

Verbal Equinox

Fall 2008

A GSA Perspective

by Cheyney Weelwright
Managing Editor, GSA

Fall semester 2008 brought another milestone. For the first time, English graduate students worked and trained alongside undergraduates as tutors in the Weber State Writing Center. I

valuable training and preparation for next semester, when we will be teaching English 1010 for WSU. It is our hope that the skills we gain through tutoring will help us to be more effective and empathetic teachers when we enter the classroom.

was fortunate enough to be one of four students chosen for this pioneering program, along with Emily Whitby, Tamar Neumann, and Emily Petersen.

Our work in the Writing Center gave us an opportunity to interact with students and to see firsthand the most common problems encountered by student writers. Our experiences have provided

As graduate student assistants, we trust we have contributed to the value of the Writing Center. Our perspectives enhance the diversity of the Writing Center staff. We bring with us a wealth of experience, and a love of writing and all things English. It is our pleasure to have been the Writing Center's first group of graduate student assistants.

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A Note From the Editor

by Gina Barker
Editor

Because this campus is spread out between different sites with many students commuting to Ogden or Davis to attend classes, it might seem that Weber State University would lack a sense of community. However, Verbal Equinox is evidence that WSU students are not just interested in their school, but are interested in the campus community as well.

Verbal Equinox is one campus publication that demonstrates students' desire to participate and share their writing with others. It proves that a love of writing exists among students.

This year, the community of writers included in our publication has expanded beyond the Writing Center's Contest. This issue of Verbal Equinox includes the Honors Department Writing Contest winners along with our own winning submissions.

The Writing Center is glad to acknowledge each student's accomplishments and will continue to do so in the future. As WSU grows, our annual writing contests, held each spring and fall, will also continue to grow and showcase student talent.

In this issue, we publish story samplings in the print, with entire pieces posted for you to enjoy online at <http://weber.edu/writingcenter>.

Thank you to those who have contributed, and thank you to our readers.

Enjoy.

1st Place Fiction

The Report

by Jessica Rogers

I came outside on that warm summer day where I found that little boy. It may have been better had I died before that moment but I never would have found life.

"Will you play with me?" he said quietly. He looked so sad and alone I couldn't refuse. We went to a soccer field that I had never seen before and began to play.

It may have been an hour or a minute before he came. A huge bear suddenly came right up to me. My first reaction was to protect that boy, but he was suddenly beside it.

The boy's face showed no sign of fear but you could tell they could both see it on mine. "The bear belongs to me. Do you trust me?" as he said this last sentence his face took on an evil grin and a look of warning if I even thought to say no.

"Y-y-yes-s." I stuttered out, wishing so much I could dare to say no.

"Yes what?"

"I-I-I trust you." I was shaking terribly.

"Then do as the bear says, and don't say another word, and you will live," the boy said spitefully. I dared not make eye contact with the bear so I looked at the ground.

A deep, dark, and cold voice said to me, "turn around and walk, if you start the wrong direction I will push you right." I turned quickly around but I was slow to take that first step. He nudged me.

After what seemed like a lifetime we came to the parking lot. I was pushed to the edge

of a long dirt path that acted as an island in the lot. The boy was digging a small hole.

"Empty your pockets and remove all your jewelry," said the bear. I did and the boy took it and put it in the hole. Before the boy had finished the bear was pushing me toward one of the cars in the parking lot. The boy ran up and opened the trunk. The bear prepared to push.

"WAIT! Please, I don't understand, why are you doing this?" I pleaded desperately.

"You cannot know and you will never understand," said the boy coldly. The bear pushed and I fell into complete darkness.

-Jenna

* * * * *

It's been nearly a week since the missing person report came in, and we have no lead, none whatsoever. Whoever is responsible for this is really good at covering their tracks. The only thing we can really give at this time is that we're sure that her cell phone was left behind. It rang for a couple of days but now we assume that the battery is dead. U anyone has found a small Samsung flip phone with a cherry faceplate cover, please notify authorities immediately. It may be the only thing out there to help us find this girl.

