Wisconsin English Journal
An Official Publication of:
The Wisconsin Council of Teachers of English

Copy Editor, Stephen Fisher
Production Editor, Mary Ellen Alea
Assistant Editor/Designer, Heather L. Stewart
Cover Design, Anthony W. Ferguson

English Department
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, WI 54702
Member: NCTE Information Exchange Agreement

Officers:
President - Caroline Majak, UW-Eau Claire
1st Vice President - Sandy Zinos, Waukesha Public Schools
2nd Vice President - Mary Ann Evans-Patrick, UW-Oshkosh
Director at Large - Eugene Baer, Wisconsin Lutheran College
Secretary - Carol Conway-Gerhardt, Sheboygan Area School District

Executive Treasurer/Membership Secretary - Martin Wood, UW-Eau Claire
Trust Officer - John Kean, UW-Madison

Membership Information:
The following options are available:
Regular Membership - $20.00
Contributing Membership - $30.00
Sustaining Membership - $40.00
Student/Retired Membership - $5.00

Send address and check to:
Martin Wood
Wisconsin Council of Teachers of English
English Department
UW-Eau Claire
Eau Claire, WI 54702-4004
(Make checks payable to: Wisconsin Council of Teachers of English)

Send Submissions to:
Stephen Fisher
1200 West Wausau Avenue
West High School
Wausau, WI 54401

The Wisconsin English Journal is published three times annually in October, January, and April by the Wisconsin Council of Teachers of English. Subscription rate is $10.00 per year for public and private libraries, curriculum centers and similar professional offices. A single copy is $5.00. Make checks payable to the Wisconsin Council of Teachers of English. All subscriptions and other correspondence referring to Wisconsin English Journal should be addressed to Mary Ellen Alea, English Department, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, Eau Claire, WI, 54702-4004.
Featured Articles

*In Memoriam: Lee Burress* ................................................................. 4
by Nicholas Karolides

*Organizing the Writing Classroom so Students Enjoy Writing* ............................................ 8
by Mary M. McClone

*Envisioning Revision* ................................................................. 12
by Alys Culhane

Collaborative Writing

*Student Voices: Personal Provocative, Powerful* ................................................................. 15
by Lois Kathan, Matt Liethen, and Rachel Joyce

*The Wisconsin English Journal Experience: A Continuing Exercise in Collaboration* .................. 18
by Mary Ellen Alea and Heather L. Stewart

Poetry

*If Poems Were Houses* ................................................................. 21
by Ralph Schneider

*Haircut* .................................................................................. 22
by Patti See

Student Writing

*Slaying the Dragon* ................................................................. 23
by Shana Harvey

*(Untitled)* ................................................................................ 28
by Jarrod T. Beglinger

*A Midsummer Night's Dream Analysis* ........................................................................... 30
by Miriam Jacobson

*America Under Siege* ........................................................................... 34
by Meredith Nichols
Student Writing, Continued

1921 – 42nd Street ................................................................. 36
by Deborah Raksany

Struggles ........................................................................ 38
by Lee Sensenbrenner

Lost in Love or Why there should Never be a Cherry Pepsi .................................................. 40
by Laura Simpson

Desdemona and Othello .......................................................... 43
by Ruth Wikler

The Battle with Grendel .......................................................... 48
by Melody J. Wollangk

NCTE News

Editor's Note ........................................................................ 3

A Call For Manuscripts ............................................................ 3

NCTE News Bits ................................................................. 50
Editors’ Note

As we close the 1993-94 academic year and look back over volume 36 of the Wisconsin English Journal, we see wonderful evidence of both educators and students hard at work—thinking, planning, experimenting, evaluating—and, in our opinion, performing the invaluable service of writing and sharing.

We are so pleased that these three issues this year have contained so much variety, so much insight and invention, so many distinct voices on so many different topics. We have put our own efforts into this publication as an expression of faith in the power of educated, thoughtful people whose ideas, inquiries, and observations stir us all and contribute to our profession; we judge that our time and energy have been well spent.

In the last issue and in this one you see award winning student writing, evidence of talent on the students’ part and commitment from their teachers. We are happy that the Journal can be the vehicle for making this work public. We are also proud to include in this final issue award winning essays by teachers—congratulations! It’s a pleasure to share good news.

As we contemplate our successful year with the Journal, we realize we have to also keep ourselves looking ahead to this coming year. We plan for the three upcoming issues each to have a special focus: elementary language arts for Fall/94; secondary (middle/junior high/high school) for Winter/95; and post-secondary (two-year/four-year/graduate school/technical college) for the Spring/Summer/95 issue. We know there is vital activity as well as challenging problems and issues on each of these levels.

As we have always said, we think the Wisconsin English Journal is the perfect place for any individual’s ideas to come into the larger Wisconsin education community.

If you have been working with an idea or trying to solve a problem or have a strong opinion on matters that you judge to be of interest to us all, we would love to hear from you. We more than invite, we urge you to submit an essay, a story, a poem to the WEF. We look forward to hearing from you.

Stephen Fisher—Content Editor
Mary Ellen Alea—Production Editor

A Call For Manuscripts

The editor of the Wisconsin English Journal, welcomes manuscripts and poetry on any topic of interest to English/Language Arts teachers and students at all levels. We are looking for submissions from K-12 and post-secondary for each of the three issues of the ’94-95 academic year.

If you are interested in submitting, the deadlines for this coming year’s issues are September 30 (Fall/94), January 15 (Winter/95), and March 31 (Spring-Summer/95).

Two copies of each manuscript should be provided—typed or word processed—preferably double-spaced throughout. In addition, include with your submission(s) a recent photograph of yourself as well as any other graphic(s) that suit your manuscript or poem. Your name, school affiliation and position should be included on the title page. Also include a stamped, self-addressed envelope (larger if you wish the return of the manuscript). The editor will acknowledge receipt of submissions by postcard and will affirm acceptance of manuscripts for publication by letter or postcard. Note: If convenient, please send a copy of your manuscript on 3 1/2 inch computer disk. Either Macintosh or IBM format is acceptable.

Generally, WEF follows the MLA Style Manual and the "Guidelines for the Nonsexist Use of Language" adopted by the National Council of Teachers of English.

Please send submissions or inquiries to

Stephen Fisher
1200 West Wausau Avenue
Wausau West High School
Wausau, WI 54401

Spring / Summer 1994 • 3
Lee Burress - In Memoriam

by Nicholas J. Karolides

My memories of Lee Burress span 29 years but my good fortune to get to know him personally did not occur until 1984 when we worked together to collect materials for Celebrating Censored Books (1985) and Censored Books: Critical Viewpoints (1993). As the neophyte editor in 1965 of the Wisconsin English Journal, I attended the WCET Executive Committee meetings; I observed. Early on and consistently thereafter Lee struck me as thoughtful and arbitrative; he would listen carefully to the debate of issues, sometimes heated, sometimes with but limited light and then, leaning forward, would offer a position or an idea that was sensible and realistic—and invariably high minded. He exuded a homespun dignity.

Our personal contacts while working on the two censorship volumes revealed not merely the dedicated man, the sincerely concerned and just man. There was also graciousness and sensitivity, persistence coupled with a certain tentativeness that made him unable to invade a potential author’s privacy. Working with him was a fulfilling experience.

He was a member of the Executive Committee on and off for those many years. He served as Vice President and President (1975-79) and more recently as Censorship Committee Chair. When he was off, he was missed. The Council honored him with the Chisholm Award for Meritorious Service in 1980.

But my memories are limited. Thus, I’ve called upon several other friends and colleagues to round out the picture.

He was the very model of an English Chair except that he didn’t smoke a pipe.

Mary Croft:
(notes for an introductory speech at a WCET conference, March 2, 1985):
I first met Lee Burress as a League of Women Voter’s husband in 1967. What were the criteria for this role: knowledgeable but non-voting, generous but quiet, tolerant of boxes of files and pamphlets (stuffed under bed, stacked in corners, piled on the dining room table), tolerant of late meals and frequently absent wife. Lee passed the test.

Next, as Chair of the English Department at UWSP. We all know what constitutes a good chair: one who encourages our individuality, one who puts up with our idiosyncrasies, an ever patient listener, an articulate but not long-winded speaker. Did Lee pass the test? Of course he did! In addition, he had the stance, the thoughtful expression, the long legs, and the cluttered desk. He was the very model of a model English Chair except that he didn’t smoke a pipe.

In the years that followed Lee has continued to accept challenges. He interrupted his service at Stevens Point to serve for three years as Dean of Liberal Arts at Fairleigh-Dickinson University. He taught for a year at the University of the District of Columbia. He also found time to help found the WCET, to collect folklore, to till the land, to receive the Chisholm Award, to serve on NCTE committees, to help found the Wisconsin Intellectual Freedom Coalition, to do research, to preach (B.D. from Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary), to teach (Ph.D. from Boston University), to write articles and books, to speak with zest, and, always, long, long before it was a universal cause—to fight censorship. In meetings, often confrontational, Lee acted with vigor, with intelligence, with balance, with patience, and, most of all, with a respect for all.

L.E. Lewis:
On a frigid night in January of 1965 I flew up to Stevens Point from Chicago for a job interview at the request of the English department chairperson, Lee Burress. I was the only passenger in the ancient DC 3, and soon the stewardess came and
sat beside me, throwing a blanket over both of us for added warmth. We chatted amiably, but my mind was filled with questions about what kind of a God-forsaken place I was heading for. Looking out the window I could see the headlights of cars not far below, paralleling our course, and realized that the pilot was following old Highway 51, apparently preferring to navigate by landmarks rather than relying on compass headings.

I was met at the gate by Lee and two of his department members. Lee was a tall, good-looking man in his mid forties, with close-cropped wavy hair. He was wearing a billed woolen cap - the kind that is flat on top and has an extra layer of cloth around it which can be pulled down to cover the ears. The hat was cocked up, as if he had just flopped it on his head without having taken any particular care to screw it down squarely. As we made our way to the car I noticed that he had a loping, slow-footed, barnyard stride, a feature by which he could be identified at great distances. Fearing that I had left civilization behind, I was comforted to learn that the other two department members were native New Yorkers. Their dropped pre-consonantal retroflexes made me feel at home, but I took great pleasure in listening to Lee's Kansas diphthongs and spelling-pronunciations ("woman" came out like "woe-mun" and "crucial" was "crew-seal").

I was immediately taken by the man's unassuming, gentle manner, and by his incisive mind. Beneath the Kansas mannerisms lay the most civilized and cordial (in the original sense of the word) person I had ever met. Over the many years of our relationship my initial impressions were strengthened, to the point where my attitude toward him could only be described as reverential. He was endlessly tolerant of people's human foibles (mine included), but intolerant of bureaucracy. When the bureaucrats dragged their feet about moving the departmental telephone, he yanked it out of the wall. He never failed to credit others' points, but he usually could be found to have researched and assembled the more compelling case. The breadth of his reading was phenomenal. I was always amazed at the way he could quote facts and figures from things he had read years before, during sleepless periods in the middle of the night.

Lee wasn't perfect. His nocturnal insomnia had its compensatory effects. He could be counted on to fall asleep in academic meetings, and if he remained awake his fidgeting and the constant re-positioning of his limbs made others uncomfortable - as if they were sharing his pain. In his vegetable garden he always set out too many tomato plants (over Maxine's protestations) and you could plan on getting a call in September to come and share in the harvest - especially if there was an early frost coming. One year I canned seventy-five quarts of tomato sauce.

We shared a love for old machinery, and I was always glad to be asked to accompany him to a farm sale. We always took his car (an unpretentious and well-used one) but I always drove, for he found driving to be a soporific. In the last year of his life he had accumulated a number of John Deere B's in various states of disrepair, but I never did get to work on them with him because suddenly he was gone. A colleague out in Washington State, hearing of Lee's death, asked me, "Who'll take his place?" Of course, there is no one. I feel honored to have known him.

Helen Heaton:

A colleague of Lee Burress once suggested that we should follow the Japanese custom and declare Lee a National Treasure to acknowledge his contributions to the profession, his students and the world. His published research and tireless opposition to censorship would qualify him; but those of us who worked with him in the UWSP English Department valued him as a treasure in our local world as well. As chairman of the department during the 60's, he deliberately recruited people of different teaching backgrounds and philosophies because he valued diversity. He encouraged growth and innovation in the English faculty by his own creative teaching, introducing courses such as folklore, sports literature, fantasy, and censorship; and he supported those who followed his lead. We knew that Lee expected expert teaching of traditional courses, but he also championed alternative matter and methods. He provided a model for what English teaching should be: commitment to making what is good better, always alert for value in a new idea, and encouraging divergence. Teaching was a yeasty, exciting, growing experience under Lee's tutelage. I feel fortunate beyond words to have been there at that time.
Don Pattow:
I first met Lee Burress late in the summer of 1965. It was the evening before my wife and I were scheduled to leave Albuquerque, New Mexico, for Stevens Point, Wisconsin. I had taken a job in the English Department at UWSP sight unseen; I hadn’t seen UWSP, and UWSP hadn’t seen me.

