

DELTA WINDS

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A Magazine of Student Essays

2012

Table of Contents

A Moment Most Sad.....	3
John Hawkins reflects on his saddest memory and how it has changed his outlook on life.	
Epiphany	5
Dennis Zevely speaks of being bogged down, lost without ambition, waiting for change to arrive.	
Hamlet: Anti-Hero	7
TyaCamellia Allred lays out the particulars that prove Hamlet to be far from the heroic figure so commonly believed.	
Ice Cream Cone.....	11
Juan Pimentel describes the childhood days when he was forced into a life as an outcast.	
Parent and Child Communication	14
Amanda Tamayo advises parents on how to refrain from passing on unattractive behavior patterns.	
Sister to Sister	16
Taylor Stuart, in a personal letter, celebrates her sister's attributes and offers kind words of caution.	
The Invidious Nature of Competition	18
Donald Kovis argues that the excesses of competition trigger more negative human behavior than positive.	
The Little Girl Once Called Faith.....	21
Cara Rapphun searches for a missing mother and for answers to questions about her personal identity.	
The Peripheral Canal: What It Means for the Delta.....	26
Tamara Piazza discusses water rights, levee failures, and exporting water to Southern California through a controversial canal project.	
The Tenth Muse.....	31
Maximiliano Canales analyzes a Sor Juana poem from the 1600s criticizing irrational and hypocritical male behavior.	
What's So Beautiful about It?	34
Evangelina Lomas grows into the given name that causes struggles through her childhood.	



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Letter from the Editors

Working at a community college, we have the privilege of interacting with young souls, full of hope and heartache. We have the opportunity to cross paths with individuals, some on steep trajectories into distant arenas. During this momentary period when our paths intersect, we may be fortunate, at times, to identify in one of these individuals a skill, an accomplished gift—a talent yet to be clearly appreciated but leading perhaps to lifelong direction. In the fall of 2010, during an English 79 Mastery Exam reading, we went looking for exemplary essays. And we found one—an essay written in eighty minutes on a controversial topic. The essay, entitled “I Have a DREAM,” argued clearly and effectively in favor of The DREAM Act. We emailed the author for his permission to publish the essay in the May 2011 volume of Delta Winds. He agreed. The essay was published and later discussed in composition classes at Delta College. Six months later, we were contacted by another person in search of writing talent—a publisher’s representative from Bedford/St. Martin’s. And she, too, wished to publish this essay—not locally but nationally—in a new edition of a textbook entitled Real Writing.

Soon afterward, when we phoned the student-writer to break the news, he seemed unclear about the whole proposal. His voice reflected the photo he had sent in—that of a smiling young man with a baseball cap tipped high and to the side. He seemed to have a half-hearted interest in the essay he had written a year before. His attention peaked, however, when hearing that he might be paid a stipend for re-publication of the essay in a textbook. Sometimes, the tone of the voice can remind us of ourselves at that age—when we were twenty-one, anxious to spend more time with close friends and troubled by tedious college assignments. Sometimes, the voice adds a dimension but leaves some missing parts from the whole picture. And sometimes the rest can be found in what the individual has left behind. This individual, this student, had written with care and compassion about allowing illegal immigrants the opportunity to become citizens. In the essay, the author had quoted his brother, who was serving in the military. The author also had quoted his mother, who had worked at St. Joseph’s Hospital and who had praised an immigrant doctor for saving many lives. The author had revealed enough of his own personal values and beliefs to complete a picture, to make us appreciate who he was. Sometimes we are left with that final impression. Sometimes we are not.

Sometimes we are struck by the abrupt break in an individual student’s trajectory. The author we were so impressed with was Dominic Deiro. In December of 2011, Dominic tragically passed away, after an automobile accident anyone of us could have been involved in. Now, we are left with what he has left us—a reminder of the kind of person he was. And we are reminded to be more aware of our crossing paths and to value the precious moments of life we share and the privilege we have to work with the students of Delta College.

A MOMENT MOST SAD

By John Hawkins

Everyone has a mother, but not everyone is fortunate enough to be blessed with motherhood. As my grandmother acquired custody of me, I was separated from my mom when I was four years old. My grandma felt it necessary to do this by and large due to my mother's drug use—chiefly, Heroin. Although my mother was allowed to visit me, I would not see her often. She came to visit when she found it necessary, as if there were an agenda. One time my mother

came to visit my grandmother and me. She stayed for half a week. When she left, I gave her a hug, a kiss, and told her I loved her.