-Officer Neals

* * * * *

I already had a lot on my mind that day, you see, Jenna and I had attended the same church and it was just sad.

That day my family had volunteered to clean the church. My dad asked me to take the

garbage out to the dumpster. With all my might I lifted it up and dropped it in. As it dropped, I heard a weak moan.

I ran inside screaming. My dad stopped me, "What's wrong honey?" he said.

"Someone's in the garbage!"

He gave me a hug and went to check. He acted as though he was checking just so I would feel better. My mom, my brother, and I followed him.

Being such a tall man he peered over into the garbage. Without a second thought he leaped in and called out, "Get an ambulance!"

Everyone reacted so quickly. My mom was instantly on the phone with the police and my brother was helping my dad pull Jenna out of the garbage.

- Nicole

* * * * *

When the paramedics brought her in they hadn't done much. She was on an oxygen tank but they had no idea what else to do. In truth, neither did I. Her skin was so cold that you could easily believe she was dead, but her heart was beating at an extremely high rate. It would begin to slow down but exactly every 84 minutes it would speed up again like she had been scared. She was also suffering from malnutrition, but that one was expected.

So we got an IV in her, we got her heart rate down and her body temperature up but the only other thing we could do was wait.

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2nd Place Fiction

Training

by Aaron Halls

Even from across the street the heat is intense. People are all over, staring in shock and horror. I steadily walk toward the burning house, my fears nonexistent. A girl screams into a cellphone. She is telling a dispatcher that one of her roommates is still inside. Next to her a girl about the same age, probably another roommate, is huddled in a blanket.

I ask for the blanket, determination in my voice. She woodenly hands it to me. I ask where the other girl is located inside the house. She points to a window on the second story above the garage. I walk toward a man who's hopelessly trying to fight the blaze with a garden hose. I yell for him to hose me down. He stares for a second, and then turns the water on me, soaking me from head to toe. I put the blanket around me and he douses that too. I move toward the front door.

I kick the door in. The heat does everything in its power to pummel me into the ground. I enter the house and walk up the stairs. My feet do all the thinking as I move down the hallway. Flames lick the moisture from the blanket that is protecting my skin from their destroying tongues. A door at the end of the hall is slightly open. Smoke blinds me but I know where to go.

The room appears empty, but somehow I know that the girl crawled under the bed when the smoke and fire came into her room. I throw the mattress aside, revealing the girl. She looks dead, but I know she's not. I wrap the wet blanket

around her, my exposed skin immediately beginning to burn. I throw a chair out the window. A million glass crystals reflect the red, orange fury closing in on me. I pick her up and step out the window.

The cool air feels like paradise, the room behind me the flaming jaws of hell. My skin continues to burn as I make my way across the roof to a point above a Jeep in the driveway. I hold the girl in front of me as I fall backwards onto the roof of the Jeep, which absorbs the impact as it collapses. People rush over to help us off the Jeep and to the safety of the neighbor's lawn. I collapse on the lawn next to the girl as the sound of sirens comes down the street. I know I have third degree burns and a few broken ribs. I also know I saved the girl's life.

* * * * *

Dr. Fields looks up from Cody's paper she's been reading. She looks at him thoughtfully for a moment, and then speaks. "That's an incredibly vivid dream, Cody. How long did you say you've been having it?"

Cody has been staring blankly out the window while waiting for Dr. Fields to read his paper. He looks haggard. This is the third shrink he's seen this year. Something tells him she can't help him either. "It's been the exact same dream every single night for eighteen months." He answers dryly.

"Have you tried altering your sleeping habits?" She asks.

"I've tried everything." Cody would sound angry, if he had the energy. "It's all in my file." He

points to the stack of papers on her desk.

"Well Cody, I have a few ideas that I think might be helpful," she says in a condescending tone. "I'm going to do some research and work them out. For now I want you to keep taking the medications Dr. Saunders prescribed. We'll go over a strategy next time. How does that sound?"