We were at the home of a fellow graduate student who was on leave from Stevens Point when suddenly there was a knock at the door. It was Lee Burress, my soon-to-be department chair, and his son. They were on their way south to do some camping. The amiable conversation lasted right up until the moment when Lee, talking about the trip he was taking, said he thought he’d also visit the Grand Canyon since it was only X miles from Albuquerque. My wife replied that it might take him longer to get there since the Grand Canyon was actually Y miles from Albuquerque. Within two minutes a "heated" discussion sent Lee to his car.

Lee was back in a flash with a map. And he was right. And it wasn’t long after I started teaching at Stevens Point that I came to understand that whenever I wanted to know the truth of a thing, whether it was the distance from here to there or the best way to motivate a reluctant composition class, I went to Lee Burress. I will miss him.

Rich Doxtator
(excerpted from a letter to me):
It’s been a little over a year since Lee Burress died, and for some reason this came to mind and may be of interest to you.

We were in Madison with several colleagues one Saturday maybe ten years ago. Driving back someone wondered about ABS, the American Breeding Service 10 miles north, you know, with the billboard or road sign touting how they’re so full of good bull.

Anyhow, the person in our entourage that wonderness was directed at was the Dean of Natural Resources, Dan Trainer, veterinarian, and he responded briefly as to their semen service. Then, for the next ten miles Lee gave us a textbook, chapter and verse, recitation about the Old Bull that started the company, his lineage and offspring. Awesome. What Lee was saying was Trainer’s script, and the way he said it was matter of fact, no bull, he wasn’t out to show off the Dean.

Lee was just Lee, revealing yet another of his interests, which as you know ranged far and wide and on occasion deep.

Evidently, some of that Founding Bull’s semen from ABS had gotten to Kansas and into some cows, and Lee’s dad had bought several of those calves and profited. So Lee had researched and stored the info. Then shared.

And revealed "You can take the boy off the farm, but you can’t get the farm out of the boy" or something.

Whatever, I sure miss him.

Jim Missey
(an abbreviated version of "Open Letter," Stevens Point Journal, June 7, 1993):
In commenting on Lee Burress, other people will doubtless recall the breadth and depth of his learning, his railing against injustice, and his ability to communicate well with people of different classes and of different ages. One of the qualities that I remember most vividly about Lee, however,
is his compassion for human suffering, which is illustrated by a story I once heard him tell.

Lee told the story of visiting Coventry Cathedral on one occasion when he was in England. It had been nearly completely destroyed during a single night of bombing on November 14, 1940, when German aircraft attacked Coventry. After the destruction of the Cathedral, a new one was built, rising out of the shell of the old.

People from all over the world contributed money, religious symbols, and labor towards rebuilding it. One contribution in particular was made by a group of sixteen young Germans who, according to a guide book on the Cathedral by the Reverend H.C.N. Williams, "restored the old vestries as an extension of the International Centre," a part of the new Cathedral.

It was almost certainly the work of the sixteen young Germans that Lee referred to as having deeply moved him. Although not a man much given to showing his feelings, he said that seeing their restoration caused him to dissolve into tears. I have often thought about Lee's visit to Coventry Cathedral.

I have the picture of a man standing amidst the ruins of an old cathedral, out of which a new is rising. And the man himself, tall and angular, towers against the ruins.
Organizing the Writing Classroom so Students Enjoy Writing

Jarvis E. Bush Award Winner

by Mary M. McClone

Iola-Scandinavia High School

Most kids like to write. Because I feel this is true, I try to promote the satisfaction and self discovery that comes with writing. My aspiration is to help my students grow as writers and individuals.

I teach a semester composition class to tenth graders at Iola-Scandinavia High School. The class has been part of the curriculum for almost fifteen years.

One of my primary goals is to help my students become fluent and competent in their writing. Challenging my students to use their language, to elaborate their ideas and to develop their imagination are some of my goals. I want them to be able to write clearly, concisely, and correctly so they can effectively communicate. If they see their writing as a reflection of themselves, I believe they will work hard to make their reflections accurate.

Another important part of becoming a mature writer and person is being able to respond and relate personally to literature. For this reason, I want my students to feel comfortable expressing their own reactions and ideas. My goal is to instill not only an appreciation of literature, but also a sensitivity to their own and other students reactions to the written word.

Another one of my aims is to help my students become more analytical, clearer thinkers. I hope to show them writing helps to clarify and to define their ideas. Writing is, in fact, thinking. By becoming a better writer, they are learning.

Writing is also therapeutic. Writing is self expression and therefore there is really no wrong writing. Even so, I try to impress on my students that all writing can be improved.

To reach these goals I have developed workable objectives for my student writers. One of my basic objectives is providing variety and freedom. First of all, I use a variety of frameworks for writing. The students utilize journals, portfolios, compositions and a creative writing booklet as mainstays for their writing. These various forms allow students wide access for different approaches to develop and to improve their writing. They realize the wide spectrum of writing.

I also allow students to choose their own topics. My two basic qualifications are that they know and care about their topic and that the topic suits the audience. Most compositions are written for a real audience: the class and me.

In addition, students are also allowed a limitless choice of genres: narratives, stories, essays, letters, speeches, reviews, character sketches, dialogues, monologues, scenes, plays, poetry, lyrics, recipes, letters, advertisements, epitaphs, slogans, and, of course, their choice.

This freedom I try to establish in classroom management, too. My composition class is organized like a lab. I work as a facilitator and editor. I work a lot of one-on-one with students. I use many writer's workshop elements, such as conferencing, peer editing, and evaluation groups.
Writing is a process and should be completed in stages. We begin with approximately three days of prewriting, three days for drafting and three days for revising.

Writing is also inspiration. I utilize a variety of prewriting techniques to stimulate creativity and generate ideas. Literature, literary magazines, newspapers, music, audio and video tapes, guided imagery, slides, objects, games, and role playing are all used as springboards for writing.

In addition, I share my writing in hopes of inspiring my students. I journal with the students, share my responses and finished manuscripts. Every writing teacher should write. By continually writing myself, I am more sensitive to my students' writing problems, and they are more receptive to my suggestions.

Besides showing my writing to my classes, I also present exceptional examples of writing. During prewriting, I show transparencies of examples of outstanding compositions by former students and professional writers. Our discussion usually involves the qualities of the piece of writing, characteristics of the type of writing and possible improvements that could've been made. We further discuss the criteria for a well written composition.

At this time in the writing process, I have the students compose an example in their journal using suggested topics I have displayed on an overhead transparency. This process continues for one to two days until the students are comfortable with the form. As part of the writing process, particularly the prewriting stage, I enable students to talk about their topics and ideas. Many times I will ask students to select three topics they like and to be prepared to converse with a partner about them. I too, continually talk to students about their ideas. By verbalizing their ideas first, many students can avoid later pitfalls. The truth is, oral and written skills are inseparable.

Next, the drafting stage. This stage provides a chance for students to do Quick Writes for their portfolio. Often times a fifteen minute portion of the class period is set aside for students to write this ungraded composition practicing the form, the tone, their voice and style.

The drafting stage requires students to prepare a finished manuscript they eventually must share. Students are given autonomy over their writing. They can choose a prewrite, a journal entry or Quick Write they've already written in their journal or portfolio to improve, or they may start over.

Students frequently use the computer to generate their prewriting and/or rough drafts. At this point students are usually enthused and excited. The classroom is unusually quiet at this stage while student writers, inspired and motivated, CREATE.

A simple but invaluable method I use is a blackboard chart of the writing process. When we begin a composition, I list the stages, the questions, and the task of each stage. With a quick show of hands each day, I record the number of students who are at various stages. I find it very helpful for keeping tabs on where each student is in the writing process. I can zero in on who needs peer editing, who's ready for the final draft and who might want to start over. This simple chart not only clearly outlines the students' tasks but also helps me to monitor their progress, notice who needs special help and reinforce deadlines.

The revising stage is perhaps the most strenuous and difficult for the students and me but an
Absolutely essential one. I have found that if students like what they have selected to write, they will genuinely want to make this composition their best work. By informally conferencing and allowing students to share their work prior to this stage, students have usually committed themselves to the piece.

My job is to read, advise, and compliment. Depending on the student's ability and the composition, I sometimes can just give verbal comments. Sometimes I must thoroughly proofread. Regardless, working individually with each student and their writing makes me feel I'm really teaching.

Peer editing is an vital method at this stage. Sometimes I form groups and other times I allow students to move into groups as they are ready. I use a variety of peer editing techniques and sheets which stress the positive attributes and suggest possible improvements for each composition. At this point, students are generally anxious for sound criticism and suggestions. The final draft is prepared after students have gone through conferencing and peer editing.

After the final drafts have been completed, I break the students into evaluation groups of approximately four students. Knowing that their peers will read and evaluate their work gives student writers focus and motivation. Much more than any letter grade would.

Each group silently reads each composition; then as a group they discuss and evaluate each composition. The evaluation sheet is a clearly outlined ten point criteria listing the important elements in this type of writing.

The students are anxious to see the evaluation by their fellow students. After all, they were writing for them. The compositions are then handed to me in their portfolio with their prewriting, rough drafts and Quick Writes done through the course of the assignment.

Throughout this process, I allow students time. Rather than fill the class period with instruction on how to write, I let students write. I'm available for help. I'm positive, supportive and gentle with criticism. By making more positive comments than negative, I can get students to work much harder to make their writing better.

I do not give any tests in composition. I grade on real writing. Real work. The journal is considered ungraded practice writing, a springboard for ideas. Journal topics are offered, assigned and once a week students have free writing. Journals are collected once a week and checked. Each student is given a weekly grade for having completed their journal. Writing is a skill. The more a student writes, the better writer they will become.

Portfolios are a compilation of prewriting, drafts, and Quick Writes. Portfolios contain the preliminary work and discarded drafts the students have possibly gone through to reach the final composition stage.

Students use their portfolio to glean ideas from and house ideas they've had. Portfolios are checked and each student is given credit for the amount of their work.

Students' final drafts are graded. Their final composition grades represent approximately one third of the total grade for the class. I, too, use an evaluation sheet to grade their composition. I make comments and suggestions, but I do not mark on their final draft.

Writing is rewriting. When a student receives their graded composition back, they make notations on what needs to be improved.
To reinforce the importance of revision, a student may revise a graded composition at any time and turn it back in for a better grade. Twice during the semester students are required to select and revise a previously graded composition or Quick Write.

At the end of the semester, each student prepares a creative writing booklet of their best and favorite compositions. The booklet project encourages more revision and again gives students autonomy over their writing. There is a sense of pride and accomplishment as they prepare and organize this final manuscript. Art work and creative covers enhance their booklet.

We write an incredible amount. The students leave composition class with their journal, portfolio and a personal creative writing booklet of their best writing. Yet even after eighty plus journal entries, a portfolio bulging with Quick Writes, ten or so compositions, the students don’t complain. I think they see the value. They are the class.

The truth is students have a lot to say, so most don’t object to writing. I know they appreciate the chance to express themselves. In fact, I often see that look in their eyes, "Okay, we understand. Now can we write!"

Giving students the freedom, time, and encouragement will allow them to develop as writers. Every now and then I realize how important writing is to them.

Last week I was called out of my composition class. After a short time, I returned. Meanwhile the students had dimmed the lights. There wasn’t a sound. All twenty six students were writing. I can’t measure that, but it’s why I’ve made teaching writing my avocation.
As a freshman composition teacher, I’ve found that it’s hard for students to grasp the concept of revision. As one student told me several years ago: “I’ve always waited until the last minute to revise my papers. That’s because if I put any time into them and they weren’t seen as being good, then I’d know for sure that I’m a bad writer.”

Realizing that many students feel this way, I began to think seriously about how I might get students to make what I call the “big leap” and see that good writing involves reconceptualization. That is, I wanted them to be able to make the distinction between revising and copy-editing. My first attempts along this line were to have them read portions of Peter Elbow’s Writing Without Teachers and Donald Murray’s The Craft of Revision. While they were receptive to the ideas and inviting voices of Elbow and Murray, they were still reluctant to make any major changes in their work, and I noticed, when I suggested expanding upon ideas, or changing one’s focus would often say “Oh, you want me to REWRITE this essay.”

Seeing that students were seeing revision as a fine idea for others, but for themselves still equating it with bad writing, I next decided to share my work in progress with them. At the time, I was working on my MFA Thesis, which was a series of essays about bicycling solo around New Zealand. One day I brought in the 50 drafts of a chapter called “The Hill,” along with my committee member’s responses, five rejection letters, a letter of acceptance, and the finished, published essay. Students were impressed, but perhaps thinking of me as being too maniacal about writing, continued to be resistant to the idea of revising their work. Thinking that I was presenting too big a picture, I decided to talk more specifically about one particular project that I was working on — a first-person essay on a 200 mile winter bicycling trip that I had participated in. Although I discussed the particulars of my writing process to them, what was of the most interest to students was a cut and paste draft. As I explained, not being able to see the essay as a whole, I decided to cut it up, and began rearranging it.

Since these particular students seemed to be intrigued, I had them do the same. “Bring two copies of you: cut and paste paper, and the next time we meet, we’ll cut and paste them,” I said. (See Figure 1)

As I instructed them to, they put their main idea at the top of the page, then begin cutting their papers, leaving a space between each paragraph. As I further explained, they were then to think in terms of what did and didn’t correspond with this main idea. “Think about rearranging and expanding upon what you have and eliminating what doesn’t fit,” I said. While the student writers were unsure of how to begin, they quickly got into the spirit of the project. Interestingly enough, a handful of the twenty or so college freshman found that very little of what they’d written was applicable to their main idea, and on the butcher paper, began freewriting. Others discovered that the space along the sides and between paragraphs allowed them to expand on ideas. Still others used the sides of the page to write directive comments such as, “Include more information from Mike Rose’s text here,” and “Ask writing center assistant if this will work.”

Although doing this exercise didn’t get students to immediately reconceptualize their ideas to the degree to which I would have liked, I found
that they were less balky when I asked them to expand upon certain ideas. Also, they were able to put the theories of Elbow and Murray to practice. Further, in subsequent workshop sessions they were more apt to make revision rather than copy-editing suggestions to their peers. While I still believe that it is primarily the degree of investment that a student has in a particular project which determines their willingness to revise, I'm convinced that this exercise enables students to put theory to practice when dealing with future writing tasks.

In the five or so years since I first did this exercise, I've made some changes. First, I now require each student to come to class with a pair of scissors and jar of rubber cement. As I tell them about the rubber cement, that "its like some relationships — it binds, but doesn't make a commitment." I add that using rubber cement unlike glue, will allow them to later move paragraphs from place to place. I also caution them to wait until the end of class before fastening down paragraphs, since they may want to do further rearranging. Lastly, I suggest that they put their paragraphs on the page lengthwise rather than cross-wise, in order that they might see the paper in its entirety. I also make it a point before "cut and paste class" to hang up copies of mine and other students' revisions.

Lastly, I have students' workshop revisions of these papers, so their peers can see what changes they've made. I also ask them to write a one-page response to me, in which they explain about what changes they made and why. These papers are then shared with the rest of the class. As I believe, this exercise could be used by any teacher, at any level.

**Figure 1**

[Diagram showing butcher paper, main idea, cut-up paragraph, space for expansion of ideas, space for directive comments, and paragraphs that might be used later or discarded]
Cut and Paste exercise -- sample directions

Materials needed:

1. One sheet of butcher paper for each writer, should be 2 1/2 feet in length
2. One pair of scissors
3. One jar of rubber cement

English 201 Revision Exercise

Revision literally means "to see again." In its broadest definition, revise means to rewrite, that is to write a new draft, while drawing upon ideas from the original. In its narrowest definition, it means to expand or delete an idea which is contained in a sentence or paragraph.

Today we'll be revising. I encourage you to follow these instructions. If any Part of this is unclear, see me.

1. Grab a sheet of butcher paper.
2. Find a partner
3. Take a look at my comments to you on the responses that I'm returning.
4. Cut your paper into paragraphs. Lay them down in order on the butcher paper, leaving space between the paragraphs.
5. Write what you think your main idea is at the top of the butcher paper. Your main idea should be at least two sentences in length.
Also, be as specific as you can be when writing down your main idea. For example:

"I've learned a lot from my former teachers" -- is not very specific. However, "I learned a great deal from two of my former English teachers about revising in relation to copy-editing" is more specific.

Your main idea might change as you begin to revise, so leave a block of space for a possible change of topic.

6. Play around with the order of your paragraphs -- eliminate those that don't pertain to the main idea, and keep those that do.
7. Use the sides of the page, or the spaces in between the paragraphs to expand on your ideas, particularly those which relate to Rose's Lives on the Boundary.
8. Ask your partner or myself for input. Working collectively is more productive than working alone.

WHEN DONE at 7:10, rubber cement your paragraphs in place. Since they won't be permanently fastened, you'll later be able to make more changes.

At home -- type up your cut and paste draft -- bring it, and copies to class next Tuesday, March 8th.
Student Voices: Personal, Provocative, Powerful

by Lois Kathan, teacher
Matt Liethen and Rachel Joyce, students
Holmen High School

“If a cluster of undisciplined kids were told they could do what they wanted whenever they wanted, chances are that they will...I and many other Americans stand safely on the beach of gratefulness...I guess it’s my upbringing. I know that I am 'old school,’ so to most kids I seem like a foreign object. But that’s okay.”

When I read these words on Matt Liethen’s rough draft of this essay back in November for the International Optimist Essay Contest, I knew I had to devote more of my time and attention to the "Matts" in my classes. "An Invitation To Write" in the Fall 1993 issue of The Wisconsin English Journal was the impetus needed to form some out-of-class collaboration time with two students I found to be of the "old school," Matt Liethen and Rachel Joyce. When I asked Matt why he agreed to this project, he replied, "It sounded interesting since I have never done anything like this before.”

Matt and I began writing this manuscript before the results of the essay contest were known. Right from the start Matt referred to this essay writing experience on the boundaries of freedom as a meaningful "win-win" situation because "I feel strongly about issues that form the foundation of this nation. From the beginning, I encouraged myself to do the best I possibly could.'

After Matt was informed he had won second place at the local level of the contest, he said, "I didn’t expect to win because of the big field of competitors. But the messages I submitted in the essay made me think of the great value of freedom and how to better utilize my freedoms and become a better student." Oh, to have many more students in Sophomore Writing with these perceptions!

When asked if the essay contest assignment was significant, meaningful, and successful, Matt explained that he needed time to really think about this. So he volunteered to put his thoughts in writing. The next morning Matt appeared at my door with response in hand, a week before our scheduled meeting. In answer to my question, Matt had written: "It was significant because I learned how to better write and address essay question topics. I also learned many things about myself including writing tone, style of writing, and how to transform my personal feelings into a written document. Some of the ideas I concocted for this paper reached out and grabbed me. Not only did it receive a second-place finish, but it helped me reflect on my emotions directed at freedom.”

When asked if he would consider entering more writing contests, he shared, "No poetry...it’s too structured. But I will try more essay contesting while working on my vocabulary. I like to read. Just ask the librarian. I’m always checking out Civil War books.”

Matt also added that he likes "fooling around with adjectives, relies on personal experience, and uses facts if needed. I feel my writing is evolving-getting better." I asked what kind of evaluation he preferred. "Not peers. Not always effective and too much peer pressure. I respect you, some other teachers, and my sister. She is kind of my conscience in my background. Sometimes she likes to correct me and the rest of the family. She corrects just about everybody but her friends. It’s like living with an etiquette teacher!"
Matt is no longer a "regular" student of mine since semester one of Sophomore Writing ended on January 14, 1994. He did stop in after school recently to interview me for an assignment for Sophomore Literature. I then realized how much I miss his quiet, attentive, respectful, deep-thinking presence. Whenever I find myself too occupied with those demanding, challenging, disruptive students, I will always remember some advice from Matt's essay on the boundaries of freedom:

"It is a shame that a handful of ungrateful protesters possess the power to spoil other people’s gratitude for freedom. The complainers and whiners will never be truly satisfied with anything that is handed to them."

"While reading Hiroshima, I was astounded at how the Japanese people who experienced the bombing reacted. I wondered if their religious beliefs had any effect on their reactions." We both then knew the focus for the collaborative manuscript.

"Do I have a source for you, Rachel?" I exclaimed one day in the LMC, introducing her to a set of specialized reference works entitled Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics. Not only did Rachel "thrive" with this source, but she discovered other sources to help answer her question.

When I asked Rachel to discuss some of her frustrations during the process of researching, she shared some thoughts: "Making sense of what I was reading was hard sometimes. I felt my creativity was stifled."

As we discussed some of Rachel’s findings, our conversations often turned to commentaries about today’s ethics, morality, and religion. When I asked her to relate some of her research about Shintoism, she explained, "Kami is the mystical, powerful force of nature, and it comes in many physical forms such as mountains, the sun, and trees. I think that the Japanese people believe that life is given by Kami so it is sacred. This philosophy probably explains why the Japanese people just picked themselves up and went on after the bombing. Shinto teaches forgiveness, the respect of ourselves and others, and the thought that everything that happens is fate."

When I asked Rachel how she felt about her final research product, she said, "Personally, I wasn’t that satisfied. I don’t feel that I spent enough time... I rushed myself."

On the self-evaluation justifying a grade for the research project, Rachel wrote: "... In conclusion, I think I deserve a B+ as a grade on this research project. And I thank you for giving us the opportunity to justify ourselves and our work."

"Rachel, why do you put so much pressure on yourself?"

"My mom asks me that, too. It’s a flaw and a plus," and she went on to explain about "getting ulcers, being a type ‘A’ personality and not knowing how to change."

Our next meeting, which would be our last for this collaborative project, concentrated on reactions to the semester exam which involved writing a letter to The President of the United States, The Honorable William J. Clinton.
These letters expressed students' connections with events and activities that have helped their lives as American citizens in relation to what they had been experiencing in Sophomore Writing, especially through their in-depth research projects.

"It was a challenge trying to figure out what to say—not to be too wordy. Being concise was very difficult. I had to be specific, formal, and friendly . . . all at the same time." I then congratulated Rachel on her very authentic, relevant, respectful, "voiced" letter to the President.

"Once I saw the entire perspective it wasn't so over-whelming after all. Writing this letter brought together all the skills we learned in class."

As I lamented the fact that she was no longer a student of mine and our after-school meetings would be soon over, Rachel so wisely consoled, "Mrs. Kathan, remember--new people, new ideas."
The Wisconsin English Journal Experience: A Continuing Exercise in Collaboration

by Mary Ellen Alea, Production Editor and Heather L. Stewart, Assistant Editor/Designer

Mary Ellen Alea

When, in 1992, I agreed to become co-editor of the Wisconsin English Journal, I have to admit I didn’t know what I was getting into. I had not served as editor of any publication since my high school newspaper in Shawnee, Kansas, more years ago than I care to admit. But I was encouraged by two colleagues who had previously edited the magazine, by another colleague who, I think, just wanted to see me grow in this particular direction, and by the fact that I would have a capable co-editor who would be in charge of the content, assigning production matters as my province.

This opportunity appealed to me because I was intrigued by the challenge of production, a set of tasks that I felt confident I could manage but which I had no real experience with. I knew I would learn a lot. Assured by these aforementioned colleagues that they would provide me with both steadfast moral support and specific expertise if needed, I happily, however blindly, accepted this responsibility.

What I already knew was that this was a perfect opportunity to work collaboratively with a student intern. Previous colleague-editors had worked in this way, so I had long been aware of this as a wonderful and practical experience for those students, most of whom were enrolled in the technical writing program at UWEC. I saw no reason to do anything but follow in my predecessors’ footsteps. What I would come to appreciate was how much I would learn from the students I was supervising, an ideal reciprocity in my opinion. Finding a student interested in this internship was not very difficult. Thanks to a few talented and dedicated colleagues, UWEC offers a strong technical writing program, until recently available only as a minor, but now as one of our major tracks.

In addition to excellent instruction and course design, UWEC has wisely chosen to invest in top quality computers and programs with which to equip easy-access labs for student use. With all of these resources at hand, tech writing students are provided with many opportunities for real-world projects, enabling them to become increasingly well-prepared pre-professionals.

As a composition teacher who has seen the potential and effectiveness of student-to-student collaborative work, I expanded my plan of working with an intern to include students working together in a mentor-protégé relationship.

In others words, what has evolved behind the scenes of the Journal is one student taking on primary responsibility for the layout and design and printing of one issue while working under the guidance and benefiting from the experience of another student who had been the one to produce the previous issue.

For example, the 1994 Winter issue protégé was Chris Solberg, working with Tony Ferguson as mentor, Tony having done the 1993 Fall issue. This current 1994 Spring/Summer issue was laid out and designed by Heather Stewart as protégé to Chris Solberg.
The students who are selected as protégés have taken technical writing courses, including Document Design, and thus have already had some “hands on” experience with producing brochures, project reports, etc. This is precisely where I have been given the opportunity to learn.

Not knowing anything about the PageMaker program, I sat in on the Document Design course in order to learn that software, but it is the students who put that technology to use in creating documents thus becoming the experts. As Chris and Heather conceived of their designs, created them, modified them, perfected them, I had a front-row seat on this fascinating process. What I am able to help them with has more to do with scheduling and financial matters than with the look of the publication.

I have been delighted to see where a healthy combination of creativity, analysis, skill, and responsibility have taken these students and the Wisconsin English Journal. Apparently our readers share in my opinion as we have received so many compliments on the Journal’s look.

This multi-directional collaboration has given all of us something positive, not the least of which is a publication we can all be proud of.

Heather L. Stewart

My experience as the latest intern for the Wisconsin English Journal has been a definite challenge. I follow Chris Solberg who was the designer/editor for the Winter 1994 issue. He and I were partners in our Advanced Technical Writing class, so we knew each other well before we learned we would also be working together on the Journal. Chris has been a difficult act to follow; he was very well organized and had a wonderful eye for design. Chris graduated in May, so our time together as a partnership was limited, but he left me with an excellent grasp on the procedures needed to organize the literary contributions to the Journal.

As a Journal intern, my greatest responsibility is keeping on schedule. Although I was allotted two months to scan in submissions, design a layout, organize the layout in Aldus PageMaker, edit text, and select graphics, by the time all submissions were in and I returned from my summer break, my time had been cut to two weeks. Thankfully I had designed my layout before I left so some of my preliminary work was already completed, but the editing took far more time than I imagined.