Subsequently, I found my video games missing and my grandmother could not locate her jewelry; I realized, then, why my mother had come to spend time with us. Years passed, revelations were internalized, and my mom and I sustained a weary relationship. However, never have I felt more sorrow than when I returned the phone call that told of my mother's death.

Although the phone call was the instant that brought the pain, it was the events hitherto that caused the depth of the pain. What is requisite to know are the months leading up to the end of my mother's time. She was suffering from Ovarian Cancer, which was dubbed inoperable by the doctors because the years of Heroin use had deteriorated her insides to the point where trying to stitch her up would be like tailoring a suit made of tissue paper. In these months she was routinely treated with methadone,

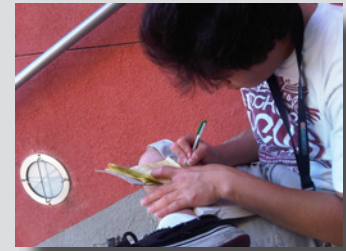
which is synthetic Heroin. Knowing my mother's time was limited, my grandmother would incessantly urge me to see my mother. After all, she lived behind our apartment. Instead I ignored the pain, a fourteen-year-old too young to process the reality, and I went out to skateboard with my friends.

Warm sunshine rays gleamed as the chilling October breeze enveloped the day. It was eight days before I was to turn fifteen. After the sixth period bell rang letting the students out, my friend and I bolted for the front of the school like racehorses.

For, on this day we were privileged with a ride from my friend's mother, ten times better than having to endure the school bus. During the ride, my friend's mother told him it was payday. My friend decided to take advantage of the situation and ask if we could rent movies. Gleefully, she one-upped him by adding to that the prospect of movie snacks. "Munchies, too!" my friend shouted. With eyes wide open and our mouths watering, we parked at the Albertson's next to Hollywood Video. We were the hawks, and the munchies were our prey. As we scoped out our victims, I could not help but be happy. With most, this is an ordinary event, but for two teens who grew up on the east side of the tracks, this was the treatment of royalty.

With candy packed into our pockets and movies in our bag, we were chauffeured to the hotel where my

. . . a hotel that stood on a block where drug dealers, drug users, and other destitute souls congregated.



John Hawkins is 22 years old and is majoring in culinary arts. These are his thoughts on writing: "I used to be horrible at writing, until I realized how awesome of a tool it is to know how to articulate thought onto paper. I figured to enable success in school and in life I would have to hone the skill of writing. Turned out, when I learned how to write, I discovered a great feeling, and have enjoyed writing since. Ms. Nugent asked us to write a descriptive essay on our saddest memory. Instantly, the day of my mother's death came to mind. I told myself that I would hold nothing back when writing the essay. My mother died my sophomore year in high school, but my guardian has always been my grandma. She has taught me how to use my heart. I am now a chef at a local restaurant and in the process of obtaining two degrees: AA in baking/pastry, and culinary arts. I love Hip-Hop, reading books, and cooking food. Life's simple."





friend and his mother resided. This hotel was not glamorous, not worth bragging about by movie stars or famous rappers, but a hotel that stood on a block where drug dealers, drug users, and other destitute souls congregated. We pulled up to the hotel, and as I walked up to the door a man with a face familiar said I needed to return a phone call. I thanked the man and wondered who the caller could be. Inside I was engulfed by pungent odors—stale cigarette smoke and un-bathed body odors—smells I was used to. But what alarmed me was a frantic face telling me I had to call

my grandmother. My blood boiled, and my heart churned with regret, for I suspected the purpose of the phone call. My friend's room was on the third floor, and on my way up I ran into a pale face also telling me of the phone call. My heart became a lump in my throat, making it hard to breathe. Today, still, I see those faces full of gloom, knowing that they were relaying a message to a boy who was yet to know of the pain he was destined to face.

Rushing up that last flight, I entered the room and called my grandmother. She answered. My eyes watered and my voice cracked. My grandmother's voice was solemn and loving. "It's your mom. She's gone. She's gone

to heaven." She was trying to hold it together, not for her, but for me. I hung up the phone. Walking home, I passed a tree that sat upon a ledge at a Buddhist temple. I sniffled, holding tears back, because as I smelled the sweet floral scent, it reminded me of all the times I had chosen

skateboarding at that ledge over spending time with my mother. All I could think of was how I had lost a mother I had never built a real relationship with. Medics had yet to arrive, so my brother took me into the room where she had passed away. Her new kitten rested on her chest. I sat with her sobbing

as her kitten's purr catered to my sorrows. I was told she had died while sleeping, and for that I was grateful.