Cody mutters something resembling gratitude as he gets up from the chair and walks out of the office. He can't stand his medication and the headaches that accompany it. As he gets in his car he lets out a long, exasperated sigh. Again, he asks himself why he keeps doing this; why does he pay a so-called expert to tell him nothing he doesn't already know? He puts the car into drive.

The idea of going home sounds almost as bad as his sessions. Home is where he sleeps, and sleeping is exhausting. As he leaves the parking lot he decides to turn the opposite direction of his apartment. Anywhere is better than his dreams. As he drives he begins to pass unfamiliar neighborhoods. He isn't paying attention; his thoughts are on nothing. Each mile takes him deeper into unknown parts of town. Cody makes one random turn after another, until one turn brings him to a familiar site. Then he realized he must have gone home at some point, and now he's asleep, because this scene is never one he sees while he's awake.

Everything's the same. The same people gawking at the same burning

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1st Place Poetry

Summer Salsa

by Elisabeth Anderson

Sitting on the veranda
watching the sun sink softly into the west
on the sand a conga slowly begins to beat

Swinging, rocking, back and forth
life rises up to take the stage
as colors of sunset flame across the sky

Flying across the floor, castanets in hand
scarlet rays touch the spines of a saguaro
heat of the night radiates from the guitar.

Hands barely touching
feet stepping into time
alone they move together

Music weaving in and out
liquid spices of red and black
swirling around with passion

Tango
Flamenco

Eternal dance of
Summer Salsa.

2nd Place Poetry

Subway Scenes

by Jordan Miller

She was in the middle of a crowd, crying
And no one seemed to care.
No one stopped to ask or even cast a stare.
People just kept on walking as if she wasn't there.

They sat there close together among the growing
crowd
Both young, both confused, about "what to do now?"
Both knew what was right, both knew what was
wrong; but now the question was "how?"
People just kept on talking as if they wasn't there.

He, among the fast paced crowd, sat, awkwardly in
stillness
A blind eye was turned to what they saw, while he
sat there and begged.
It was as if he was invisible, invisible until a little
girl yelled out "Daddy how did he get down here, he
doesn't have any legs!"
People just kept on walking as if he wasn't there.

He was there giving his speech amongst the half an-
noyed crowd
Was he called by God to try and save these people,
while they yelled at him, cursed at him, and told him
to take a seat.
Or was he just another nickel and dime hustler try-
ing to make ends meet?
People just kept on talking as if he wasn't there.

I was there in the midst of all these crowds
Did I care? Did I stop and ask, or do a single thing?
If I would have, would it have helped, what kind of
changes could one man bring?
That's something I'll never know, because like those
People...
I just kept on walking and talking as if they wasn't
there.

Caught Between a Bomb and a Hard Place

by Scott McIntyre

"You are free to go." The police detective's words were a welcome relief. During the past several hours I had repeated my story forwards and backwards so many times that I could probably recite it in my sleep. It suddenly occurred to me that I was tired. The exhaustion was not just from physical exertion and lack of sleep, but also from psychological and emotional stress. The realization of what I had done had just barely begun sinking in. I leaned back on the hard plastic chair and checked my watch: 3:15A.M. My interrogation had gone on for most of the night.

As I left the interview room and entered the hallway, I glanced through the one way glass at the chair in the corner that I had occupied for so long. I wondered what I had looked like to my invisible spectators when the large, irate officer had burst into the quiet room and exploded into his profanity laced tirade, accusing me of the crime. In spite of my innocence, I had wished I hadn't waived my right to have a lawyer present. Now free of those mirrored windows, I surveyed my surroundings.

The Centerville police station was filled with tired looking officers, detectives, and bomb squad technicians. In spite of the excitement of the day's events, I could see in their faces that there were other places they would rather be. I retrieved my coat from the chair in the hallway and made my way through the crowd of

people toward the door. Just before I stepped outside, the officer that had transported me to the police station handed me a large brown paper bag with my belongings inside. In spite of his actions, his suspicion of me was still plainly evident. No apology was offered, and I didn't ask for one. I was too tired to care.