Even if the work was more involved than I thought, it was important for me to realize that I was capable of completing it. I plan on doing much of the same type of work as a career. When I graduate in December, I will have completed a major in English and minors in Technical Writing and Chemistry.

The experience that I gained as an editor and designer of the Wisconsin English Journal will be
relevant to any job I apply for in Technical Writing or Science Writing. My organization skills have been greatly improved as well as my ability to work with PageMaker, develop styles for different textual appearances, edit, and design literary productions.

I would encourage all instructors to work closely with their students as I have been working with Mary Ellen Alea. During my school career, teachers have always had a mystical aura about them. Because they were so much more knowledgeable than myself, I naturally placed them above me and admired them.

In this process, however, the instructors would lose all earthly qualities. They were no longer human beings teaching a class every day; they were the personification of knowledge, the epitome of what I could become. Working so closely with Mary Ellen, whom I can now call by her first name without being embarrassed, I have discovered that while she is much more skilled in the "English World," she is wonderfully human. Instructors are real people; they get hungry, laugh, and cry like the rest of us. Although this is perfectly obvious as all human beings share these qualities, I assumed that instructors lived a life much different than mine. Knowledge put them on another level.

Although I have no concrete facts, I would think that most students share some of my feelings. Students may respect their instructors for a variety of reasons. I hold my instructors in admiration for their knowledge; others my respect instructors for their guidance or for the fact that they determine the student's grade.

In any case, the instructor has a profound influence over students, which can be very intimidating. Working one-on-one with an instructor, as I have been doing with Mary Ellen, can help reduce this intimidation and restore an instructor's human qualities.

After the Journal goes to press and this entire editing experience is but a fond memory, I will be mentor to the next Wisconsin English Journal intern; in a sense, I will be playing the role of an instructor.

I don't think that the next intern will find me intimidating because I have held the position before him or her. I do hope, however, that the next intern will believe that I am a good source of information and help if any problems do arise.

If the teaching experience of Mary Ellen has rubbed off on me at all, the Journal will continue to be a quality, attractive, creative publication.
If Poems Were Houses

by Ralph Schnieder
UW-Eau Claire

This dawdling line should invite you up the click-clunk of the back iambics into the kitchen's jumbled text, past the sink's liquid repetitions and the refrigerator's backlighted overripe vowels and that bowl of anapestic succotash.

Best walk this way, past the bathroom's porcelain euphemisms and its imperative satisfactions. Ah.

We could step farther down into the chill concrete textures of the cellar or up to the attic's nostalgic connotations, but no; we've read nearly far enough.

Sit a while here, this stanza will do, and sip this cup of recollections, mixed conceits and builder-poet projections. Do come again, and we'll work out the prosody of that rickety limerick treehouse out back: a bit of tarpaper doggerel we'll do just for fun.

Into that living anthology whose opened doors and windows counterpoint, where pages stream out images from table to rollicking chair and floor, pausing under the lovely blooming caesura, to be finally punctuated by the wastebasket's round end stop.

Down the page is the tousled bedroom, measured by rhythms of gutteral sleep, lush tossings, loose pouncings, periodic suspensions, fond relaxations and lovely metric bouncings.
Haircut

by Patti See
UW-Eau Claire

Midsummer's child, splitting the season in two like a halved watermelon born and celebrated when corn is just past knee high. We prepare you for days, telling you for this birthday you'll get a Sampson crop. In the bath tub I stretch the tight wet curls down the length of your back as we pose for pre-cut pictures. One last measure for the record.

Then the three of us move to the patio, you and I do the spider on a paint splattered step stool. Your father, today's barber, holds the awkward orange Fiskers and a gap-toothed comb. For the first moments you still believe Sampson is a gift we'll open together. But even in your muted silence, you're contented with the promise of a popsicle, grape not red. A Mowgli beach towel is safety-pinned around your angel bones, and underneath your cape are Ninja Turtle underwear with the crotch you've not yet mastered.

Your nails tell the story of many sandboxes. The first snip is the hardest; where to begin on this golden frenzied mop. Ringlets the color of wheat in sun spring to the ground and blow clump by clump into the grass. For birds nests my mother would say, knowing better than I that everything finds a home. Your remaining hair recoils snug to your scalp like a cartoon tongue rolling itself back in. No more androgyny, my baby. Soon preschool, then little league, boy scouts. No longer Shirley Temple to the blue haired women at the market who ask if mama does your hair. Now with the last of your baby loveliness cut away, I save a handful of hair in a plastic windowed business envelope, to later seal in the urn your baby book has become, knowing your hair will grow back wavier, darker, coarser, never nearly as soft. And at last, framing your face in my hands—dreading the summer day I'll need relics of you at two—I see you, for the first time, my son.
Shana Harvey • NCTE Achievement in Writing Award Recipient
Roseann Lyons, Teacher University School, Milwaukee

Slaying the Dragon

There have only been a few times in my life when I have been genuinely scared. I mean the frigid pain that begins in some nondescript area around my stomach and then eats its way to the tips of my fingers where it turns to icy needles, making me frozen and helpless. Oh, I’ve often been nervous, and I’ve been frightened at times when my imagination gets the better of me, but I was introduced to genuine fear at the age of six, not by a nightmare or a monster, but by another child.

The morning my first-grade year began I strutted about the house, clad in my favorite denim jumper and hugging my new, bright red bookbag. In the past week, I had arranged all my school belongings nearly twenty times. I could not pass the spot in the front hall where they were piled without scampering back to press my fresh pink eraser to my nose or open my pack of crayons and admire its rainbow of perfectly molded tips. Now my crayons, my eraser, a new pair of sneakers, a windbreaker, and a green pencil case bearing my name in fancy, white letters, all stood poised next to the door.

When the kitchen clock hit seven thirty, I snatched up my supplies, slung my windbreaker and bag over my shoulder and marched out of my warm house into the crisp autumn morning. I was a suave businesswoman of the eighties: bright, mature, and beautiful. I allowed my mother to use several rolls of film in order to capture me in my first grade splendor.

"Do you want me to wait with you for the bus, Honey?"

The bus? What had my mother uttered between her rapid clicking of the camera? The bus. The means by which I would be transported to first grade was a small detail that I had forgotten during my weeks of mental and physical preparation. I would have to ride a bus. My charismatic business executive stature faded slightly as I assessed my situation. I had never actually boarded a bus before, but I had seen a lot of buses—and I had ridden in a green van to kindergarten and back the year before; that counted as a bus, right? Besides, adults rode buses. This last fleeting thought settled my quandary.

"Nah, you just go inside, Mom. I'll wait for the bus all by myself." Was my mother kidding me? Did she actually think that a girl of six, practically in college, needed the support of her mother? I accepted a kiss and strode evenly up our long, steep driveway.

I reached the mailbox where our drive met the beaten country road, and had a sudden impulse to look back at the house. I turned and saw the comfortable shelter where I was born and raised. The house looked unusually far away, much farther than I had walked. Across the road a vast field, decorated with an occasional cow,
stretched in front of me. For the first time I took note of my beating heart. I was scared.

Many long, anxious minutes passed, and I was just about to turn around and sprint back down the driveway when I heard it—a distant but steady roar which made me freeze in mid-dash. It was growing louder. I felt a terrific impulse to fly back to my house, dive under my bed, and stay there for the rest of my life. As I stood in the middle of my driveway frantically deciding whether to become a scholar or a recluse, a monstrous hunk of blinking, flashing, yellow metal ground down the road and stood waiting, menacingly, at the top of my drive. I gaped at the bus, knowing that if I tried to run it would most certainly utter a hideous roar and pursue me to my front door. With this terrifying image in mind, my feet skipped beneath me involuntarily and I ran to the bus.

Carefully I climbed each step leading to the driver's seat, and the sweet morning air was gradually replaced by the stale scent of oatmeal and rubber boots. Two rows of green seats, each pair filled with the bodies of screaming, squirming, tough-looking kids, stretched to the back of the vehicle. My eyes searched every seat, every person—there was not a place to sit. I took a tentative step into the sea of children, frantically looking for a nook or crevice into which I could slip quickly and disappear. My collected executive mindframe had withered long ago. I felt like a rabbit that had been catapulted into a busload of Doberman pinschers. The inhabitants of the bus must have smelled my fear, for the din receded and forty pairs of eyes shifted from their own business to my predicament.

I suddenly wished I had packed a megaphone next to my crayons. I would be able to pull it from my bookbag and announce, "It's all right, there's nothing to see here. So just go back to whatever you were doing. Everything's cool."

But my situation was definitely not "cool"; it was nearing the boiling point.

From the back of the bus, impatient voices rang out. "SIDDOWN, YA MIDGET!"

The restlessness of the crowd grew until the entire population riding the bus was simultaneously rocking back and forth while screaming rhythmic "sid-DOWN's!" "Sid-DOWN!" "sid-DOWN!" In my wildest dreams of the bus I had never envisioned these primordial beasts and their tribal chant.

"Sid-DOWN!" "sid-DOWN!" I think even the bus driver joined the chorus.
For passengers so anxious for me to sit, no one bothered to clear a spot. To make matters worse, the driver, apparently deciding I had had my three seconds to find a seat, lurched the vehicle forward and started down the road. I stumbled into the raucous pack of kids, and, just as I was debating whether to break into a screaming, thrashing fit, or to coolly open the emergency exit and fling myself out, I saw a small patch of seat exposed under layers of legs, boots, and grappling hands. Relieved, I clambered over bodies, my eyes riveted to that little patch -- and then I stopped, suddenly apprehensive.

There was a girl sitting next to my patch. While the entire bus swayed in time to the "SIDDOWN's", she was looking straight ahead, motionless, wearing one of those "don't mess with me" looks. She was a sinister, seedy-looking character, wiry and pale with scowling, deeply inset eyes. Dusty brown hair, cropped short, stuck out of her head in unkempt clumps. Her mouth was red and turned down like the lips of a carp. I had been topping the length of the bus for at least five minutes. Feeling that if I stood for another minute my legs would cease to function, I ignored the foreboding countenance before me and plopped down next to The Girl.

Squeezing in next to her, I immediately realized I had underestimated her bad mood. The girl's head slowly twisted until her eyes bored into mine. "Don't you ever sit with me again," she hissed. "You GOT THAT?" Her strident voice rose above the conversation around us, and I flinched, as from a blow. I slowly tore my eyes from hers and focused on the seat in front of me. My heart froze as I heard her speak again. "Boy, are you in trouble," she said. With that, she spent the rest of the ride trying to shove me off my square-inch of seat. The other kids encouraged her. "Way to go, Brenda!" I heard one say. In seeming response to her peers' admiration, Brenda dealt me a royal ram in my side that sent me, my windbreaker, and my supplies flying into the aisle. At that point the bus stopped abruptly in front of a dirty, brick building. Having long forgotten my hopes and anxieties about first grade, I hastily scooped up the supplies that had not slid under seats, and ran -- ran from the bus, ran from Brenda, and tried to suppress the torrent of tears building behind my eyes.

After the initial two weeks first grade began to move along smoothly. School was not exactly my favorite place to be, but I was slowly engaging myself in the program. The problem was the bus, and the root of the bus problem was Brenda. Since that first excruciating day she had tugged my clothing and hair countless times, threatened me on several occasions, and goaded my many seat mates into pushing me into the aisle. In short, Brenda had made my morning and afternoon bus trips the equivalent of being lashed to the mast of a ship during typhoon season, and every day she gained new comrades who readily followed her lead.

At home I kept my swelling fear and frustration inside, afraid to speak of the torture I withstood every day on my way to school. Once I let something of my plight slip out at the dinner table, but my mother just became angry at "the situation" and threatened to board the bus with me, find the culprits, and order them to stop mistreating me. That, I decided, would be a humiliation worse than one.
hundred Brendas. I slowly faced the inevitable fact that I would have to slay this dragon myself.

Somehow I'd known all along that I would have to stand up to Brenda, and my acceptance of this fact replenished my strength. Though I hadn't realized it, anger had been building inside me ever since that first tumble into the aisle. I had developed a shield of hatred defending me from the evils of the bus, and every growl and sneer from Brenda strengthened and thickened this defense. I would have to make it clear to Brenda, Brenda of the pallid face and curling lips, that she was not messing with the average tike; and I did make this very clear to her several times -- in the mirror above my bedroom dresser. Let's face it, telling an angry bully who was at least two feet taller than I "where to get off" was plenty unnerving.

Each day I would inch closer to breaking under Brenda's belligerence only to draw back, thinking, "She'll be worse tomorrow so I'll just save my strength until then." I was a little apprehensive; after all, who knew what Brenda had in her possession? If I confronted her, would she pull out a switchblade? A rifle? My Brenda fabrications were growing grislier every time I thought of her. I had to get these gnawing nightmares out of my head.

My big opportunity for vengeance knocked, or, rather, kicked down the door on one afternoon when I was feeling in especially high spirits as I boarded the school bus, giggling with a newly found friend. Nothing could knock me down today -- not even Brenda. I silently vowed that if Brenda uttered one word during my trip home, even if it was "hello", she would be mine to toy with.

She sat glowering with one of her cronies in the first row of seats, and I, baiting the hook, casually directed my friend into the seat across from her. I was actually excited to see Brenda so close to me. My ears were perked for even the softest comment shot across the aisle. Sensing my tension, my friend reached up and opened a window. "Close that window!"

My friend jumped and looked across the aisle to meet Brenda's cold, muddy eyes staring back. She hastily reached up and began to close the window as ordered.

As I watched my friend, who just moments ago had been smiling and confident, now struggling frantically with the window, I realized how important it was that I stop Brenda. It dawned on me that she had always, and would always lash out at anyone, with no reason except the feeling of power that she gained from seeing someone shrink away from her. A mixture of anger, excitement, and satisfaction bubbled to my throat as I shouted: "NO! She WON'T close the window!"

I cannot remember the exact sequence of events during the next few minutes. I wasn't completely conscious of what I
was saying. I simply allowed all the fright, the fury, and the tears I had bottled over the past month to spew forth in a molten tirade.

As raved at Brenda, my voice ricocheting throughout the bus in raging waves, these heated feelings began to recede and were replaced by warm fulfillment. My last words rang through the dead silent bus. I had finished. Brenda gave one last attempt at retaliation. "Oooh, so sassy--I'm shaking, oooh." Nobody laughed. Brenda never bothered me after that. In fact, as twisted as it may seem, she started being nice to me. I suppose that by disgracing her, I had gained her respect -- which is rather sick, now that I reflect upon it. Strangely enough, I feel attached to Brenda; I often wonder what she is doing now, whether she went to college, whether she's still living in the same small town where she and I grew up, whether -- God forbid -- she has children. I wonder if she remembers me, the first-grader who humiliated her in front of a busload of her peers.

On occasion, I still run into a "Brenda." I'm probably going to encounter a long line of them in my life. It's nice to know that somewhere inside me I have the courage to take care of them.
"Hasta la vista, baby." These words were uttered by Arnold Schwarzenegger's character in the movie Terminator 2 before he obliterated his enemy with a very large handgun. This movie, along with many other action films, is indicative of American society's attitude toward violence. In fact, the United States is the most violent nation on Earth, partly illustrated by the fact that more people die here each year from handguns than in any other country. Furthermore, many deaths by handguns are from accidents in the home. This obnoxiously harmful facet of American life must be curbed. Justification exists to deny the civilian population of the United States the right to possess firearms.

Many hunters would undoubtedly be offended by the proposition of eliminating firearms. Some gun owners, for example, defend automatic weapons through their use for hunting. However, even if one argues that killing animals is a sport, there is nothing sporting about hunting with a weapon that fires anywhere from 400 to 1600 rounds per minute. Those hunters who zealously maintain their right to own guns should consider these three words: "bow and arrow." Try incorporating some skill into the hunt instead of relying on raw explosive firepower. Exploring other means for hunting, like the bow and arrow, would integrate more skill and make hunting more "sporting."

The National Rifle Association has been a consistent and persistent defender of the right to possess guns. It is a powerful, influential lobbying entity that contributes substantial amounts of money to political campaigns. However, the NRA holds an extreme position, even advocating the right to possess automatic and semi-automatic weapons. A proposed federal law introduced to the House of Representatives in 1988 that would enact the drastic step of a one-week waiting period for handgun purchases became known as the Brady Bill, after James Brady, then White House press secretary shot in the 1981 assassination attempt of President Reagan. When 95% of Americans, including 87% of gun owners, supported the Brady Bill, the NRA mounted a $4 million dollar campaign to stop it.

Many other gun owners, with the NRA staunchly behind them, would invoke the 2nd Amendment to the Constitution, which enumerates the right of American citizens to bear arms. Unfortunately, although the Constitution is a brilliantly written document by brilliant, forward-looking men, the 2nd amendment is outdated. Americans had just been through an armed revolution, and our forefathers thought that this was an important right.

At that time, though, the technology of firearms and the depth of violence in our society had not progressed to their current
levels. How could our forefathers have foreseen the exploding gang violence that harms not only gang members but innocent bystanders? How could they have foreseen a time when bullets are designed specifically to tear through protective vests our police officers wear? They couldn't have.

The evidence exists to promote the idea of denying the American public the right to possess firearms. This is shown by the trait that 10,567 Americans, 87 Japanese and 22 British shared in 1990. What did they have in common? They were all killed by handguns. While the United States has a population four times that of Great Britain, 480 times as many Americans were killed with handguns. The total these guns exact on human life is shocking. For example, approximately every three hours a teenager commits suicide with a handgun; fourteen children under the age of 19 are killed by handguns every day.

Children aren't the only victims. Some of the greatest American leaders ever, including Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King, Jr., and John F. Kennedy, were assassinated with guns.

One of the NRA's slogans is "guns don't kill people, people kill people." What the NRA doesn't realize, or won't admit, is that when people in the United States of America decide to kill other people, they routinely use firearms as the easiest and most efficient means. Whether accidental or intentional, the effects guns have had on our society are horrible. The bloodshed must be stopped.
A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM ANALYSIS

The idea of the dream, in A Midsummer Night's Dream, represents a play, with the dreamer as both actor and audience, in which the dreamer journeys through the subconscious to untangle his or her problems.

The whole play is itself a dream in which the problems of its characters are sorted out through a journey through the woods. These deep and dark woods represent the unknown subconscious, where the mortals encounter flowers and fairies, who symbolize raw feelings in their purified forms.

In the beginning of the play, two mortals, Lysander and Hermia, flee from the strict Athenian law, which prevents their marriage, to elope in the woods. Demetrius, enamored of Hermia, follows, and Helena, infatuated with Demetrius, follows him. This whole "tangled chain" proceeds to the woods in pursuit of their separate desires. Demetrius, pursued by Helena, speaks of the wood and its ambiguity.

Demetrius expresses his exasperation with the dark wood in the words "wood within this wood," meaning simply mad because he has lost his way on journey. The wood is a metaphor for the unknown forest through which the folkloric hero journeys in a quest for self knowledge.

Within this magical wood, among abundant flowers and trickling streams, live Oberon and Titania, king and queen of the fairies, with their train of sprites and elves. The flowers and water are sex symbols, while the fairies represent the simple feelings which govern our mind and control our dreams: love, hate, jealousy, amusement, desire and fear.

The fairies' speech is studded with images of nature and flowers, as in the First Fairy's speech.

And I serve the Fairy Queen,
To dew her orbs upon the green,
The cowslips tell her pensioners be.  
(Il. ii. 8.)

This transforms the wood into the unexplored subconscious where repressed and unacknowledged sexual desires grow like flowers, the union of masculine and feminine on the banks of trickling streams. The flowers' sexual imagery is best illustrated in Oberon's description of Titania's "close and consecrated bower".
I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
With sweet musk roses, and with eglantine.
There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,
Lulled in these flowers and dances with delight.

(II. i. 249.)

...a little western flower,
Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound,
And maidens call it love-in-idleness.

(II. i. 166.)

The virgin, "milk-white" flower has been pollinated by Cupid's arrow and now turned purple and mature with the penetration of "love's wound."

The fairies themselves take on the characteristics of certain feelings experienced by the mortals. Oberon embodies jealousy. He envies Titania because she has possession of a changeling he wishes for his train. To spite her, he makes her fall in love with "some vile thing," causing his own jealousy to grow as he observes another man entwined in her arms.

In opposition to the feeling Oberon embodies for most of the play, Titania is the fairy of faithful love. She sleeps in a plethora of sexual flowers, in a bower near a stream. She falls in love with Bottom and promptly asks: "What angel wakes me from my flowr'y bed?" Also, Titania keeps the changeling boy in her retinue out of love for his deceased mother.

Full often hath she gossiped by my side,
And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands...
...But she being mortal of that boy did die,
And for her sake do I rear up her boy;
And for her sake I will not part with him.

(II. i. 125.)

"nodding violets," "musk roses" and "eglan- tine", twined round with woodbine. Here in this bouquet sleeps Titania, connecting the perfumed flower with sleep, hence creating an image of dreaming. The sexuality of the flowers is suggested in the lines "and dances with delight." Similarly, Oberon's description of "love-in-idleness", the flower which creates immediate infatuation with the first thing seen, is abundant with sexual imagery.
The fairies in the wood are characterized feelings not only because of their own concrete feelings, but because they have control over the mortals’ minds. With the enchanted flower, love-in-idleness, the fairies govern the humans’ actions, as when Puck and Oberon endeavor to untangle the web of Athenian lovers. When Puck and Oberon decide to watch the result of their mistakes, they play with the mortals exactly the same way that our feelings toy with our minds. Puck says to Oberon,

Shall we their fond pageant see?  
Lord, what fools these mortals be!  
(Ill. ii. 114.)

The fairies watching this living tangled mess evoke the image of a dreamer watching his or her own confused feelings within a dream.

Earlier in the woods, Hermia has a nightmare which symbolizes her fear of Lysander’s disloyalty.

Methought a serpent eat my heart away,  
And you sat smiling at his cruel pray.  
(Ill. ii. 149.)

This is not only a dream, but the truth, as Lysander has just run away swearing his love to Helena. Hermia awakes as from a dream, shouting,

Help me, Lysander, help me! Do thy best  
To pluck this crawling serpent from my breast.  
Ay me, for pity. What a dream was here!  
(Ill. ii. 145.)

Hermia experiences her fear in the form of a dream about a serpent. Perhaps the crawling serpent is a metaphor for the long twisted and tangled chain the lovers are in, as well as a parasite, a phallic symbol of poison, hatred and lust.

Throughout the play, several different problems appear and are sorted out in the end. The Oberon and Titania quarrel, stemming from their fight for the Indian boy, upsets the balance of nature. In a long speech to Oberon, Titania describes the affects their disagreement has wrought on nature.

The fold stands empty in the drowned field,  
And crows are fatted with the murrion flock;  
The nine men’s morris is filled up with mud;  
And quaint mazes in the wanton green  
For lack of tread are undistinguishable.  
The human mortals want their winter here;  
(II. i. 96.)

The quarrel between Oberon and Titania has made all of nature infertile, and caused disorder and chaos throughout the earth.

The Athenian lovers who are thrown through jealousy, hatred, love, betrayal and desire while lost in the woods, are another tangled chain. By morning, when the quarrel between the king and queen of the fairies is resolved, the lover’s tangled chain untangled, and they awaken, as if from a dream, changed and almost reborn within the wood.

Bottom the Weaver, who gets entangled in the dreamlike mesh of the woods and ends up sleeping with Titania, with an ass’s head clapped on his shoulders, awakes in the morning, befuddled as usual, and marveling at his "most rare vision."

The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue conceive, nor his heart report what my dream was.  
(V. i.208.)
Finally, in a different context, the idea of the dream as an untangling of the chain, is applied to the play which the "rude mechanicals" perform for Duke Theseus, his bride, and the couples. In response to the prologue, Theseus remarks that "his speech was like that of a tangled chain; nothing impaired but all disordered." (V. i. 124.) The tangled chain is a metaphor for all of the messes sorted out in both the dream and the play.

In the final scene of the play, all of the disorder, chaos and tangled chains having been sorted out, the fairies trip off to bless the multiple marriage beds, and Puck addresses the audience, thereby bridging for a moment the gap between players and watchers.

If we shadows have offended,
Think but this and all is mended--
That you have but slumbered here
Whilst these visions did appear.
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding but a dream.

(V. i. 412.)

The play's title probably comes from this speech. Puck compares the whole play to a dream—a play in which the hero is both actor and auditor, a quest to unravel a problem, a journey through the dense forest of the subconscious.

As long as humans have lived and slept on this earth, they have dreamed. The Bible shows evidence of dream analysis as a reading of the future. In the book of Genesis, Joseph dreams of all the sheaves in a field bowing down to his sheaf, symbolizing his future prospects as a great leader on his own aspirations. Later, he goes on to interpret his brothers' dreams, and is abandoned by them because of this power. Dreams give us a front row seat to a performance of our own imagination, and we watch our feelings untangle our problems. Most importantly, without dreams, we would not know ourselves. Without the chance for our subconscious to sort out our problems, we would reside in darkness and ambiguity.
America Under Siege

We as a nation must wake up to the threat that teenagers represent and begin to take action before our country falls into their hands. They run rampant over America, lacking in discipline and all sensibilities. It is up to us to protect our free and beautiful nation from this plague of rebelliousness. We must all do our part.

Teenagers today have turned away from their families and have been corrupted by degenerate friends. Parents! Rein your children in! Do not allow them to run with the fast crowd. Protect your sons and daughters for they themselves cannot comprehend the danger their peers pose. Why, anything that comes between a family and a child must not be condoned. I urge the entire nation to impose a ten P.M. curfew to keep our youngsters safe from the streets. Once they have fallen into the hands of these "friends" all is lost, and we certainly must plan ahead to keep our future safe and secure.

To keep these youths in line, I suggest that we apply pressure to them. Pressure them to excel academically. Pressure them to excel athletically. Pressure them with responsibilities at home. Only expectations from you, their parents, can prevent them from falling in with hoodlums, breaking curfew, experimenting with cigarettes and alcohol, and cutting classes. Expect perfection from your teen and make it clear that you will accept nothing else. Only then can they mature to someday become a truly productive generation. Responsibilities, too, are important.

School-related activities, after school jobs and chores at home are imperative! Demand they keep up their grades! Push them to achieve!

Never leave important decisions in the inexperienced hands of youth. Such decisions regarding their future, friends and leisure time activities are best handled by those who know the ways of the world. Upstart opinions of their own must be stifled as quickly as possible. Well-established opinions are the only ones of consequence, and, of course, the sooner we have them thinking like us, the safer the future will be. Our values and beliefs are far superior to any they could possibly conceive of, and are the correct ones. We must work to instill in them
unwavering obedience and respect for authority. It is imperative that they learn to follow directions!

Unfortunately the task of keeping these teenagers off the streets may prove impossible. In fact, the gravest danger facing society today is the presence of teenage drivers. We are currently pushing legislation to raise the driving age to twenty-one, but in the meantime we must fight to keep youths home where they belong. By placing full financial responsibility upon your child you can, in fact, accomplish a dual purpose: (1.) Hopefully prevent another youth from entering the mobile world and (2.) create more pressure for that youth.

Alas, despite these precautions some teenagers manage to find themselves out in society where they frequent eating establishments. They have the gall to drink coffee and laugh and talk loudly to each other, often past ten o'clock in the evening. They have caused many a frightening fire hazard by moving chairs and tables and standing near other parties. The management of such establishments should indeed discourage their patronage. Refrain from serving these young degenerates until it is unavoidable. Don't bother with manners or politeness for they wouldn't be understood or returned. Think of it as doing your part to preserve our nation from certain destruction at their hands.

Only we understand them, and only we can protect them from themselves. Foster only those hopes and dreams which are practical. Encourage aspirations toward medical, scientific and legal fields, for liberal arts and humanities aren't worthwhile studies.

With immediate action we can still be saved. Wrap teenagers in the bosoms of their families where they will be nurtured and can grow into functioning members of society. Prevent them from forming their own opinions and distance them from their friends. Though the future may appear bleak, it will indeed brighten once we squelch the rebellious nature of Youth. One day, as responsible, rational adults, they'll thank us...and support our social security payments.
Some would call my grandmother’s house a dump. The carpet and floors are worn, the faded mint green paint is peeling from the walls in ribbons, and in every room are drawers full of withered and mildewed pictures and newspaper clippings we have not sorted since she died. Yet amidst all the worthless trash she saved—recipes, advice columns, Christmas cards, and plastic rain hoods—there is a picture of my father at fourteen; tall and skinny, his hair in a buzz, and his football helmet at his side. To me, this house is not filled with garbage, but rather a wealth of memories yet to be discovered.

The house in Kenosha is a dull gray brick with black trim on the windows and doors. The lid of the mailbox is nearly rusted closed, and the screen on one window of the front porch leans precariously over the side. The black paint of the metal railing along the front steps is blistered and old, leaving a grainy coating of black crumbs on my hand as I lean against it. The house has an air of abandonment about it; it seems lonely and solitary despite the brash voices of the children on the sidewalk outside it and the bright flowers of the neighbors’ gardens that surround it.

Right inside the front door my grandfather’s old recliner crouches like an old family dog guarding the house. Its fabric is worn smooth on the arms, and its seat is a crater created by years of my grandfather’s vigilant sitting. Each time I walk in the door, I can see him there, his gray hair combed back from his broad forehead, the milky color of his pale skin beneath his sleeveless undershirt. He was a gymnast in his youth, and I could see the soft outlines in his arms where muscles were once solid and strong.

Against the far wall leans a cabinet with thick glass doors. Its dusty shelves are filled with delicate china cups and plates, massed together like gossiping women. I don’t think my grandmother ever used those dishes while I was alive. They belonged to my father’s grandma, Julia. Also in the cabinet, on the bottom shelf, are two little glasses, decorated with intricate flower patterns, that my grandmother used for my sister and me when we came to visit. Beside them are two gumballs, one white and one yellow. They have probably been there at least ten years. I always hoped Grandma would give me one, but she never did.

On one wall of the room hangs a black and white portrait of my father, when he was less than two years old. He looks positively angelic with his big brown eyes and perfect ringlets of hair framing his round face. Grandma told me that Grandma Julia had carefully curled his hair around her fingers to make it turn out that way. The picture makes it easier for me to see my father as a child; sometimes it seems impossible to imagine that he was ever young. I wonder what he acted like: whether he was quiet, if he played the same games I did, whether he was always joking like he is now.

My grandmother’s bedroom is the first bedroom in the house. It is fairly cramped; there is only room to walk between her bed and her dresser. The first thing I notice is her certificate of baptism hanging on the
wall. It is a pink piece of paper decorated with doves, gold script, and roses, and I am always a little disappointed that it reads nothing more than facts, handwritten in fading ink, by either her parents or the minister. On her dresser is a little dark block of wood resembling a paperweight, with light wood letters spelling out the word "JESUS." We don't have anything like this in our house, and it first strikes me as a little tacky, but then I realize Grandma must have liked seeing it as a reminder of her faith.

Afternoon light streams into the room from a side window, but the front window is covered with a torn paper shade. A tall mirror with a few greenish stains, the flaws of age, reflects the flowered pattern of the textured bedspread. The room is very quiet.

Grandma's dresser in the back of the room is not filled with clothes, but rather with papers and everything else she accumulated over the years. Grandma was a "saver"--she collected anything that held even the slightest meaning for her. I am that way, too. I like to hold on to things, so that maybe I won't forget them or whatever they were connected to.

In one of her drawers we found a pair of her brother Norman's wool pants. They are a dull khaki green, and enormous. Norman was tall, and his waist was probably forty-two inches wide. The pants look like some kind of army surplus tent. The image of Norman I remember from photographs seems to leap out of the paper to fill those pants. I wish I could have seen him wear them.

My grandmother's closet is stacked with boxes. Some are balanced over the edges of shelves or piled on top of others, and I often fear that while opening the closet one might jump out at me like a wild bird. Most of these boxes are filled with old news clippings: wedding announcements of people we don't know, obituaries, the latest news about aspirin and cancer. Also there are little memo books with blue covers, containing old phone numbers of plumbers or neighbors who have long since moved out.

One piece of paper stands out. It is old and yellowed, part of a stack that came from my great-grandfather's house. On it are written a few brief lines of poetry, unfinished or continued somewhere else. My great-grandfather never had more than a grade school education. I had always thought of him working around the feed mill he owned, but reading his words, a secret side of himself he had longed to express, makes me wish very much that I had known him.

On the wall is a picture of my grandparents when they were both young. They are holding hands, standing on the lawn of a house unfamiliar to me. I can hardly recognize them as the people I knew, but I like to imagine what they were like and how they felt. Looking at old photographs, people say I resemble my grandmother when she was young. I wonder who else I am like and think of all my relatives.

This house, seemingly wasted and alone, must be like the picture of my grandparents. It, and everything in it, were once something I would barely recognize. Each time I come here, I think about the people who lived here and used it, and try to understand what they were like.

Though it may appear to be nothing more than a run-down building, this house is filled with echoes and memories that seem to have no end. Here I gain a sense of my past and of continuity I can find nowhere else.
Struggles

The winters of my childhood were often spent sledding down the neighborhood drainage gully, which made up for its length with its slope. On one of these winter days I remember sitting at the bottom of the hill trying to construct a jump out of the mostly dry snow. Somehow I could never build them nearly as well as the older kids.

I was about halfway done with building the jump when I had the urge to pee. It sort of scared me. The house was at least a two-block walk through deep snow, an incredible distance for a kid’s legs to cover. Instead of starting back immediately I continued building my jump, hoping the problem would go away. Five minutes passed and no relief was in sight. The urge to urinate was becoming more powerful by the second. It was time to take action; I would begin the trek back to my house.

Each step was awkward. The clammy nylon of my snowpants stuck to my skin and pulled at my legs. The motions of walking through deep snow swelled the discomfort and seemed to put undue pressure on my bladder. But I was making remarkable progress despite, or maybe because, of the agony. In fact I was over halfway there when a startling realization froze me with panic. I had forgotten my sled. Normally I would have just left it, after all, a piece of plastic isn’t usually worth wetting your pants over. This sled, however was.

It used to be my brother’s and it carried with it some intangible qualities the older kids seemed to possess. I’m not sure if it went any faster or flew any higher, but it always seemed like it was more exciting, more dangerous. I had no choice but to run back, even if it would cost me my pride.

When I reached old blue a sense of overwhelming relief washed over me. The urge to urinate dissipated. My bladder must have stretched out a little bit more, allowing me to survive.

I hiked back home cautiously, never knowing when the pressure would return to my bladder. I made great strides and my house loomed nearer and nearer. I was
almost there when Nature's call returned again full force. But this time I was not afraid. The only thing between me and success was my yard and a couple of doors. I would make it.

I hustled inside to the first bathroom, only to find a locked door. Some thoughts ran through my mind and I pictured the toilet which was less than six feet away. The only thing that separated me from victory was an inch and a half of wood, an impenetrable wall that tore a huge hole in my confidence. But I did not let my reflection about the cruelty of life slow me down.

I ran upstairs to an open bathroom. I rushed to the toilet and ripped the zipper on my snowsuit down about two inches, the distance it traveled from my collar until it snagged.

I frantically pulled the nylon fabric from the zipper and tried pulling it down again. My efforts were in vain; the zipper continued to snag. I bit my lip and forced myself to go slow. My eyes burned in frustration as my tiny hands wriggled the zipper down inch by inch, always careful to pull the nylon fabric away from the zipper's grasp. After what seemed an eternity of forced patience the zipper was down. I pulled my sweatshirt up and attempted to pull my sweatpants down, but to my horror and disbelief they were tied tightly around my waist.

My legs started doing a dance of their own while I fumbled with the knot. It was tightened by snow and ice. I gnawed on my lip as my weak, tiny hands struggled to untwist it.

My knuckles turned white and my fingertips hurt. Time was running out. My dancing got more frantic and my heartbeat rose. This was it. My confidence had been wholly replaced by fear and in my final effort I tried to just yank my sweatpants down.

Did I make it? Did I succeed? Let's just say some problems are insurmountable. Sometimes life is stacked against you. Sometimes zippers are bad and sweatpants are just tied too tightly. Let's just say I went down fighting.
Lost In Lvov
or
Why There Should Never Be A Cherry Pepsi

In the summer of 1990, one month before the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union, found myself exploring the western Ukrainian city of Lvov. The march step of palatial museums, brilliantly colored churches, and solemn historical monuments had stopped. At last, it was free time. After a breakfast of tea and haleb, a Russian bread, my friend Cathy and I decided to walk towards the city's center, in search of interesting local cuisine and people (in that order as we were still hungry). Ready for the unexpected in a land that has been so long our nation's greatest enemy, we walked, trusting that our youth and our friendliness were all that we needed.

Having been in the Soviet Union for more than one week, I had not found the characteristics of the stereotypical Soviet citizen to be true. The politeness and kindness with which people treated us, a group of high school students from Illinois, Tennessee, and Wisconsin, were in contrast to the perceptions many of us held before we left. As an American, I feared a cold, resentful people, hardened by their lack of opportunity and economic difficulties. Instead we met children at Pioneer camps in Odessa and Minsk who were neither suspicious nor outwardly competitive (as our governments and Olympians have been for decades). Ranging in age from six to eleven, the children clung to us, as if trying to get a feel for our culture. Their jovial faces and warm eyes contradicted T.V. images of a humorless youth devoted to Lenin and the ideology he preached. Even the elderly grandmother visited in her apartment in Lvov had been graciously welcoming, rummaging through her books to find a gift for me. She seemed unconnected to a harsh, Stalinistic generation who, I imagined, might shun an American intrusion.

On our way across Lvov we walked through a park, well-tended by a cadre of babushkas. We saw children playing games while their parents and grandparents sat, animatedly talking until we walked by. At that moment, I could feel their silence, our American clothing attracting their attention. With an eager smile pasted across my face, I remembered too late a conversation I had had with a Ukrainian college student, Natasha, at a youth disco several nights before. When I asked her what Soviets think of Americans, she thought for a moment before replying, "Some think you smile too much." In between the heavy beat of the Russian disco music playing in the background, I questioned why Soviets think that. Without hesitation she responded, "The older people think you smile so
much because you are stupid." Embarrassed and somewhat stunned at the
time, I had never before linked smiling
with stupidity. I knew, however, that I was
not going to let the Soviets think that
was yet "another dumb American." In our
wake, the lilting sounds of Russian re-
sumed.

Stopping only to buy a can of Pepsi-Cola at
the Beriozka, a
hard currency
store, we soon
approached
our destination. There,
neart the heart
of Lvov, we dis-
covered a
sprawling
farmer's mar-
ket. Fresh
fruits and vege-
tables from
the Ukrainian
countryside were abundant. Fantasizing
about foods we hadn't tasted since we
left home, we entered. As bodies brushed
against us, it seemed as though the
entire population of Lvov was shopping
that morning. Young men in silk shirts
meandered through the crowds while boys
and older men carried satchels of carrots,
potatoes, raspberries, and cherries.
Women with small children, arm in arm
with elderly women, were haggling with the
farmers for the best price.

After purchasing a twenty kopek plas-
tic bag from a desiccated, old woman, we
searched for the most enticing fruit. As
we approached one of the cherry booths,
the eyes of the female farmer standing
behind it stared intently at us. Her color-
ful Ukrainian clothes seemed to match
her bold personality. With thick, worn
hands she snatched our bag and began
filling it with cherries. Not knowing how to
react to her aggressive sales technique,
we stood dumbfounded and watched as
she triumphantly handed us the fruit.
Taking the bulging bag from her, Cathy
set her can of Pepsi on the ledge next to
the cherries. The woman's
eyes immediately shifted
from Cathy's face to the
Pepsi-Cola.
She pointed
incessantly at the can, obvi-
ously indicating that she
wanted it. It
soon became
clear that she
wanted us to trade the Pepsi for the bag
of cherries.

While amused that she was so excited
over a can of soda, I quickly reasoned (no
dumb American here) that this was not a
good deal. Cathy paid a $1.50 for the
Pepsi at the Beriozka. A dollar fifty con-
verted to rubles was about forty rubles.
The current price for a kilo of cherries was
only ten rubles. I was determined not to
let Cathy waste her expensive Pepsi like
that. As I vehemently tried to convince
her not to give in, the farm woman was
persuading Cathy, through her genuine
desperation for something so inexpen-
sive and available in our society. We
hardly noticed that a crowd of spectators
had gathered around us. Interested in the
Pepsi and most likely in the fact that we were American, they shoved forward, trying to understand what was happening. With several people leaning over our shoulders, adding their comments in Ukrainian, we completed the transaction. Cathy smiled and gave the farm woman the coveted Pepsi-Cola. Feeling Cathy had been suckered by the woman, yet at the same time wryly amused at the latter's success, I smiled too. With the crowd dispersing, we left the booth, ready to devour the cherries.

Suddenly remembering the warnings we had received about pickpockets, I reached for my shoulder pack. Designed to be worn around the waist, the zippered pouch felt less conspicuous if I wore it slung over my shoulder. Now, uncomfortably, my overriding sense was that it felt lighter, much lighter. Tearing through the opened pack, could feel my heart pounding. It only took seconds to confirm that my wallet was gone.

My mind raced. Realizing that the last time I had the wallet was just seconds before at the crowded cherry booth, my panic increased. My sight narrowed on the farm woman and the booth of cherries; I shoved my way towards them. "Where is my wallet?" I shouted.

Wiping the Pepsi from her lips, she stood, confused by my hostility. She raised her hands and shook her head, indicating she had no idea what I was talking about. Anger surged through me. Again interrogated her. She continued to gulp the Pepsi, infuriating me. "Someone stole my wallet! Who took it?" She responded but to my endless frustration, in her native Ukrainian.

My patience lost, I demanded that she speak English, even knowing that she couldn't. Despite my obvious rage, I saw amusement in her eyes. Sheer anger formed within me the idea that she had been the perpetrator. Yes! She had plotted to make a complicated transaction so that she could have someone steal my wallet! At that moment Cathy reached the booth and in a placating voice said, "Come on, let's just go back to the hotel."

Recounting the things that were in my wallet, my throat swelled. Not only had I lost $200, a credit card, luggage keys and addresses, but also a family picture. "How could someone take that from me?" I questioned out loud. Tears streaming down my face, I quickened my pace to a near run. All smiles extinguished, I pursed my lips and felt my eyes become pinched slits below my eyebrows. Elbowing people out of my way, I was no longer an open-minded, enthusiastic traveler but a harried, insensitive brute. I could hear Cathy calling my name from behind, but I did not stop.

As I stormed through the streets, my emotions mercurial, kept asking myself, "How could someone do that to a visitor?" The focus of my anger was no longer just on the person who stole my wallet, but on the entire nation. For that moment, the entire Soviet Union betrayed me.

That night, on the train to Moscow, the scene kept playing over and over in my head. The rage I felt towards the Soviet Union had subsided. No longer did I feel a resentful people had conspired against me. I remembered the discussion I had with Natasha at the disco, with regret that I had fulfilled their stereotype of Americans. Had I been thinking, as I should in any crowd, I would still have my wallet. Smiling inwardly, I ate the cherries.
DESDEMONA AND OTHELLO

Othello and Desdemona, in Shakespeare's tragedy Othello, were in love with what they wanted each other to be. When they married each other, it was apparent that their relationship could not succeed. Although Iago and Cassio played influential roles in the couple's relationship, both Othello and Desdemona made their own choices and decisions and it was these choices and decisions combined with their clash of personalities that caused their downfall.

Of the marriage's many flaws, four contributed most to bring its end. First, both Othello and Desdemona entered the partnership from a destructive childhood: Othello growing up as a soldier, completely disconnected from his emotions; and Desdemona playing wife to her father Brabantio after the death of her mother. Second, each of them lived in their own little world, thinking only of themselves and disconnecting themselves from the influence of others. Third, the amount of communication between them was virtually nil—had they once sat down and openly talked, freely discussed their problems, the marriage might have been saved. Fourth, Desdemona was so young that her lack of life experience disabled her in dealing with adult issues like love, marriage, and tact.

Although being a soldier since the age of seven taught Othello discipline, courage, and obedience, it failed to instruct him in the ways of the emotional world. As a result of his childhood, growing up among male soldiers without anyone to provide the warmth through which he could learn the feminine aspects of life: gentleness, compassion, and interpersonal relationships, Othello treats every action like a military duty and every person like a military assistant, including his wife. He relates to her as if she were just another emotional tie and responsibility. When Desdemona is awakened by the clamoring of Cassio's drunkenness and what follows, Othello reassures her by saying, "Come, Desdemona. 'Tis the soldier's life to have their balm slumbers waked with strife" (II iii 264-5). As if to imply that since she is a soldier too, she must learn to deal with the problems soldiers face. When Othello sends Iago to fetch Desdemona, he asks one of his assistants (Iago) to find another assistant (Desdemona): "Ancient...you best know the place" (I iii 136). A third example of his confusing wife with soldier is when he joins the two in saying, "The flinty and steel couch of war my thrice-driven bed of down [or marriage bed]" (I iii 249-50). Othello equates the role of wife with the role of soldier and treats Desdemona accordingly.

Desdemona comes from a somewhat warped childhood as well. After the death of her mother, she was forced to play the wife to her father. Othello describes his visits to their home and refers to her, "But still the house affairs would draw her thence" (I iii 147) as having wifely duties. By her father's reaction to her leaving him to get married, it is apparent that Brabantio had worked up in his mind that Desdemona was his wife in more ways
than doing the chores. Although she did play the wife, she was not allowed the amount of respect that a wife is entitled to. Brabantio accuses Othello, "O foul thief, where has thou stowed my daughter?" (I iii 76-77) as if Desdemona were equipment--or a kidnapped wife! He becomes more enraged than a normal father would to hear of the marriage of his daughter--because he cannot stand to lose a wife (or what he thinks is a lover?). When Roderigo informs him, he cries, "Oh, Heaven! How got she out? O treason of blood!" (I i 185) and, "Get weapons, I And raise some special officers of night" (I i 200). Because of this past, Desdemona runs away not from a father to a husband as it would seem, but from a husband to who she needs to be a father, Othello. Her childhood helps to distort her expectations of marriage; she expects not love and mutual friendship but a father figure and protector of his dangerous world which intrigues her. The problem with this need is that the protecting relationship she wants could also be a stifling one--a suffocating one--hence her cause of death (Othello suffocates her at the end of the play).

A second reason for the destruction of their marriage was the fact that both Othello and Desdemona live in their own worlds, not willing to acknowledge anyone else's views or opinions. Othello cuts himself off from everyone; he restricts himself to hearing only what Iago tells him and does not seek a second opinion. Iago, as part of his efforts to destroy Othello, plays on him enough so that he relies on Iago for information dealing with his wife and never validates what he is told with her. Othello is like the island of Cyprus: alone with attacks coming in from all sides (the attacks being the different ways Iago uses to hurt him from all angles: turning his wife into an adulteress, turning his most trusted lieutenant into a wife-stealer). Before Othello arrives, the Duke and some senators are conversing about Cyprus when a messenger enters and gives news of a planned attack on Cyprus (in other words, solitary Othello as Cyprus is being attacked by Iago, the Turks.) The Duke, as the voice of an observer, says, "'Tis certain then for Cyprus" (I iii 48). Another example of Othello's self-confinement is his failure to observe the handkerchief dropping. Desdemona tries to ease his headache by wrapping her handkerchief around his head. This is an emotional reaching out on her part; Othello, unskilled in emotional matters and newly infused with jealousy and suspicion by Iago, rejects her efforts by pushing her cloth away with, "your napkin is too little" (III iii 325) (signifying to the naive Desdemona that her efforts are meaningless) and it drops to the ground. With this move he cuts himself off further by not even allowing his wife into his solitary cell.

Desdemona has a wall around herself like Othello, but much of her actions are explained by her youth. Most adolescents are overconfident and think they know everything without needing the help of anyone else, and Desdemona is no exception. An example of her overconfidence comes near the end of the play when Desdemona and Emilia are conversing about fidelity. Emilia, the wizened older woman, tells Desdemona some lessons of life and of men, and Desdemona the idealistic naive youngster, refutes them confidently--denying any reality but the one she has dreamed up for herself. Emilia tells her, "Who would not make her husband a cuckold to make him a monarch? I should venture purgatory for't."

which Desdemona responds, "Beshrew me if I would do such a thing for the whole world." (IV iii 89-93) Desdemona is resolved to remain inside her own ideal reality.

The third main problem with the marriage of Desdemona and Othello is the complete lack of communication. Even during a conversation between them, neither really hears what the other is saying; although they both speak, each one is performing his or her own monologue in terms of how many people they hear talking back. For example, at the end of the play when Othello enters to kill Desdemona, he talks to her with his intent in mind and goal fixed. No matter what she says, he will kill her—and she is panicking; blabbering on without really paying attention to his words and what puzzled motives lie behind them. She expresses her fear, "but yet I feel fear" and he responds, "Think on thy sins" (V ii). These words express his disregard for anything she says—they are a continuation of his last thought. This is not the first time Desdemona has encountered fear in this relationship—in the beginning of the play she was a frightened newlywed. Tactless Othello sent strangers to fetch her in the armory, which must have been frightening as the only person she knew in the area was Othello and she delivered a very clean-cut and seemingly rehearsed speech to the Duke's group at that time when she was the center of argument and must have felt panicked and afraid. The non-communicative dialogue stated above at the end of the play could have been easily remedied at any other time by any other couple by open discussion; however at this point in the play this would have been impossible because Othello has been influenced so much by Iago that he is convinced that his soldier Desdemona has committed mutiny that he is too set in his plan of murder to deviate. He plunges head on with his plan and no matter how much young Desdemona pleads with him he will not relent.

By marrying an older man, Desdemona has put herself in a position where she is expected to act like an adult and deal with adult situations. However, her youth and understandable immaturity show themselves repeatedly, and one wonders if a more mature Desdemona would have acted in ways that would have helped the marriage to succeed.

While Desdemona is attempting to get Cassio rehired, she pushes Othello over and over again and as she considers only her goal and is oblivious to his reactions, she tests him to the point of angry impatience. Regarding the date when Cassio is to return, she asks Othello, "But shall't be shortly?" "Tomorrow dinner then?" "Why then, tomorrow night, or Tuesday morn..." (III iii 62,64,66,69). With every question he becomes more annoyed but she, lacking the maturity to know when to quit, does not realize this and keeps pushing.

Desdemona demonstrates her youth again with her innocent hope that if she creates the setting of when everything was "good," by putting her wedding sheets on the bed to symbolize the happy time right after they were married, then everything will be all right again. She says to Emilia: "Lay on my bed my wedding sheets" (IV ii 105). The couple's lack of communication, effects of a bad childhood, and self-isolation combined along with Desdemona's youth and other factors to destroy their relationship with a grand and violent finale.
After explaining what went wrong in the marriage, it is important to explain how it began so well; why it started in the first place. The reasons for its beginning were the individual attractions of one partner to another; the reasons for its end were the combination of the faults of the couple when trying to work together as a team.

Desdemona "loves" Othello for three reasons: she is swept away by his heroic stories, he is what she needs as a father figure because she has never had a father—the person can take her under his wing and on whom she can depend, and she is in love with the idea of being married.

As Othello reveals the events in the courtship leading up to their marriage, he explains what first attracted Desdemona to him. He speaks of the stories of adventure that he would tell Brabantio, and "This to hear would Desdemona seriously incline... She'd come again and with a greedy ear devour up my discourse" (I iii 161-2, 165-6). He says, "She loved me for the dangers I had passed" (I iii 183). The tales of adventure promised to Desdemona a life of such adventure—it mystified her young mind that she could actually be a part of his exciting life through this marriage. She expected a replay of his stories in their life together. It was his words that swept her away; at first she heard the words and did not mind his age or other imperfections: she tells the Duke and his comrades, "I saw Othello's visage in his mind" (I iii 274). Desdemona, as mentioned earlier, had to play the part of wife to her father and never got a chance to be the daughter—now in marrying Othello she sought someone to be the father she never had, someone with whom she would not be expected to play the wifely role of doing chores and being responsible for her own actions. Othello seemed subconsciously willing at first to perform this role, and Desdemona loves him for it. Othello calls for a senator to "Send for the lady to the Sagittary" (I iii 129). The Sagittary is the armory—she is being protected by all of Othello’s armor. When Desdemona rises from her bed to investigate the event that got a drunk Cassio fired, Othello reassures her with, "All's well, sweeting; come away to bed" (II iii 258). He takes her under his wing as a stronghold she can depend on.

Desdemona is in love with the idea of marriage. Most of the love she bears for Othello she really bears for the idea of being in love. She tells the Duke, "I did love the moor to live with him" (I iii 270); she wants a part of his adventurous life in marrying him, and by living with him she thinks she can have it. She acts how she thinks a good wife should act: when Othello should be returning from Cyprus, the first question Desdemona asks is
about Othello, "What tidings can you tell me of my lord?" (II i 99) and when she speaks with Emilia she professes her undying loyalty as all good wives do. She asks Emilia, "Wouldst thou do such a deed [commit adultery] for all the world?" to which Emilia replies, "Why, would not you?" and Desdemona exclaims, "No, by this heavenly light!" Desdemona is in love with adventure and marriage, with Othello's ability to act as a father figure, and with his heroic stories and what she takes as the promise of an adventurous life.

Othello, older but not wiser, is attracted to Desdemona for different reasons. At first, Othello is flattered that sweet young beautiful Desdemona would even take an interest in older Othello. He loves her because she loves his stories. He tells the Duke: "and I loved her that she did pity them [my stories]" (I iii 184).

A second attraction is that he is pleased to have added a new soldier to his regiment! He regards her as another assistant (mentioned earlier in this essay) and in these warlike times he needs a lot of help. When they meet on the stage, they cry out terms of endearment for one another. Desdemona says, "My dear Othello" but Othello says, "Oh, my fair warrior!" (II i 210-211).

Thirdly, Othello is experiencing through Desdemona his first taste of unconditional love—in his mercenary life the only women he has probably had were either whores or those women he raped and pillaged. So while Desdemona loves marriage, loves the father figure she finds in him, and loves the stories he tells, Othello is flattered by Desdemona's interest, pleased to have a new soldier in his company, and enthusiastic about his first long term relationship.

Before their marriage and during its first day, Othello and Desdemona get along beautifully because each of them has an idea of what the other should be, to fit their own needs, and their idea does not require the other at that point to actually do anything. However, as their partnership progresses each person's expectations of the other increase until the gaps that they have within themselves are expected to all be filled by their partner. Conflict ensues when the partner does not fulfill the role that he or she has prescribed for them.

This kind of relationship is universal—it has happened to me, and it has happened to nearly everyone. If I am attracted to someone, I work up in my mind the kind of person I want them to be, and if they do not fulfill the role I have set up for them to play, I lose interest. (THIS DOES NOT HAPPEN EVERY TIME I AM ATTRACTED TO SOMEONE!!!) The difference between me and Othello is that I do not kill the person I was formerly interested in. Shakespeare exaggerated a universal theme to point it out.
The Battle with Grendel

We arrived in great vessels and were promptly directed to Herot, the guest hall of King Hrothgar. The townspeople hailed us, called to us as their hero's. Our hearts were light and giddy. I can hardly concentrate now for the memory of all those trusting faces and the feast we beheld when we entered the hall. It was wonderful, the food, the ladies, the drink, the promise of more when the Grendel was slain.

Aye, the Grendel. How could I forget that monster whose name provoked fear in the hearts of the most trusted knights here? What kind of fiend could hunt the defenseless, and kill those who slept like innocent babes? He will pay dearly for what he has done, aye, he will pay with his life. No man here will rest easy until the Grendel's head is presented to King Hrothgar himself.

'Twas a clever plan to lie waiting for this monster! He shall suspect Herot's knights to be asleep after a feast such as tonight. What a surprise to realize it is not the men he craves waiting here, but his end. It is only a matter of time before the beast shows himself.

What was that? You excite yourself with the anticipation of killing this walking horror. Do you not know the wind when you hear it? Aye, that was only the wind, this time. Keep alert. Soon it shall be the real thing, but I shall be prepared. My sword is ever ready at my side, and my dagger clutched beneath my pillow.

There, that sound. That is definitely not the wind. He has come, he is here. The Grendel is outside the outer wall. I can hear him pacing, step after step. His speed increases. He grows impatient for his meal. It stops. He is scratching at the door now, like a lost dog begging for protection, or the faithful pet reminding us he has yet to be brought in. But this is no dog. No, this is the monster that steals the sleep from under us.

He mauls the door now. Aye, he can not tolerate the wait any longer. Hah, Grendel, come and meet your maker.

He's broken through. He's within the hall now. I can hear the heavy footsteps making their way to this room. They are heavy and one foot drags. One, two, three, they've stopped. A loud bang echoes through the hallway.

He's broken the first door down and searches for food. None to be had in there, my friend, you prove too eager, but I can wait. Search all you want. I'll not disappoint you.

More footsteps, he's done and moves now to the next door. One, two, three, four. Another crash. He's quite the confident one that no one should awake. Or perhaps that is what he wants. Maybe he doesn't care if his prey is conscious. Maybe he enjoys seeing fear upon their faces before destroying them.

One, two, he is done. Three, four, five, only two doors left to choose from, the second being your doom. Six, seven, the third door has been left open. I can hear it squeak even farther as he thrusts his head through to check for a meal. One more door. My door.

One, two, three, what is that odor? Four, five, it's horrible, a gut wrenching...
stench, six, seven. He's near the opening to the hall. I must lie still, and stay silent. One slight move and he will know that we wait for him, that he is the prey. Close your eyes, he will see you. My heart beats frantically for the chance to spill his blood. One step more and he will be within the room.

The stench grows, it is him. His presence is felt, he is here. Just one look, I must see this beast for myself, I must know my enemy.

Dear God, 'tis a monster I see before me. Huge and terrifying. He turns, I can see his teeth the large fangs, the claws. I gasp. I clench my eyes shut. Oh you fool, did he hear you? Does he know? The room is silent I'm holding my breath. Breathe, breathe, you must breathe. He can not hear that.

He's moved, but where? My senses are overrun with the memory of his features. Open your eyes. I can't, he'll see. But I must. Where is he?

That stench, his stench, grows. I can't breathe. My eyes are watering, tears moisten my cheek. Do not wipe them. Don't move! Where is the beast? Why can I not hear him?

My heart pounds so in my ears that is why. I can hear my chest rise and fall. It is so loud he can surely hear it too. I must scream. I need air.

Help, end this. The stink threatens to strangle me. I can not open my mouth the air burns so. My throat is on fire. Where, where did he go? I must look. He will not see me. I am among two hundred men he searches not for me. Just one quick glance that is all. A mere second. He can not see.

There, but I see not. Blink a few times, aye, that is it. Clear the water from these burning eyes. Focus now. Search him out. Turn ever so slightly.........

Aahg, I muffle a scream. He is right there, standing right in front of me, nay standing atop me. He reaches, he reaches for me. Bile rises in my throat. Swallow it, you must. Struggle. Scream. I can't. I can't breathe lest I burn my lungs. Tears flow from my eyes. Where is my sword, my trusty dagger? It does not matter. I can not use my arms. They are too far from reach. I can not even move.

This Grendel has the strength of a thousand men, in one hand alone. Scream fool, warn the others. His grasp is too tight. I am being crushed. My ribs rub together, I can hear them snap.

He has raised me. Do not look down. Dear God, he is a demon. Close your eyes. I can't I am in a trance. I can not even turn my head away. He's coming closer, gnashing his teeth. So close I can feel his breath on my face. His clasp tightens once more, the pain is not enough to black out. I must watch as his mouth widens, as the drool slides from his tongue, as I edge ever closer to the stench strong enough to kill, but not merciful enough to have done so. I can not bear this. I need to scream. Scream. More tears flow from my burning eyes, blazing a trail of fire down my cheek.

Closer. Why, why?

Closer. The teeth, gnawing, waiting, ready.

Closer still.

Finally I turn away, my lungs now ash, and my belly overturns, his chuckle is like a scream echoing through the night. I can see open jaws in the corner of my eye.

"Beowulf why have you forsaken me?"
NCTE News Bits
National Council of Teachers of English:
Calendar of Events, 1994-95

During the coming year, the National Council of Teachers of English will sponsor a series of conventions and other professional meetings focused on improving the teaching of English language arts at all levels of education. Major events--NCTE's Annual Convention, the annual convention of the Conference on College Composition and Communication, and the annual NCTE Spring Conference--rotate on a four-year cycle which places them in each geographical region of the United States in turn. The 1994 Annual Convention of NCTE is scheduled for November 18-21 (pre-convention workshops Nov. 16-17), in Orlando, Florida.

Founded in 1911, NCTE now has some 68,000 individual members. Subscribers to its journals bring the total to more than 120,000.

1994

June 5-8
Summer Institute for Teachers of Literature, sponsored by the NCTE College Section, Myrtle Beach, SC

June 16-18
NCTE Professional Development Services Institute (topic: portfolios, writing across the curriculum, and program development and assessment), Scottsdale, AZ

July 12-16
Summer Institute for Teachers of Secondary School English, sponsored by the NCTE Secondary Section, Pine Mountain, GA

July 22-24
NCTE Professional Development Services Institute (topic: media education), Madison, WI

August 15-17
NCTE Professional Development Services Institute (topic: global conversations on language and literacy), Oxford, England

October 6-8
Midwest Regional Conference on English in the Two-Year College, Livonia, MI

October 13-15
Southwest Regional Conference on English in the Two-Year College, Laredo, TX

October 13-15
Northeast Regional Conference on English in the Two-Year College, Rocky Hill, CT

October 14-15
West Regional Conference on English in the Two-Year College, Provo, UT

October 28-29
NCTE Professional Development Services Institute (topic: student portfolios), Wichita, KS

November 18-21
84th Annual Convention of NCTE, Orlando, FL (pre-convention workshops Nov. 16-17)
1995

January 5-7  Conference on College Composition and Communication, Winter Workshop, Clearwater Beach, FL

February 22-25  Southeast Regional Conference on English in the Two-Year College, Jacksonville, FL

March 16-18  Spring Conference of NCTE (elementary and secondary school teachers, teacher educators), Minneapolis, MN (preconvention workshops Mar. 15)


June 4-7  Summer Institute for Teachers of Literature, sponsored by the NCTE College Section, Myrtle Beach, SC

July 7-9  NCTE Professional Development Services Institute (topic: reconstructing language and learning for the 21st century), New York, NY

November 17-20  85th Annual Convention of NCTE, San Diego, CA (preconvention workshops Nov.15-16)

For more information on the meetings listed above, write to the Membership Service Representative, NCTE, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801-1096.
For details on Regional Conference on English in the Two-Year College, write to the following persons:

Midwest:
Steven Dolgin, Schoolcraft College, Livonia, MI 48512

Southwest:
Dennis Kriewald, Laredo Community College, West End Washington Street, Laredo, TX 78040

Northeast:
Sharon Shapiro, Naugatuck Valley Community-Technical College, 750 Chase Parkway, Waterbury, CT 06708

West:
Stephen Ruffus, Salt Lake Community College, P.O. Box 30808, Salt Lake City, UT 84130-0808

Southeast:
Carol Grimes, Florida Community College at Jacksonville, 11901 Beach Boulevard, Jacksonville, FL 32246

Pacific Northwest:
Ed Reynolds, Spokane Falls Community College, Communication Department, 3050350 W. 3410 Ft. George Right Drive, Spokane, WA 99204
DIRECTORS

Chair
Bonnie Frechette, West De Pere High School, De Pere, WI 54115

District #1
Pat Santilli, Glen Middle School, Glendale, WI 53209

District #2
Diane Mertens, Edgewood High School, Madison, WI 53711

District #3
Al Menninga, UW-Platteville, Platteville, WI 53818
Mary Graber, Mineral Point High School, Mineral Point, WI 53565

District #4
Susan Bartlett, Cashton High School, Cashton, WI 54619
Carol Carlson, Central High School, La Crosse, WI 54601

District #5
WCTE is seeking directors for district #5

District #6
Jean Stebbins-Mueller, Clovis Grove School, Menasha, WI 54952
Mary Ann Evans-Patrick, UW-Oshkosh, Oshkosh, WI 54901

District #7
Jean Larson, Howard Grove High School, Howard Grove, WI 53083
Bonnie Frechette, West De Pere High School, De Pere, WI 54115

District #8
Anita Hartman, Bonduel High School, Bonduel, WI 54107
Katherine Holman, UW Center-Marinette, Marinette, WI 54143-4299

District #9
Mary Kay DeBroux, Newman High School, Wausau, WI 54401
Mary O’Flyng, North Central Technical College, Wausau, WI 54401

District #10
Pam Rennback, 1108 Dutchman Drive, Chippewa Falls, WI 54729
Douglas Robertson, Medford Area High School, Medford, WI 54451

District #11
Diane Hjelstad, Chetek High School, Chetek, WI 54728
Lorna Coleman, Amery High School, Amery, WI 54001

District #12
Gary Banker, East Junior High, Superior, WI 54880
Kimberly Towns, East Junior High, Superior, WI 54880