It is soon to be seven years since then. I have grown beyond holding the regret next to my heart, for I know my mother and I loved each other. Worrying about what I could have done is no longer a matter. I have learned instead to contemplate the present. Now I treat others with a consciousness of life's volatility. Now I try to critique life positively, and with this adjusted perspective, I have been able to see the good in bad situations. I have never been as sad as I was the day of that phone call, but I will add that ever since I have lived my life with much intent.

Epiphany

By Dennis Zevely

Some people call it the daily grind, that “nine to five every day, five days a week, fifty-two weeks a year for the rest of my life, or until retirement,” which I would probably get bored with. My “nine to five day” does not start at nine; it starts at 3 a.m. when I wake up exhausted, rushing to shower and running out the door, without even having a chance to eat to get to my 4:00 a.m. to noon Fed Ex shift. Almost every morning, unless my mind is just too tired to function, I will have the specific thought of how much I hate it, my life, and the way it is, yet I do nothing to change it.

“Take the shot,” my father says to me, bringing me back to the here and now. “When I was your age I could take that, no problem.” We are sitting at the 856 Bar and Restaurant. It’s happy hour, and my dad felt like going out and drinking, and I, against my better judgment, decided to tag along. “Yeah, like eighty years ago,” I quip. “You probably couldn’t even take half of it now.” And so it begins. I’m getting drunk with my father at 3:30 in the afternoon on a Thursday. Sadly, I have nothing better to do. As the alcohol kicks in, I start to daydream and manage mostly to ignore my father’s heckling.

“Later, much later, I will be happy,” I think to myself. “Everyone is happy later in life. I just need to wait for something to happen.” For some reason I’m picturing my house, looking at my living room as if it were in front of me. There’s my chair—yes,

my chair because it belongs to me—and also the grossly ornamented table that sits awkwardly in the middle of the room. The television sits in the corner with piles of movies stacked haphazardly on both sides. “This is my space, my life, yet I am not happy. What am I going to do to change this?” I say to myself.

“What are you doing with your life?” my dad interrupts, as if reading my mind. This is how he usually starts his probing, not very subtly.

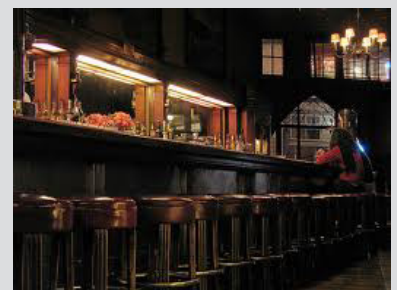
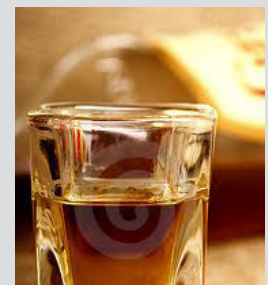
“I’m not sure,” I say. “Is there something more? I’ve been a little bored lately, and feel like I’m not really going anywhere.” My thoughts continue to myself, “What am I doing with my life?” It’s a tough

question. Is there anything more to life than what I am doing?

I take stock. Clearly, I am unhappy. I’m a college dropout. My job is about the best I can manage without some kind of a degree. I’m working full time to support myself, plus one. While I was attending school before, it was fun, but I had no drive. My original thought about life was that all I needed to be happy was a spouse, a job, and a home. But these have not brought satisfaction: The spouse is demanding, the job is boring, and the home is slowly falling apart. I feel as if I am waiting for some kind of a sign, but I don’t know what the sign is or what it would look like if I saw it. I have been playing the lotto religiously. It isn’t that I actually think I can win; it is the dream of winning that drives me, the thought that perhaps one day

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Dennis M. Zevely, 24, is a full-time student at San Joaquin Delta College. Dennis recently came back to Delta after taking a few years off to “experience” life. After entering the working world, he realized that it is pretty tough for people who do not have a college education to succeed. Dennis has recently taken a strong interest in dietetics, and wishes to transfer to San Diego State University, where he will continue to pursue his goal of becoming a registered dietitian.





I can change this situation. Slowly the dreams have become the driving point of my life. “I could do anything” is the thought. “I won’t be greedy, just a couple mil.” I will travel, enjoy the world, have a bunch of promiscuous sex; I could live the life of a movie star. But this never happened.

now. His body looks weak. It is at this moment that I have the epiphany: he isn’t young anymore. He is old, and getting older. For the first time in my life I see my father as the aging man he is now, rather than the younger, stronger man that I had idolized as a child.

“Well, nothing will change unless you change it,” my father advises me. He goes on, “I am happy how my life turned out, happy for you children, the house, your mother, but one thing that I was never happy about was not finishing school.” It is the start of the “go back to school” talk; how typical. “I know you probably don’t want to hear it,” he says, and I don’t, “but if you want something more, then you will need a degree.”

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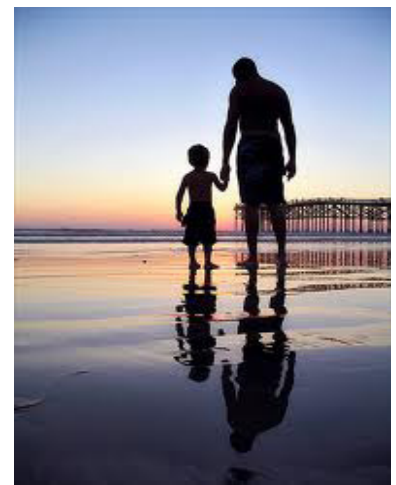
We continue to speak of life and its changes. It hits me that this is the first adult conversation that I have ever had with my father. Listening to his worried words, looking into his tired eyes, I come to the conclusion that I am the only one who can change my situation.

Dreams of grandeur and a lavish lifestyle have their place, but they are still just dreams. Only I can change my situation; only I have the power to make myself truly happy. This is the starting point, this conversation with my father in a bar at 3:30 in the afternoon on a Thursday that sends me back to school and into English 1A, like my classmates, trying to make more of my life.

I don’t know why, but for some reason this time I listen to my father. It seems there is suddenly more of an air of concern in his voice, rather than the typical bossy and demanding nature that was my father.

“Dennis, at this point I’m sure you know that life doesn’t go on forever. You need to figure out what it is that you want, and how you want to get there. Your mother and I aren’t going to live forever—.” He pauses.

At this point I am wondering how the conversation has drifted so much. I know that he isn’t going to live forever. I closely examine his face. The fine lines that once showed his wisdom, grace, and strength, now show a fragile old man. His hair is grey



HAMLET: ANTI-HERO

by TyraCamellia Allred

Humans are rational beasts, bestowed with a superior intelligence. Yet even with this unique ability, humans are flawed. They experience complex and persuasive emotions that interfere with their reasoning skills.

Protagonists in comic books, plays, movies, and other fictional works can be perfected and turned into what are known as “heroes.” Heroes can be described as idealistic, courageous, moral, decisive, fair, and selfless; they are “the good guys” that are against evil. Hamlet, the protagonist in William Shakespeare’s play Hamlet, does not fit into the above description of a hero, and should be labeled as an “anti-hero.”

By a specific definition, an antihero is the “hero” of the play or novel, but this protagonist has negative attributes apart from the classic hero figure. Such negative aspects may include a violent nature or a tendency to use coarse language. An anti-hero can be described as pragmatic, inconsiderate, greedy, rebellious, cowardly, insubordinate, reluctant, and morally suspect. Hamlet

himself acknowledges that he has these flaws. The play begins with Hamlet’s learning of his father’s murder at the hands of Hamlet’s uncle Claudius. Although the murder of Hamlet’s father and the marriage of his

In short, Hamlet lacks the confidence and self-assurance that heroes and leaders need.

mother, Gertrude, to Claudius are obviously quite devastating, Hamlet’s reaction to the situation with those around him seems rather cold, whiny, and over dramatized. Instead of growing from a difficult situation and overcoming obstacles, like a true hero would, Hamlet constantly complains that he is unable to commit suicide because God “fix’d / His canon ’gainst self-slaughter” (1.2.135-136)! Heroes by definition are brave, upstanding, and selfless; yet Hamlet does not have these qualities. In Act II, Hamlet states, “You cannot take from me anything that I will more / willingly part withal, —except my life, except my life, except / my life” (2.2.227-229). In short, Hamlet lacks the confidence and self-assurance that heroes and leaders need.

When confronted by his father’s ghost, Hamlet is told that “If thou didst ever thy dear



TyraCamellia Allred was born in Indianapolis, Indiana, but was raised in Stockton. She is 20 years old and currently on her last semester at Delta before transferring to UOP. She is majoring in psychology and English with plans to ultimately earn a doctorate in psychology. She loves fast food, cartoons, horror movies and metal music.



father love— / . . . / Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder” (1.5.27-29). The late king is even denied the chance to repent before facing God’s judgment: “Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin, / Unhousel’d, disappointed, unanel’d, / No reckoning made, but sent to my account / With all my imperfections on my head” (1.5.82-85). At the meeting between Hamlet and his father’s ghost, Hamlet is given a purpose in life: to

Though Hamlet’s courage is a bit more present in this scene, true heroes do not take revenge, and surely do not encourage torture or gratuitous suffering.

avenge his father. But even with this newly acquired information about the truth behind the death of his father, Hamlet hesitates to act on merely the apparition’s word, which is understandable. Yet that does not stop him from feeling ashamed of himself: “(O! vengeance!) / Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave / That I, the son of a dear father murdered, / Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell, / Must like a whore unpack my heart with words, / And fall a-cursing like a very drab” (2.2.569-574). In an attempt to reassure himself that what he plans to do is just, Hamlet arranges to have traveling players act out the murder of his father in a play called The Mouse Trap while he, Hamlet, observes Claudius’ reaction to it. When it is clear that Claudius has a guilty conscience, Hamlet gains the confidence to kill Claudius.

His first opportunity to avenge his father comes while his murderous uncle is praying. Hamlet refrains from killing his uncle at this time because Claudius would have the luxury denied the late king. If Hamlet had killed his uncle during prayer, his uncle would have been sent to heaven because he had repented his sins. Hamlet sees that if “A villain kills my father, and for that, / I, his sole son, do this same villain send / To heaven. /

Why, this is hire and salary, not revenge / . . . / Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven, / And that his soul may be as damn’d and black / As hell, whereto it goes” (3.3.79-98). In the scene, it is clear that Hamlet wants his incestuous

uncle to suffer horribly for eternity. Though Hamlet’s courage is a bit more present in this scene, true heroes do not take revenge, and surely do not encourage torture or gratuitous suffering.

The second occasion when Hamlet thinks of killing his uncle is during a fight with his mother over her sins against her late husband and God. During this argument, Polonius, while hiding behind some curtains, is alarmed when Gertrude screams. Startled by the unforeseen presence, Hamlet stabs Polonius, assuming the figure to be Claudius. When discovering his mistake, Hamlet feels almost no remorse and even places the

blame on Polonius, stating, "Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell! / I took thee for thy better. Take thy fortune; / Thou find'st to be too busy in some danger" (3.4. 36-38). Heroes do not kill the innocent, and if it were to happen by accident, there would be obvious remorse, not a nonchalant and cold response as in the case of Hamlet.

Hamlet's negative characteristics also include his rudeness towards others, including the fair Ophelia. Young girls are vulnerable, and his cold disposition towards the woman who

loves him is not reflective of a hero. He personally lists his bad qualities and refuses to marry her: "I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious, / with more offenses at my beck than I have thoughts to put / them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them / in. . . . Go thy ways to a nunnery" (3.1. 131-136). Such heartless abandonment pushes Ophelia to commit suicide. To further his offenses, Hamlet has the nerve to confront her grieving brother, Laertes, claiming that he suffers from her loss more than Laertes. Hamlet states that he loves Ophelia: "Forty thousand brothers / Could not with all their quantity of love / Make up my sum" (5.1.265-267). Along with the two current deaths that involve Hamlet, he later arranges for the deaths of his former friends, Rosencrantz and

Guilденstern, and again has no guilt or acknowledgement of blame: "They are not near my conscience. Their defeat / Does by their own insinuation grow" (5.2.62-63).

Throughout the play, Hamlet takes no responsibility for his evil actions, yet curses the rest of the world for their faults. When Horatio offers to make an excuse so Hamlet will not need to spar with Laertes, Hamlet ironically states, "Not

Throughout the play, Hamlet takes no responsibility for his evil actions, yet curses the rest of the world for their faults.

a whit, we defy augury; . . . / If it be now, 'tis not to come; / if it be not to come, it will be now; if it not be now, yet it / will come: the readiness is all. Since no man has

ought of / what he leaves, what is 't to leave betimes" (5.2.209-213)? In other words, Hamlet says that it is the will of God and the plan of destiny that determine when a person dies, so one should not try to prevent it or be upset when it comes. If he were true to his words, he would not be as upset with his father's murder, because obviously since it happened, it is God's will. Before starting the sparring match, Hamlet follows his mother's good advice and apologizes for his actions at Ophelia's funeral, yet it is a hollow apology because he once again takes no blame. Instead, he blames his "madness. / . . . Never Hamlet" (5.2.221-222). In the climactic final scene, Claudius plants poison in Hamlet's drink, Hamlet inadvertently kills Laertes, Gertrude drinks





the poison meant for Hamlet, and Hamlet fulfills his promise to his father's ghost by slaying Claudius.

During Elizabethan time, revenge was widely accepted. Knowing the audience would empathize with Hamlet, