easier to blame non-traditional families for America’s problems than to seek long term solutions. The emphasis on personal responsibility and moral values takes away from an examination of the “broader forces which hurt families, e.g., the impact of economics, discrimination, and anti-family policies” (80).

Some examples of programs which have been repeatedly denied by lawmakers are listed in Eldelman’s book, The Measure of Our Success. The United States is not one of the seventy nations that provides financial assistance and medical care to pregnant women. Our country is also not one of the seventeen industrialized nations that have programs for paid maternity leave (43). An unpaid parental leave bill has been strongly opposed by American business interests and funding guarantees for Head Start and a comprehensive child care bill have been continuously rejected by Congress (44). Although sixty-three other nations provide a family allowance to workers and their children, this is not a program that our government has enacted (45). By failing to invest in programs that protect children and ensure financial stability for working parents,

our nation’s leaders are undermining all families, especially those with a single parent.

In contrast to this neglect, a strong social support network can serve to reinforce the positive qualities found in families that are considered to be “non-traditional.” There are unique strengths found in families with a single parent. The reduction of tensions from a previously high-conflict marriage can result in greater focus on the child’s needs and more consistency in the enforcement of rules (Duncan par. 5). Because single parents rely more heavily on the cooperation of their children to keep the family stable, there is a greater potential for interdependence. The children are often more directly involved in problem solving and in making decisions (par. 6). This environment is also more likely to present the opportunity for children to learn new skills (par. 7). When there are two parents to share responsibilities, it is less likely that children will be called upon to



Policy-makers consistently vote against legislation which supports the family even though they claim that it is their top priority.

contribute to the family's well-being. Children in single-parent families may feel more valued because their help is needed on a daily basis (par. 9).

Although blended families are presented with an entirely different set of social dynamics and problems than single-parent families, these groups can also experience positive outcomes (Clemmensen par. 2).

There is the possibility, in this situation, for the formation of a whole new network of supportive and enriching relationships. If there are realistic and objective expectations of the issues which are involved in bringing together two separate family systems, difficulties can be lessened. There is a growing body of research data that can be used to help families anticipate some of the common problems

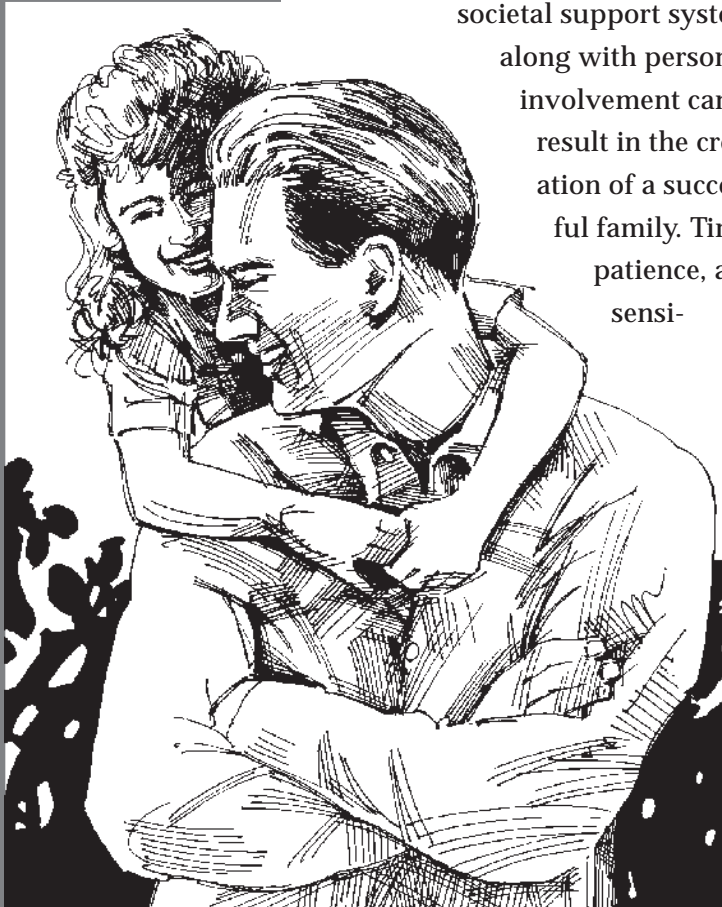
which arise. Again, a strong societal support system along with personal involvement can result in the creation of a successful family. Time, patience, and sensi-

tivity are the keys to arriving at this success (Clemmensen par. 3). The process of creating a whole new family is "one that poses significant challenges, yet offers many rewards" (par. 2).

The challenges facing non-traditional families can only be overcome if society does not ignore or blame these groups or stereo-

It is easier to blame non-traditional families for America's problems than to seek long term solutions.

type them as abnormal. The true cause of America's social problems has been characterized by Stephanie Coontz as "economics and the culture of selfishness." The solution to these problems does not lie in promoting the superficial and nebulous ideas of "family values" or "the traditional nuclear family," but rather, it can be found in a realistic understanding of the complex issues which are involved. An acceptance of personal responsibility coupled with social and economic support can result in a society that is made up of many different types of viable and healthy family structures.



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Our DIFFERENCES

The author of this essay chooses to remain anonymous.

They laughed
as they
continued
to beat
him until
they
rendered
him
unconscious.

He was somewhat of an “icon” to many of the store owners, and got along well with everyone that he came in contact.

“**W**hat a funny little man!” I heard one of the young people say as I walked past the crowd, wondering to myself, “What on earth could be going on over there to have made such a disturbance?” My private question was answered all too soon as I approached the small crowd of observers to find a “small” man crouched down on the cement. His body and his demeanor told me right away that he needed some assistance, but his face told me just as quickly that he was a victim of some kind of abuse.

Little did I realize that day I had come across the most hideous kind of crime there is: violence toward another human being just because he/she was deemed “different.” Walking closer to the man, I knew that I had to stay in control, for my emotions were not going to be of any help to this individual, only my expertise and training as a paramedic were needed right now. It was not until much later as I lay in my bed at the fire station that night, remember-

ing the events of that particular call, did I let my defenses down and weep for a man that was a victim of his own circumstances — circumstances that he had no control over.

Three o’clock in the afternoon, a young man is walking in downtown Stockton, with no particular destination in mind, just a stroll so to speak. Something that all of us have done at one time or another, I am sure. Well-dressed, clean and nothing out of the ordinary. Nothing except that he was born small, or at least smaller and shorter than some consider to be “normal.” He lived in the neighborhood, and enjoyed walking through the park and the stores that were conveniently located close to his home. On any given day, he could be seen walking among the businesses and parks in the area. He was somewhat of an “icon” to many of the store owners, and got along well with everyone that he came in contact with. Except for this particular day, he had never encountered problems during his walks in the area.

It was not until much later as I lay in my bed at the fire station that night, remembering the events of that particular call, did I let my defenses down and weep for a man that was a victim of his own circumstances.

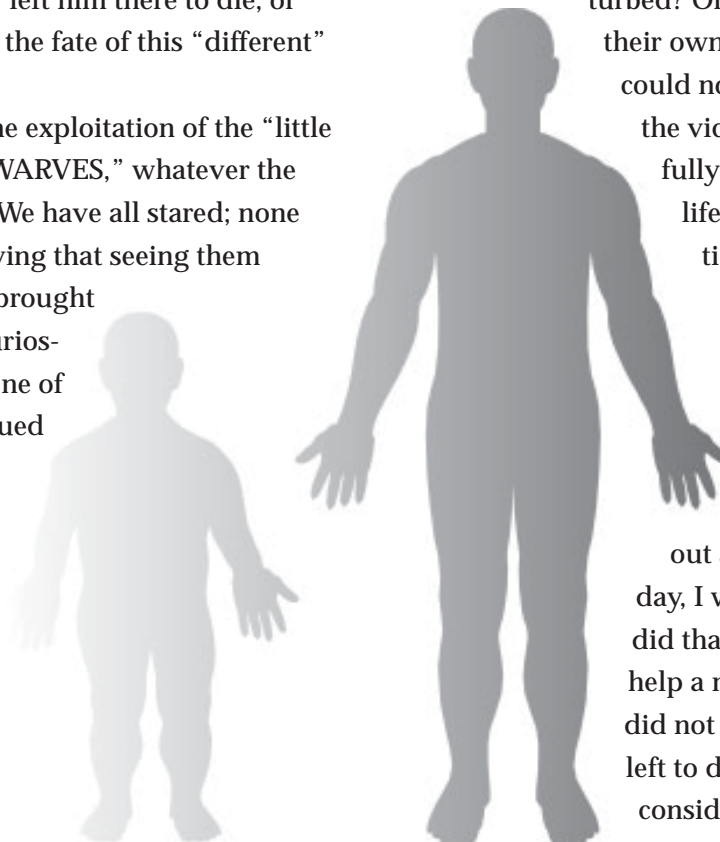
As they were “cruising” by, several young men driving through the area happened to see him from the windows of their car. Looking for excitement, or looking simply for something to do, they bounded out of their car and beat the man for no other reason except that he was different. This was not an attempt at robbing the man because it was later discovered that he had over \$200 on him; he had offered this to his assailants if they would just leave him alone. They laughed as they continued to beat him until they rendered him unconscious. Whether they stopped their attack because they thought that they had killed him or because of their fear in getting caught is not known; nevertheless, they left the scene of the crime. They left him there to die, or whatever else was to be the fate of this “different” man.

We all have seen the exploitation of the “little people,” “midgets,” “DWARVES,” whatever the term that is acceptable. We have all stared; none of us is exempt from saying that seeing them on the streets has not brought forth our attention or curiosity, thereby making us one of the many that are intrigued with their individuality. But that is where it ends, and we move on with the knowledge that we are all different in our own unique way. That is what makes all of us the individuals that we

are. Our conscious decision at those very moments to accept others for who they are, not what they are, sets us apart from the individuals that commit these kinds of horrible crimes against other human beings.

Looking back at that day so many years ago, I cannot help but wonder why a group of young people would do such a hateful and horrible act of violence to a complete stranger? With no more knowledge of the identities of these young men now than I had that very day, it is something that I will never know the answer to. Their mean-spirited and bigoted words still find their way into my mind when I recall the incident. Were these young men on drugs? Were they mentally dis-

turbed? Or were they also victims of their own circumstances that they could not control anymore than the victim that they so unmercifully beat within an inch of his life? These are merely questions that I consider as I go on about my life. I continue to help people that need my help for that is what I am trained to do. Whether I am on duty, or just a civilian out and about enjoying my day, I would do the same thing I did that day. I would stop and help a man in trouble, a man that did not deserve to be beaten and left to die just because someone considered him different.



Happiness



Tiiu Newlin moved to California from Estonia five years ago, and now lives in Lodi with her husband Dennis and two teenaged sons. She works full-time in a bank as a service specialist. She is pursuing a business degree at Delta College.



If you think about being healthy, wealthy and wise, what would you like more? Moreover, what does it all bring? Someone once said, “The best things in life are free.” Others would have you believe that life is a game, the one that has accumulated the most at the end of the game wins. I believe that the really best things in life — happiness and all that it brings — are free and cannot be purchased.

First, we must understand the difference between pleasure and happiness. Although people believe that you can purchase happiness, it is really pleasure that they buy. Money is a medium of exchange by economists. When we go to McDonald’s to get a hamburger, we need money. By rules of economy, we get money for

an exchange of the work we do or services we give. In return, money gives us the possibility to get stuff or do stuff. These things may bring pleasure, but pleasure is not happiness. Therefore, we can purchase opportunities and material things that bring about pleasurable experiences, but happiness is something more than this.

What is happiness and all that it brings? Happiness is both a state of mind and a way of life. Some would call it a spiritual journey; others may refer to it as a balance of nature. I have even heard someone say that happiness comes when you find yourself. These are all things that money cannot purchase. I have heard of many people being accused of buying their way into heaven. We can

Although people believe that you can purchase happiness, it is really pleasure that they buy.

If you could buy happiness, then you would expect wealthy people to be very happy


usually tell when someone is happy or unhappy. Happy people are good to be around, and bring a sense of security and benefit to the relationship. These are the best things in life, and they cannot be purchased with money.

If you could buy happiness, then you would expect wealthy people to be very happy. There are many examples of wealthy people who we would expect to be happy but are not. Life seemed to give everything money could buy for the young Bay Area man John Walker, but he ended up fighting among terrorist forces in Afghanistan against the progressive world. He comes from a wealthy family, but the “wealth” probably did not make him happy. In his search for happiness, he gave up his wealth, family and country, and made statements that indicated he was happy with being near death in a fortress fighting alongside our enemy.

Other examples come from stories and parables. “Happiness” or “happy ever after” are the words that I most vividly remember from

childhood fairy tales. Most fairy tales begin that once upon a time, there lived a rich king or queen but he or she was lonely and not happy. However, nearby in the countryside in a poor neighborhood a young woman or man with many friends lived very happily. Through these stories we understand that happiness is something that you find; we learn something about the people — who they are, how they see themselves, and how they live their lives.

So you can see many people try to find happiness through pleasurable things, and because you can barter for these pleasurable experiences through various means, people think that they can purchase happiness. The possibilities that come through wealth may bring pleasure, but pleasure is not happiness. Happiness is a journey that encompasses both a state of mind and a way of life. Out of this journey comes all the things that money cannot purchase — the best things in life.



Happiness is both
a state of mind and
a way of life.

Hooked on “Caramel-Colored Gold”



Melody Nelson was born and raised in Hayward, California, but has lived in Utah until last summer. She and her husband, Rick, recently moved to Stockton (after all the kids left home) to finish school and enjoy the milder climate. Melody has raised six children and is a grandmother of four. She is currently a student and Graphic Artist here at Delta College, and a music teacher at Pianos Plus Midi. She plans to transfer to UOP in the fall where she will be majoring in music therapy. She is also the graphic artist for this volume of Delta Winds.

“A sound mind in a sound body’ is a short but full description of a happy state in this world. He that has these two, has little more to wish for . . .” – John Locke.

As mortal beings, maintaining good health can mean the difference between success and failure, joy and pain, life and death. For more than thirty years, the Surgeon General and the Department of Health and Human Services have spent billions of our tax dollars to educate the nation about the negative effects of poor nutrition. Statistics show that poor nutrition causes “untold personal suffering, and accounts for astronomical health care costs [. . .] as the diseases of nutritional deficiency have diminished, they have been replaced by diseases of dietary excess and imbalance—problems that now rank among the leading causes of illness and death in the United States” (Koop 3).

In response to our nation’s health crisis, our federal government has sponsored programs to educate and regulate the sale of “junk food” in our nation’s schools. A report from the Department of Health and Human Services says that even a small decrease in junk food consumption would result in substantial benefits to

our nation (3). But current national studies show that obesity is on the rise, and approximately 40% of school-aged children have an increased risk of heart disease (Evers 13). Despite the increased awareness of the benefits of good nutrition, we are a nation hooked on junk food, and many school administrators are taking advantage of the situation. Unless parents and teachers get involved, not only will our nation’s children continue to be encouraged to sacrifice their health for education, but our public schools will become dependant on this “junk food” addiction to generate revenue.

In Washington County, Utah, school administrators defend their current policy allowing vending machines because they say the students are going to eat junk food anyway, so the schools might as well be the ones that benefit. Furthermore, they say it keeps the kids from going off campus. They are convinced that parents and faculty do not have the time to get involved in fund raisers in order to earn the extra money needed for education (Henderson).

There is no question that a substantial amount of cash can be generated by selling junk food to students. At Desert Hills Intermediate School (DHIS), a school whose

enrollment consists of about 1,000 sixth and seventh grade students, the total profit for the eight vending machines is \$21,855/year. That's a lot of junk food (Nelson).

Vern Jensen, a teacher at DHIS, believes that we are living in a permissive society, and it's not worth the effort to try to keep candy

sell junk food so they can finance the purchase of such things as computers, teacher training, and other educational supplies. But is the extra revenue worth the increased health risks? Jill Barcum, a writer for the *Minneapolis-Star Tribune* says, "This year the average American will guzzle 54 gallons of Coke, Pepsi, Mountain

Despite the increased awareness of the benefits of good nutrition, we are a nation hooked on junk food, and many school administrators are taking advantage of the situation.

and pop out of school (Jensen). If the parents and teachers don't take a stand, then maybe he is right. But, maybe parents who are not concerned about what their children eat at school do not understand the long term costs of poor nutrition. Apparently, the school administrators need to investigate the long term consequences as well.

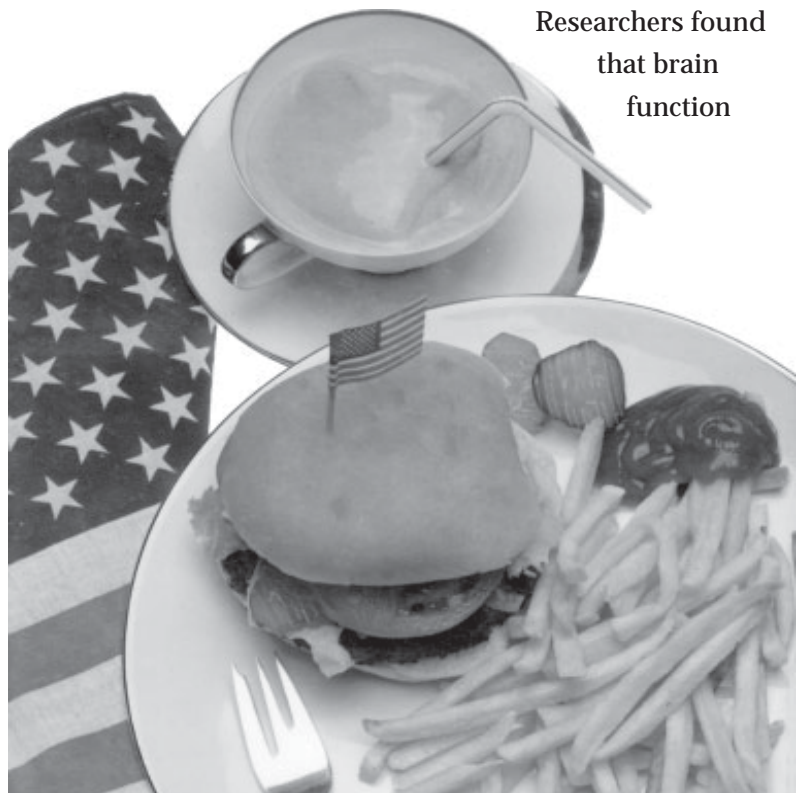
Experience tells us that if the junk food weren't available, most of the students would choose food that is healthier. One student admits buying some chips and a Pepsi, even though her mother packed her some yogurt, cookies, and an apple because she says "it's fast and it's filling" (Nakamura A01). Another teacher reminds us that "many of the students at the sixth and seventh grade levels do not make wise decisions, especially regarding nutrition. As educators we have the responsibility to help them be wise consumers as well as healthy citizens." (Loveland)

Some parents and teachers advocate selling healthy snacks. The problem is that the kids are not hooked on nutrition; they are hooked on sugar and caffeine. Schools have reported that when nutritious snacks were put in vending machines, sadly, the revenues dropped (Nakamura A01). The schools

Dew and other fizzy beverages . . . This is three times the amount consumed per capita in the 1970's . . . Health related diseases in America are on the rise."

There is no question that the junk food sold in vending machines promotes poor nutrition. A study found that about 40% of America's children had intakes of less than half the recommended amounts of folate, vitamin D, calcium, iron, magnesium, selenium, zinc, and many other minerals (Sizer & Whitney 280-2).

Researchers found that brain function



Researchers found that brain function may be sensitive to borderline deficiencies of many other nutrients, a conclusion supported by many previous findings.



may be sensitive to borderline deficiencies of many other nutrients, a conclusion supported by many previous findings. With the onset of adolescence, needs for all nutrients become greater than at any other time of life, except during pregnancy or lactation. When students fill up on pop and candy, they literally have “spoiled their appetites.” The high amount of empty calories, in the form of carbohydrates, the most common one being sugar, satisfies their satiety center in their brain, and they simply are not hungry when lunchtime arrives (Sizer & Whitney 280-2).

Lack of iron is the most widespread nutrition problem for children and adolescents, despite the iron fortification of foods and other programs to combat this deficiency. An iron deficiency causes an energy crisis in the body and can have a negative effect on behavior, mood, attention span, and learning ability. The need for iron is especially great in supporting menstruation in girls and in developing lean body mass in boys. Again, allowing students to consume sugar in lieu of healthy snacks lessens their ability to learn. The cost for special schooling, and rehabilitation of individuals who get behind in their school studies is in

the billions of dollars. Granted, there are many factors that result in a child’s failing in school, but poor nutrition is one of those factors that could be minimized or even eliminated.

Adolescence is also a crucial time for bone development. The bones are gaining density, laying down the calcium that may make the difference between weak and strong bones later in life. Soft drinks contain phosphoric acid. Some studies suggest that too much phosphoric acid, particularly when a person is not getting enough calcium, may trigger a process that lowers calcium levels in the blood (Dunne 248).

Other health experts explain:

“To compensate, the body mobilizes calcium from the bones and uses it elsewhere. The caffeine in pop, which can contain 50 milligrams or more of this stimulant in a 12-ounce can, may similarly affect calcium levels. Excess caffeine may cause the kidneys to rid the body of more calcium than it should. The result may be that the calcium needed by your bones winds up in the urine” (Barcum).

Another hidden cost of the use of vending machines involves the extra time it takes to clean up the school. One custodian at DHIS is

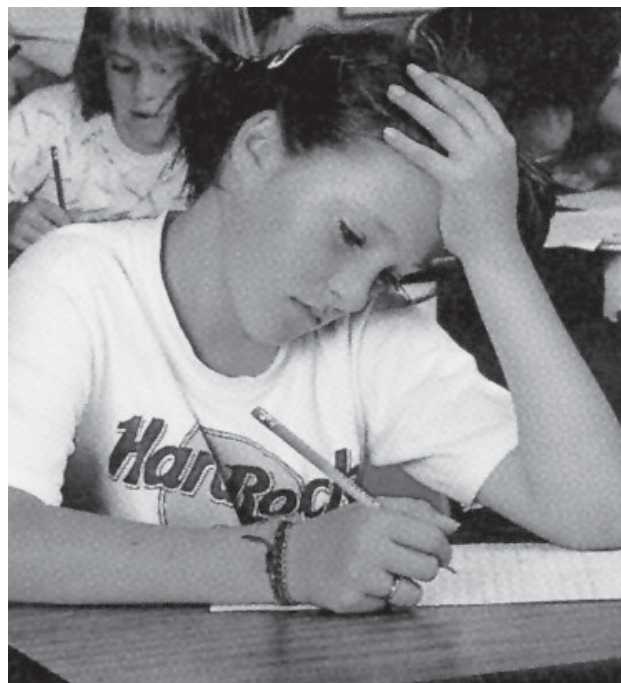
convinced that the additional cleanup required due to the increased candy wrappers, pop cans, and sticky messes cost the school approximately \$25,000 per year (Nelson). In other words, each school has to hire another full-time custodian just to take care of the increased workload. Also, has anyone ever totaled the amount of school hours a child misses because he or she is ill? Good nutrition could make a difference. Surveys show that most teachers do not support the sale of junk food in the schools (Nelson). Even though teachers have the advantage of being with our children for a good part of the day, they still need help. We, as parents and community members, can help them organize student or teacher committees, educate other students, teachers, and administrators, or start petitions to get the entire community involved. We support the PTA. We support the anti-drug program. We can support the cause against junk food. There are science fairs, reading fairs, creative art fairs, why not a "Nutrition Fair," with prizes available for the students with the best, most ingenious displays? We can help students get more excited about being healthy by showing them how good nutrition makes them stronger, smarter and better looking, but remember the presence of vending machines counter acts such efforts (Evers 83).

Parents, in agreement with state and federal regulations, have tried to reach a compromise, insisting that the machines be turned off until after lunch. Still, school administrators argue that if vending machines were off limits until after lunch, the revenues would drop (Fisher B01). It seems that the thousands of dollars that are coming their way is obstructing their vision. They are failing to see the big picture. The presence of junk food machines sends conflicting messages to our children.

Marc Fisher, writer for the *Washington Post*, reports that soda companies lure the principles into signing contracts which violate state rules by offering sports equipment and other "goodies." Fisher described one principal as willing to "grab

a few extra shekels for his school, [as] he committed to hedging the law and luring students into buying more fattening swill " (B01). These contracts force the principals to promise that ads will be placed around the school, and that machines will be available for students at all times. Even Channel One, which all students are required to watch so the schools can get free video equipment, includes two minutes of candy and acne-cream ads. These principals think that the parents are grateful for these contracts because it keeps the schools in the "black" financially. Fisher relates his experience at a public hearing where he watched "a sad parade of principals, [as they] begged lawmakers not to squelch their flow of caramel-colored gold" (B01).

Despite the increased awareness of the benefits of good nutrition we are a nation hooked on junk food, and administrators of our schools are taking advantage. School contracts with big companies such as Pepsi and Coca-Cola are on the increase. These contracts require the schools push sales as soda manufactures offer additional "end of month" bonuses. For example, administrators of High Point High School in Beltsville, Maryland signed an agreement with the Mid-Atlantic Coca-Cola Bottling Company, Inc. and Monumental Vending. The contract with Coca-Cola requires the



school to sell a minimum of 4,500 cases of soda per year. They are also required to advertise Coke products on all menu boards. Coke also has exclusive rights at athletic games. Monumental requires a minimum number of

integrity. We need to make sure that the administrators of these schools realize they are promoting poor health habits to the children whose future they were hired to enhance.

In the Washington County School

This issue is about integrity. The school administrators seem to be willing to sacrifice theirs for money.

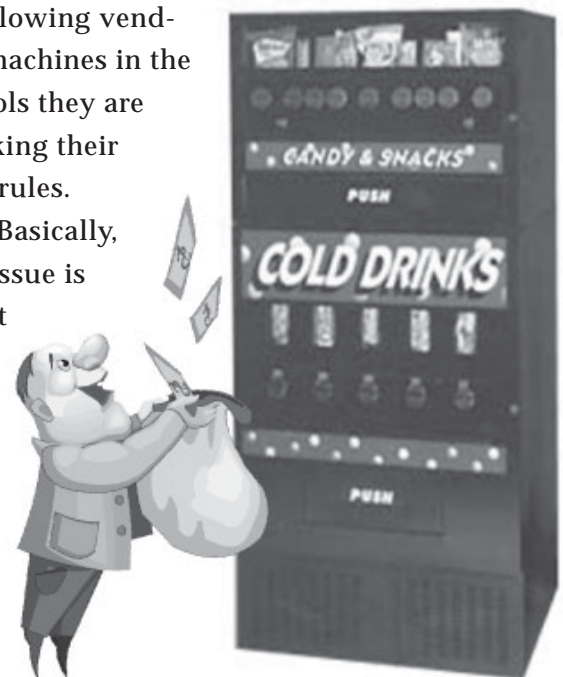
vending machines to be placed in the schools, and that they be available to students at all times “except where not permitted by state or federal regulations.” Even though Maryland has regulations prohibiting the use of the machines during lunch, these regulations are often being ignored (Nakamura A01). A school district in Florida reported losing \$450,000 in sales when vending machines were turned off until one hour after lunch (“School Vending Machines”).

Since most of the products sold by Pepsi and Coca-Cola contain significant amounts of caffeine, school administrators who sign these contracts are promoting the use of a legal, but addictive, drug. In essence, they are saying, “Even though soda and junk food are bad for your body, and may cause you serious health problems in the future, the school needs more money. So, if you are going to buy it, buy it from us.” Demoree Johnson, department head of Nutrition and Family Sciences at Dixie State College, believes that any one of the reasons listed above would constitute all the proof that is needed to justify removing the vending machines from the school. She is convinced that this issue is “a no-brainer.” Allowing vending machines in schools just complicates the problem of poor nutrition in the lives of the students (Johnson). Our challenge is to convince the school administrators that the increased revenue is not worth sacrificing their

District’s front office is a sign that reads, “We proceed on the basis on what is best for the child,” not “what is best for the school’s pocket book.” Is there a conflict of interest that keeps these machines in the schools? A budget cut, as a result of lost revenue, could jeopardize someone’s job. Not very many people are willing to sacrifice their own job for the good of all. The presence of vending machines in our schools has proved to lower the quality of the learning environment and is not “best for the child.” Because these machines have been allowed, these administrators have, in essence, failed our children and the taxpayers. They need to be reminded that our tax dollars are paying their salary.

By allowing vending machines in the schools they are breaking their own rules.

Basically, this issue is about



integrity. The school administrators seem to be willing to sacrifice theirs for money. Fisher's experience has shown us that many school administrators will not give up this revenue without a fight. But there is hope. Parent groups in Philadelphia have successfully blocked a 43-million dollar contract with Coca-Cola, and others have forced schools to sell only nutritious snacks during lunch (Nakamura A01). An organization called CATCH (Child and Adolescent Trail for Cardiovascular Health) has also successfully improved the eating and exercise habits of students that participated in the program (Danzig).

Think of it this way: How many pet owners would support a kennel that offered their "family pet" junk food? Are we guilty of caring more about our animals than our children? Our greatest natural resource for tomorrow is the child of today, and certainly, the money invested in our children gives everyone a better chance in the future. Our children trust us to do everything in our power to increase their chances for success. Robert Louis Stevenson said, "Sooner or later we all sit down to a banquet of consequences." Making money off the poor eating habits of America's children could result in consequences that are more costly in the end. Eliminating or limiting vending machines in our nation's schools is an important first step in showing our children that we care enough about their future to say "no" to junk food.

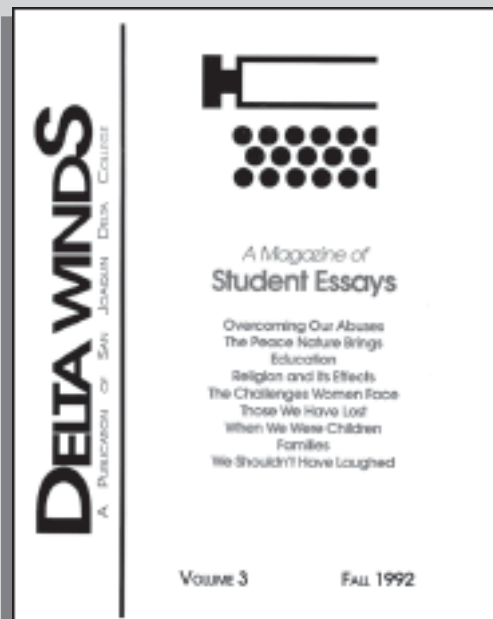
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Editors' Choice

The Editors' Choice essays are works published in previous volumes of Delta Winds. As a way of commemorating the fifteenth volume of Delta Winds, the editors have selected these essays for special recognition.



Homemade Dresses

Nearly ten years after its publication in the third volume of Delta Winds, Michelle Cox's essay "Homemade Dresses" emerges as one of my favorites. In its simplicity, the brief essay highlights her honest reflection and regret about saving her own reputation by not standing up for someone else being ridiculed. It is at once a personal memory of fear, shame, and regret, and an analogy for a much larger issue: if we each save ourselves, ultimately, we are made more vulnerable to that which we are trying to avoid. It is what the Native American saying, "Walk in another's moccasins" argues against. It is what enables holocausts to occur. It is what Arthur Miller writes about in his play After the Fall: "If everyone broke faith, there would be no civilization." It is the choice we face every day in a myriad of ways. And, it is as simple as risking ostracism even as children when another is rejected for appearing different.

Jane K. Dominik
Editor (1991-1996)

Racism and Sexism in Advertising

This essay provides striking evidence of how advertisers send implicit messages that perpetuate racist and sexist stereotypes. Shafeeq Sadiq brings these messages to our attention and explains the subtleties involved. His essay is used in English courses across the country as it has been reprinted in a college textbook, *The Compact Reader: Short Essays by Method and Theme* by Jane E. Aaron and published by Bedford/St. Martin's Press.

A model for student writing, "Racism and Sexism in Advertising" shows us how to organize the essay into a clearly defined introduction, body, and conclusion. The body paragraphs contain very specific details and transitional devices to add unity to the writing. Also, students take note of the content. Recently, after having read the essay in English 79, students viewed and discussed advertisements in the Super Bowl with a much more critical eye. And this is what good writing can do — make us more aware.

Bob Bini
Co-editor (1997-present)



Me and My Shadow

I like this essay as an essay. The title alludes to a well-known song and fits perfectly with the content. Cathy gives background information about guide dogs, about her former guide dog, Coral, and about the event which is to take place. Then she builds suspense in her narrative, sharing her anticipation and doubts, until the happy moment where she meets Shadow. The special bond between Cathy and Shadow is evident and touching.

The essay is more special because of my personal knowledge of Cathy and Shadow. They were enrolled in my American Literature Survey class (only Cathy officially, I guess). We often joked that Cathy could stay awake during lectures, but not Shadow, who stretched out and thoroughly enjoyed a deep sleep soon after class started.

Will Agopsowicz
Co-editor (1997-present)



Homemade Dresses

(Originally published in 1992 in *Delta Winds* Volume 3)

After graduating Delta College with an A. A. degree, Michelle Cox graduated from U.C. Davis with a degree in English Literature. After some haphazard soul searching, she ran off to Thailand where she lived for a year teaching English and traveling throughout the area. She spent another three months traveling through India and Sri Lanka and two months hiking the Everest trail in Nepal. Since then, she has settled in Oakland, California, where she works as an accountant for a small property management company. Currently, she is taking accounting classes to earn a CPA and she is taking glass blowing classes to keep her sanity.

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It was Easter Sunday. I was nine years old, an age when best friends were necessary and giggling a common pastime. It was also an age when the effects of our actions and words were not considered.

That day was a day of excitement. Not because it was the celebration of the resurrection of Christ, but because I could wear my brand new dress — bought two weeks ago and saved just for this occasion. When my family and I arrived, I went straight to my Sunday school class where I met with my two best friends, Mary and Jane. After we had each shown off our new dresses, we sat down to complain about our big brothers and talk of all the candy we would get in our Easter baskets later that day.

Then she walked in. Sue. I was used to seeing Sue in old hand-me-downs passed down from other girls in the church, usually faded shirts and jeans that were about to fall apart. But today was different. She was wearing a sunshine yellow dress with little white flowers decorating it. There was a bow in the back and lace on the collar and cuffs. I had never seen Sue in a dress before. I knew that her mother had made the dress. It just didn't have that store-bought quality to it, not to mention they could not afford to spend money on something so frivolous.

In class, Sue usually had a faraway look in her eyes and rarely smiled. But today was different. Her face was bright, and she walked like a queen. I don't think I had ever seen

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her that happy before. She could hardly contain herself; my first reaction was surprise, but I began to smile. Her obvious happiness seemed almost contagious.

Then I heard them. The whispers. These were not usual quiet, secretive whispers, but the kind of whispers that were meant to be heard by all. The pastor's daughter, Mary, leaned over and whispered loudly.

In that glance, her eyes were pleading with me, pleading with me to defend her.



“Sue is wearing a dress! Now I know why she always wears pants. At least the pants didn't show how fat she was!”

Then I heard Jane whisper even more loudly, “What an ugly dress! Have you ever seen anything like it? I bet her mother made it!” Sue's face instantly hardened. She was probably used to the name-calling, the teasing, the cruel laughter of children. She looked down at the ground, trying to fight back the tears, fighting not to let anyone see that she did have feelings, that words do hurt.

Suddenly she looked up and glanced at me. In that glance, her eyes were pleading with me, pleading with me to defend her. To somehow take back what was said. To give back her happiness. But I was frozen. Frozen by my own fear of rejection. My fear of being an individual. I did not want to be different and alone, but was satisfied

being a clone and accepted. I looked away to avoid my own guilt and remained silent.

Sue continued to come to church, but she never went to Sunday school. Instead she went to class with her parents. And she never wore a dress again. And I never saw her smile again. Though I know she may not ever remember the incident, it deeply affected me. I realize that an incident like this not only occurs in the lives of nine-year-olds. Every day, people are shunned because of color, religion, lack of education, and, yes, even when they are wearing homemade dresses. And we remain silent.

RACISM AND SEXISM IN ADVERTISING



(Originally published in 1997 in Delta Winds Volume 10)

These advertisements present women as a goal, a trophy if you will.... Unfortunately, the exploitation does not stop with women.

After graduating from Delta College in 1998, Shafeeq Sadiq transferred to University of California, Davis. There he completed a bachelor's degree in economics in 2000. He then worked as an accountant in the Bay Area for one year before returning to his education. Shafeeq currently is enrolled in the University of California, Hastings College of Law, one of the premier law schools in the nation. He finds law school challenging, but he dedicates himself to his studies and intends to focus on tax law or immigration law.

It seems as if everywhere you turn, someone is trying to be politically correct. Whether it involves minorities or women, racist and sexist comments are no longer tolerated in places such as the school yard and the work place. Why is it, then, that minorities and women are constantly being exploited in everyday advertisements? Television, magazines, and billboards no longer show products, but rather show gimmicks in order to sell their product. In general, these gimmicks seem to enforce racial stereotypes and to view women in a negative way. It appears that on every channel, there is another



television commercial trying to sell its product with beautiful women. These commercials can range from selling beer to selling cars.

Who can forget the gorgeous blonde standing next to the green Geo Storm, proudly exclaiming, "A man likes a woman who knows how to drive a stick!"? Advertisements like these, though seemingly aimed towards women, are actually exploiting them en route to their actual target: men. This commercial would routinely air during sporting events, when the majority of the viewers are male. It fits in well with the other commercials which, more often than not, have to do with beer. Beer companies have been

notorious for exploiting women in their everyday promotions. Watching a football game, you can usually find an attractive young lady being swept off her feet by a less than attractive man after he opens the beer of his choice. Or, if you are lucky, you can witness several young women materialize on a desert island with the male drinker after, of course, he opens his can of beer. These advertisements present women as a goal, a trophy if you will, that can only be attained with the proper beverage. These women seldom have anything to say besides “Yes,” making them seem like unintelligent sex objects. Unfortunately, the exploitation does not stop with women. Beer commercials exploit minorities as well.

Black Entertainment Television frequently airs malt liquor commercials directed at African-American buyers. These usually involve a hip-hop rap artist who visits an unusually quiet ghetto community. When he brings the malt liquor, the entire neighborhood breaks into song and dance, with the very attractive African-American woman saying, “Things are back to the way they used to be.” How did things used to be? Were there no peaceful afternoons in the ‘hood? African-Americans can’t be happy in a calm, serene environment? Though there are no racial slurs uttered, the entire commercial perpetuates stereotypes of the African-American community. They must sing and dance in the streets, trying to live life the way it used to be, before they were confined to the monotony of a good job and a quiet neighborhood. Perhaps the commercial maker is trying to say that African-Americans, as a whole, have been subdued by society.

African-Americans are not the only minority group exploited in advertising; Arab-Americans are victims as well. On September 16, 1996, *Newsweek*

magazine printed a two page advertisement for a well-known computer company. This ad depicted an Arab man from an unknown Arab country, wearing his native garb and standing next to a camel. There are boxes of computer parts in the corner of the page. The ad reads: “Some computer companies don’t make their own parts. Makes you wonder where they get them.” This advertisement insinuates that if these parts were made in an Arab country, they would somehow be inferior. Though the country is not mentioned by name, the message is still very clear.

Perhaps the most stereotyped people, when it comes to advertising, are Indian-Americans. To my recollection, there has never been a major commercial involving an Indian-American who didn’t speak with a ridiculously exaggerated accent. The most recent perpetrator, MCI, promotes a dime-a-minute service featuring an Indian-American with a very thick and pronounced accent stereotypically driving a New York City taxicab. The actor will never be an American who happens to be of Indian descent. For the company, using Indian-Americans in this manner

might add to the comic value of the commercial. But it is safe to say that to most Indian-Americans, it is no laughing matter.

Racism and sexism are problems that go unnoticed in advertising today. Nevertheless, they must be dealt with. The only winners in these types of ads are the advertisers themselves, who make money when you buy the product. There needs to be a public awakening, for racism and sexism should not be used in any situation, especially not to sell products. Advertisers need to take responsibility for their own actions and to end this type of exploitation. If they do not, we the consumer can always force them. After all, we have the dollars and the sense.

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Me and My Shadow

(Originally published in 1997 in Delta Winds Volume 10)

Cathy Anne Murtha, self-employed as an Access Technology Trainer on the Internet, is a pioneer in her field. She teaches trainers from around the world in her online classes. She was the first Access Tech Trainer to bring training of blind and visually impaired computer users to the Internet.

“Paws for Independence” is the motto of Southeastern Guide Dogs of Central Florida. These words carry special meaning for me. They signify the freedom and sense of friend to me. When we first met, I could not imagine how that little bundle of energy could possibly settle down into a competent working dog. She managed to push all my

The frisky, little black lab that leapt into my arms three years ago has become an invaluable friend

independence that I now hold within my heart and exhibit on a daily basis through the assistance and companionship of my best friend, my guide dog, Shadow. Meeting Shadow in the living room of Southeastern Guide Dogs was one of the most memorable moments of my life. The frisky, little black lab that leapt into my arms three years ago has become an invaluable

fears aside the first time I took the leather handle of her harness in my hand. Shadow, four years old, has continued to amaze me throughout our two years of working together. We are best friends and constant companions.

The sense of excitement in the spacious living room of Southeastern Guide Dogs was palpable on that sultry August day in 1993. Twelve blind students from all walks of life and all regions of the United States were about to experience

great change. We were not to understand the special bond that would be created or how much



Cathy Murtha's company website can be found at:
<http://www.accesstechnologyinstitute.com>.

Laughter spread throughout the room.
Golden Retrievers, smooth-coated Collies,
and German Shepherds dragged their
trainers into the room.

pleasure we would derive from these incredible animals until much later. At that moment, all we could feel was a sense of overwhelming anticipation.

One by one the dogs were brought into the room. We could hear the toenails skittering on the linoleum of the hall as the trainers struggled to control the dogs' excitement. It was hard to believe, but it was very possible—they were almost more excited than we were. The trainers tried valiantly to maintain a sense of dignity about the occasion; however, as more dogs entered the room, the party atmosphere overwhelmed one and all. Wet noses were thrust into our surprised faces, greetings and doggy kisses were offered by the four-legged bundles of energy, and happy tails thwapped our faces. Laughter spread throughout the room. Golden Retrievers, smooth-coated Collies, and German Shepherds dragged their trainers into the room. As the trainers handed the leashes to the appropriate students, the greetings began. The dogs really didn't care whom they were saying "hi" to; it seemed like everyone was catching a wet tongue on his face or having the air whooshed from his lungs by an eager pup who wanted to be the center of attention. I sat on

the sofa, listening to the excitement, remembering a similar moment seven years previous when I had received my first guide dog, a rambunctious black lab named Coral. I remembered the sense of awe and wonder that filled me. I felt that feeling returning. I listened for my name to be called. Because I was a returning graduate, I had a feeling I would be one of the last to receive my dog. My heart was beating faster as I waited, trying to be patient, trying to control the sense of excitement that would not be quelled. Finally, I heard my name announced. I heard the words "Black Labrador" and a name . . . "Shadow." Suddenly there was a cold nose on my hand, a velvet ear, a sleek black body and a ferociously waving tail. Two paws were planted firmly in my lap; Shadow and I were nose to nose. She sniffed me gently; I felt my hands wrap around her strong neck; I held her close. I murmured her beautiful name over and over again, "Shadow." Tears welled in my eyes. I had missed having a dog in my life since having to retire Coral. Coral had developed epilepsy and had gone to live with a good friend of mine. I wondered if I would be able to enjoy more years with Shadow. I felt trepidation creep over me, but I

Cathy works in many areas: Cathy writes and sells textbooks on CD and in Digital Audio, making her textbooks totally accessible. Up until her first release of a CD textbook, all recorded textbooks for blind consumers were on cassette tapes. Her series of classes for ACB Radio aired recently. In May of 2002, she will begin a regular column in Access World, a magazine published by the American Foundation for the Blind. She takes a rather unique spin on the needs of blind computer users. As she states, "Access World has given me an opportunity to press for better quality training for our community and to voice concerns that are well known within the community but rarely expressed."

When the chest strap was buckled into place, Shadow was transformed. She was a working Guide Dog and knew it!

thrust it aside! I let the tears fall and decided that Shadow was mine; we would be together for a very long time!

Just as a mother checks on a newborn baby, later that night I found myself creeping to the bottom of my bed, reaching over to feel my dog. I would usually be met with a moist nose and the happy thump of Shadow's tail against the floor. I am not sure, to this day, why I felt that need to check on her. Perhaps I wanted to be sure she was real, or that she was okay, or that she was really there. I only know that I felt a sense of wonder and satisfaction each time she was there, breathing softly and curled in her customary little ball.

The next day the other students and I assembled in the sun porch and waited for our turn to work our dogs for the first time in harness. I decided not to anticipate my moment, but to enjoy those of my companions. One by one they left the sun porch; I could feel their sense of doubt; many had come to the school expecting something but had no real concept of what a guide dog could do. They had gone through the interviews, had many meetings during the previous three days, but this was the moment that would tell them that their lives were about to change. They left the porch not knowing what to expect; they were hopeful, but the skepticism was in their voices and actions. At that moment, their companions were just dogs—wonderful, frisky creatures—but they had no concept of the miraculous changes that would take place

when the harnesses were snapped beneath their dogs' chests. It was not possible to convey the experience to students who had not yet worked their dogs; words like *incredible*, *wonderful*, and *freedom* tumbled out. *Freedom*, the word hung in the air; I felt it swirling through my mind when I was called to bring Shadow to the work area. I rose from my chair. Shadow heeled perfectly. My head was in a daze; my fingers caressed the soft leather of the harness that was slung over my shoulder. I wondered if our relationship would be as good as Coral's and mine. I had returned to cane travel three months before arriving at Southeastern. Now the moment had come to welcome a new companion into my life. I was afraid of making comparisons, afraid that I would not give Shadow a fair chance, afraid that I would be disappointed.

The harness slid over Shadow's wriggling head; as I buckled it into place, her nose touched my face; a gentle sniff was offered. I patted her gently on the head and ran my hand down the length of her body. Her tail was wagging, not with the enthusiasm of a puppy, but with self-assurance. When the chest strap was buckled into place, Shadow was transformed. She was a working Guide Dog and knew it! I stood beside her, the harness held loosely in my left hand, the leash looped through two fingers; I gave the command: "Forward!" Words cannot express what I experienced at that moment. I thought it would be the same as the first time I picked up Coral's

harness, but it wasn't. It was so much more! Shadow strode out with confidence. I could feel the wind in my face and listen to the birds singing high in the trees. I felt the sun shining down on us as we strode down the sidewalk. I no longer worried about running off a curb or having to listen for pedestrians. I remember wondering if that was how a sighted person felt as he strode down the sidewalk. In that moment all the fears I had been trying to push aside left me. I silently apologized to Shadow for my doubts and began to talk to her. I told her what a good dog she was, how special she was, and what a wonderful job she was doing. I felt the first of many acknowledgments that were to follow. Shadow turned slightly and bumped her soft muzzle gently against my knee. This is a signal that Shadow continues to use today. If I am not talking enough, if I don't acknowledge an especially great aversion quickly enough, if I don't know that she has just walked around a gaping hole in the sidewalk and saved me from tumbling headlong into a chasm filled with jagged chunks of concrete, I will feel the familiar, gentle nudge and know that I have been negli-

gent in my responsibilities.

Shadow has proven to be an exceptional working dog. This is not only due to the excellent training she received at Southeastern Guide Dogs, but also to the family that gave her the love and training she needed as a puppy. Shadow is secure in any environment. She handles even the most treacherous of obstacles with self-confidence and pride. She is a gentle and loving creature whose only desire is to please me and receive the acknowledgment she deserves. Meeting Shadow and welcoming her into my life was an experience that will never be repeated, but each time I pick up the harness and command her to go forward, I feel the Florida sun and hear birds. I remember our first walk and think of the word that best describes our relationship, the word that swam in my head on the humid August day—*freedom*.

Cathy says that Shadow is still with her, she is growing older. She explains, "although we still work together, it isn't as often as usual. She is still healthy but slowing down. At nine years old, she now enjoys casual walks and playing in the yard. Her personality is still sweet and loving, she still loves to catch a kid at 'dog level' and smother them with kisses. In short, she is still the same sweet-natured little thing who is very loved by the family."



Shadow wears a sign that says, "Do Not Pet Me. I am a Southeastern Guide Dog." Since many are tempted to pet or embrace her, it is important to stress the rules about not petting guide dogs. Guide dogs in public should never receive attention of any kind, not even a "hello" without permission of the guide dog user. Petting, feeding, calling and approaching a guide dog should absolutely never be done. These are working dogs, trained to be attentive to their job, and they should not be distracted even with the kindest of intentions.