I glanced inside the bag to make sure everything was there. Wallet, cell phone, handgun, keys... it crossed my mind as I inventoried the contents that, if anything was missing, I would have to file a complaint with the same person who removed the items from me in the first place. I closed the bag hurriedly and pushed open the door.

The crisp night air was refreshing. I had turned down the offer of a ride home because, after so many hours of sitting, I could use the chance to stretch my legs. Retrieving the pistol from the bag, I loaded it and placed it in its holster. Reaching behind me I clipped the holster to the inside of my belt and pulled my shirt down over it. With a weary glance around me at the newly fallen snow, I pulled the hood of my coat over my head and began the one mile walk home. This was not my idea of a restful night, and this was definitely not my preferred method of celebrating an otherwise peaceful Christmas morning.

My mind raced over the events of the past twelve hours. What had begun as a short, solitary hike up Centerville canyon to do some

stream fishing had turned into a life-changing event that would be the foundation of countless future decisions. I mentally struggled to grasp the gravity of the situation. While most families in this suburban city were making last minute preparations for the anticipated arrival of Santa Claus, fate had placed me face to face with a sophisticated homemade bomb that the bomb squad described as equivalent to three blocks of C-4 plastic explosives.

The events surrounding that moment swirled inside my mind in a dizzying manner. One thing was certain: until the authorities could locate and apprehend the three suspects, my precarious situation as sole witness to their crime made me an obvious target. My hand subconsciously moved to the small semiautomatic pistol I had just placed in the small of my back. Its presence offered only limited reassurance. Thrusting my hands deep into my pockets, I picked up my pace.

There are pivotal points in every person's life that serve as crossroads to be passed through only once. The choice to turn to the right, left, or remain on one's current course is crucial in determining personal character. The decision I had made almost a dozen hours earlier was one of those junctions. I had chosen to obey the law regardless of the consequences, and if the judge

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2nd Place Creative Non Fiction

Winning is My Last Emotion

by Kristina Cornelius

On the court I see the countdown on the clock that has big, bright orange numbers. The numbers were counting down the time that we had left to play our final basketball game to take first place. The numbers blink 9:36...9:35...9:34...9:33 to the point that I can't realize that my team is down by 18 points. I've never lost a game in my life and the feeling is unbearable because it is as if we are going to lose.

The big scoreboard reads: Home, 20 and Visitors 38. The scoreboard isn't the only distraction, but my friends and family are watching. I don't know if I'm embarrassed, ashamed, or overwhelmed. I try to concentrate on the most important thing to me right now which is winning and taking my trophy home. I don't want the red trophy because it stands for second place or a ribbon because it stands for third place. I want the blue one.

As all of these thoughts are running through my head; I can hear shoes squeak on the floor. I'm like a robot, and I can't concentrate. As I look back at the clock, the big bright, orange lights read 7:48, and while I've been away in a daze with a thousand thoughts with the smell of leather basketballs and popcorn in my nose, we have scored a total of two points. Once I realize the game is partially over, my body starts to shake, sweat drips, and I honestly can't realize that this is the last quarter, and we are down by 16 points. After a lot of thinking, I score my first basket with a foul. Since I made my shot and got

fouled, my team, which is called Hotshots, receives two points, and I will get to step on the free throw line to make a basket. If the basket goes in, we will receive one point. If not, the game continues on. I step on the free throw line to make my extra point, and it goes in. With excitement, the crowd stands up, claps, screams and cheers us on.

Now we're down by 13 points. The other team, the Trojans, has the basketball, and they try to score by penetrating through our defense, but I steal the ball that drips with sweat out of the opponent's hand, and run down the court for another lay-up, which goes in, and I get fouled again. I go back to the free throw line, wipe the wetness off the basketball, bend my knees, bounce it up and down, look at the rim and throw it up in the air towards my target, and the basketball goes in. Now we're down by ten points, and the clock that blinks bright orange reads 4:30. The crowd is louder and, more people join the crowd in the bleachers.

We have almost caught up with the Trojans, and this makes the Trojans' coach nervous. The Trojans' coach is named Coach McKenzie. I remember his name because he was the coach I had before the one I have now. He had coached me for about two years, and I know when he gets frustrated. When he gets frustrated, he starts to put his head down and shakes it. When he brings his head back up, his face is like a red light bulb and he calls a time out.

Well he calls a time out, he keeps looking at me, and during the time out his face is red. His voice is loud and filled with temper. I can hear him say with anger, "Stop her!"

At the end of the time out I see Coach McKenzie push a player to sit down and scream, "If you want to win, you've got to put your head in the game!" I've never seen or felt this type of emotion from Coach McKenzie in my life. After the time out we get back to our game and once again we steal the ball. We run as hard as we could to the other side to make a basket, but instead of a two pointer, we make a three pointer. On the next play, we do it again!

After we make the basket, the Trojans try to throw the ball in to get the ball to the other side of the court, but when they throw it in, they accidentally throw it in to us, and we take advantage of the opportunity. They try again, but once again it comes to us and we score, making us tied with 2:00 on the clock. At this point my body feels as if it is going into overdrive because I am getting goose bumps that make my skin turn red. My heart is beating twice as fast as it should and I don't want to breathe until I make my next basket.

It's the Trojan's ball and they dribble down the court. Their coach yells, "Yellow, set up our play, yellow!" They start to set up "yellow" and play so intensely that one of their teammates gets hurt and sprains her ankle.

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Honors Contest 3rd Place

Dream American

by Clayton Gerrard

Keenan didn't have to do a thing to make Chan regret what he just said. Keenan simply looked at Chan as though he were a slimy, unidentifiable substance wedged into the tread of his Nike sneakers.

"I can't, Keenan. I'm sorry. I just can't," Chan said "What if something goes wrong? I mean, one of us could get shot."

Two big black hands enveloped Chan's shoulders, and Keenan pulled him into a fierce bear hug. A couple of Chan's vertebrae popped. Chan could smell the acrid residue of Keenan's last cigarette.

Locked together, Keenan whispered in Chan's ear. "Nobody backs out now. Do ya hear me? We go ahead as planned. There's nobody gonna get shot, unless you ain't there when I come to get ya. Then I's gonna shoot you myself. Get it?" He shoved Chan away and stalked off down the hall without an answer.

Other than that, it was a normal day for Chan. He got out of bed early and practiced some arpeggios on his guitar. He couldn't seem to hit any of them right, for some reason. His mom came in to wake him at the normal time, and seeing him already up, had to touch his shoulder to get his attention out from under the noise-cancelling, Sony headphones he had plugged in. Before he knew it, he was in school, going to the normal classes, sluffing those he knew were a waste. It was not as though he needed to go to class.

He was well-above the average-student, although he would never tell his friends that.

Before he had his run-in with Keenan, Chan had seen Justin in biology. Jouncing his legs and twitching his forehead, Justin told Chan he couldn't wait to be rich. The teacher suggested they pay attention. When class was over, Chan slipped out quickly while Justin was distracted by Hilary Barnes. Chan only hoped he wasn't telling her he was going to be rich.

Other than that, it was a normal day at school. Except for maybe the time when Chan saw Lee at the far end of the east hallway. The two of them didn't say anything across the distance. They didn't even nod, or lift a peace sign in greeting. There was a momentary eye contact in which Lee communicated his fear, and seemed on the verge of tears, but then he walked away, and Chan went to math.

"I saw you and Keenan hugging in the hall earlier," Janica told him as he sat down in math class.

"Yeah. So?" Chan shrugged.

"Nothing. I just think it's cool when guys can be close friends without worrying about gay cracks. I mean, girls can do it; why can't guys?"

"Yeah."

"You and Keenan must be real good friends."

After math, Chan met his girlfriend for lunch. She asked him what was wrong six different ways before he started joshing

her about her beads to change the subject. He had never met another Native girl so sensitive about beaded jewelry before. For that matter, other than Skye, he didn't know a single Native who even wore any. Eventually, she called him an ass and told him he could eat alone.

Besides each of these awkward moments, it was an average day for Chan. Predictably, Mr. Bills asked Chan if he had heard back from any colleges yet.

"No letters, yet," Chan said.

"Soon, though," Mr. Bills said.

"They're bound to fight over you."

"I suppose."

"Don't worry, Chan. You'll hear from them soon."

Choir was interesting. With Keenan in the bass section, and Chan in the tenor. Chan tried to ignore his friend, but Keenan kept glancing his way with a raised brow as though daring him to say anything.

After school, Chan drove out to his father's restaurant. He was first going to sneak in through the back door, but he could hear his parents arguing in Cantonese, so he went around the front. Chan always pretended to have no idea what they were saying, although he caught a lot of words here and there. His parents seemed to like the arrangement as much as he did.

Slipping into the dishroom, Chan put on an apron and a paper hat, and started hosing down the dishes from the lunch rush. Lo mein noodles, and coagulated bits

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Dream American cont...

of sweet and sour sauce rushed down the drain. Overall, it was a normal day.

"There is letters for you." Chan's mom had come into the dishroom. She wrung her hands on her black server's apron. "You father mad. 'Why all colleges on east coast?' he say. 'What wrong with Colorado State?'"

"All the good schools are back east, Ma."

"You better go talk to you father." Chan shoved his last rack of plates into the Hobart and dried his hands.

In the office, his father was counting out one dollar bills for the cash drawer, but he slapped a wad of bills on the desk and stood as

chan entered.

"You better start explaining yourself," he said as he pointed to three envelopes on the desk between them. Two of them were plain sized security envelopes.

The other was a thick manila package. Chan quickly surmised them as two rejection letters and an acceptance packet. He snatched up the large envelope, quickly reading the return address as Dartmouth College. He ripped open the seal.

"Congratulations, Chan," the cover letter stated. "Let me be the first to welcome you to the world of higher education at Dartmouth College."

Chan sat down hard in the office

chair where various employees received chastisement or their reviews.

"I'm going Ivy League, Dad."

"You're not going anywhere but Colorado State," his father told him.

"Ivy League, Dad. Dartmouth! I've been waiting for this forever."

"I cannot afford out of state tuition."

"Dad, I'm second generation Chinese American by you, first by mom. They'll be throwing money at me."

"How much? It won't be enough. Not for this school I can't afford to lose the restaurant

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Honors Contest 1st Place

Jewelry Box by Rykki Olsen

She hits the road with dusk
on his quiet conquest
over the busy thousands,

and loss was a pair of earrings
for all the special occasions,
kept in their little box

like dangling tag reminders
of all she knew
and had forgotten,

and she dreamed
of losing teeth and dignity
at the probing hands of love

before dusk's invitation came
to take her, and she'd gone
to the cooling dark

as someone else's loss-

Honors Contest 2nd Place

Joy of Life

by Adrian Stumpp

There should be a word at the beginning concerning the peculiar name of Aaron and Ariadne Lent's only daughter, Joie-de-vivre. The name is a French noun meaning literally The Joy of Life and is usually used to describe a certain gusto or spirit of a thing which engenders its greatest value. The Lents agreed upon the name as soon as it was suggested, for though it seemed eccentric it was also perfect, and once it was between them, no other name would feel as right.

The couple was young and handsome and had so far enjoyed a life full of promise. They understood they were exceptionally fortunate in every important and trivial way and felt somewhat guilty for wanting more. The child crammed their lives with a meaning they lacked before. She was the quality which engendered their perfect world with its greatest possible value. Before, they had been shallow and pretty. The child animated them, made them somehow

more real than other things. Now they were truly enviable, and knew the joy of life.

Ariadne Lent came from a rich tradition of eccentricity. Her mother was a classicist and named her after the daughter of King Minos, who helped Theseus find his way through the labyrinth to slay the Minotaur. As a young girl it disturbed Ariadne that her namesake was later abandoned by her hero on a lonely island, but her mother reminded her that Ariadne was also rescued from her exile by her true love, the God Apollo.

Her father was a semi-famous film actor. He had been lucky enough to have a name which every movie-goer knew and a face almost no one recognized beyond the screen. He was dashing and handsome but never attained sex symbol status. He was talented and, respected by the public, and his friends in the industry admired him for a good family man. Ariadne's mother often speculated the reason her father never attained

greater fame was due to his ability to stay out of the tabloids. Ariadne grew up affluent and sheltered, and Aaron Lent was the only man she ever loved.

Her father did not approve at first. He said the young man was below her, an idea Ariadne had supposed died a long time ago.

"Not below your station," he corrected, "below your person."

The two had been together for five years and had lived together for one, and this disapproval had never surfaced before. He had never been critical of her boyfriends and seemed to like Aaron as much as the others. Her father had a nervous inaptitude for confrontation, and always found a way to be friendly with even the shadiest of young men. But none of them had wanted to marry his daughter, or rather, she hadn't wanted to marry any of them.

The evaluation was that Aaron Lent was too sensitive, precisely the reason Ariadne had fallen in love with him. Her father feared Aaron would be too easily discouraged by the responsibilities of private and professional life, that he was too thin skinned, that he would buckle and eventually take the cowards way out, either by running away, or worse, by staying with her and making himself more of a burden than an asset.

Her father was also a sensitive man in an insensitive world and had adjusted accordingly, and Ariadne saw no reason why Aaron wouldn't be able to do the same. Her mother assured her with a scholar's certainty if she wanted to marry Aaron she should, her father was only worried. The wedding was splendid,

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Verbal Equinox Staff

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The Report cont...

Jenna became a permanent part of my ward within a week of her arrival at the hospital. Dr. Rhine and I agreed that it would be best that she be put in the psychiatric ward until we could find what caused the outbursts in an exact time frame.

Every time I ask her why, she starts screaming how they tricked her and how she can't tell because they said she couldn't. "I'll die" she says.

We keep her in solitary and she is restrained every time one of her attacks is coming on. She has visitors almost every day. They come in to see her and read her bible verses and tell her words of encouragement. Most of them won't sit through one of her fits, it makes them uncomfortable and they don't have to see it.

Some of them actually do sit through and tell her that she cannot die because she will live eternally. Unfortunately nothing they do is helpful she is showing no improvement.

-Dr. Shaw

* * * * *

He came and woke me up. I suddenly found myself in a dark room, but not nearly so dark as the darkness I had just come up out of. I found that I couldn't move because of straps on my arms. I suddenly became scared of what they were going to do next.

A deep voice rang out of the room, not a cold and mean voice like the bear's, but a warm, soothing voice. It said, "Do not be afraid for I am with you."

The cold chill that had clung to my heart was suddenly lifted from me and I could bring in a deep breath. "Who are you?" I asked "I have waited long for you." He said. Suddenly everything that I had known about God became truth to me, not just a story they repeated over and over on Sunday morning. It was all real and I believed

It suddenly felt as if the morning light exploded through me, all my

fears and pain had been taken away. I no longer was afraid to tell the doctor what scared me, even though they told me I would die.

All this happened last night and I will tell the doctor as soon as he comes in.

-Jenna

* * * * *

All of the above information came from direct interviews done by myself, all except for Jenna's. All of her writings came off of the wall of her room where she died trying to explain the situation to her doctor.

The cause of death was determined to be a brain aneurysm caused by an unknown microchip that disintegrated when it was removed. This has been a Youth life report.

-Reporter

Caught Between a Bomb and a Hard Place cont...

and jury agreed with my account of what I had witnessed, my testimony would send three men that I once viewed as friends to federal prison.

My day had started normally. Having finished up my traditional last-minute Christmas shopping earlier that morning, I had bribed my sister to wrap the gifts. Mom had asked me to do a handful of chores which, with the possibility of an afternoon hike, I completed quickly.

It was warm for Christmas Eve, and with snow in the forecast, I imagined this would be my last chance to do some stream fishing

before winter set in. I threw my collapsible fishing pole into the small backpack that held the rest of my fishing gear and quickly putting it on, dashed out the door. Fishing had always been an escape for me and living a mere 100 yards from the stream that meandered out of Parrish Canyon, it was a retreat I participated in often.

As I did every day, I legally carried my compact Berretta 9mm semi-automatic pistol in a concealed holster at my waist as an additional line of defense against any potential threat. It was something I had decided to do after I had been attacked

by a gun wielding assailant three years earlier after a high school basketball game. The weight and bulk of the gun had become unnoticeable over time, but its presence was welcomed whenever I ventured alone into the outdoors.

I surveyed the mountains, debating which of the two familiar canyon streams should be graced with my presence. I wanted a good hike, so I chose the south canyon. The well worn footpath I would be taking began just above the large irrigation reservoir at the edge of the city, continuing up the northern slope of Centerville

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Training cont ...

house. He steps out of the car and approaches the girl with the blanket while her friend screams into her cell phone. He goes through the familiar motions. The man with the hose douses him and his blanket before he turns towards the house, but just before he kicks the front door in, he pauses. Something's different. It takes only a fraction of a second for him to realize what it is: This time he has a choice. He doesn't have to do this. He doesn't have to walk into that inferno. Suddenly his thoughts turn to the girl upstairs under her bed, the smoke suffocating her and burning her

lungs. He only has to picture her there for a second, and a second later he's in the house.

Up the stairs, down the hall, through the door and to the bed; it's all familiar to him. His instincts have been fine tuned for this. Uke a machine with a single purpose, he does what he has been conditioned to do every night for a year and a half. He throws the bed aside, wraps up the girl and throws the chair out the window, just like he had done hundreds of times before. Just like before he felt his skin melting, but just like before he didn't let it slow him down. He pulls her out the window

and jumps down onto the Jeep, her small body only breaking a few of his ribs as they hit the vehicle's roof. Neighbors help them across to the cool grass of the lawn. Above the clamor Cody can hear the sirens approaching like they do every night, but this time they're much clearer. Waves of exhaustion sweep over him as he turns to look at the unconscious girl he just saved. Before he passes out, he manages to mutter one thing: "Dr. Fields is never going to believe this."

Honors Contest 4th Place

The Eyes of the Beholder

by Candace Martindale

sin (sin) n. 1. The breaking of religious law or moral principle, esp. through a willful act. 2. To commit an offense or fault of any kind

Where do we draw the line? What is sin and what is just a bad decision? What about what others view as sin? There are many different answers to the age old question: What is sin? Many look to religion for the answer, while others turn inward to find out through their own experiences. I believe that the true definition of sin lies within us; a culmination of the whole human experience, religious, personal, or otherwise, contained in one truth. That truth, however, and what it is defined as, is quite tough to put a finger on.

Most are familiar with the major topics that fall into the category of sin: murder, theft, violence, infidelity, but when

it comes to the little things in life, how does one tell? Come judgment day, will I be damned for cutting in line? This is when personal viewpoints become important. Personally, I've found that the difference between something I classify as a sin and an act that I wouldn't is whether or not I can learn from my mistake and mend my ways.

Mind you, this is not a free pass to do anything you feel like once, just for the heck of it, without consequence, if you promise never to do it again. There is a difference between making a mistake and pretending, my friends. The point is to do your best and learn when you fall.

I know I've done things I regret and will never do again,

yet I still continue struggle with new challenges every day. If we never improve ourselves, can we ever really grow and say we've accomplished anything at all in our lives? Other people's views can also have a strong influence on what we see as sinful.

Different cultures have varying definitions of sin, especially within the realm of religion and daily life. Even though our complex world tends to make a clear cut answer to this question a bit muddled, I believe we have the power to know which decision is the right way to go if we just take a look inside ourselves.

Sin has certainly changed a

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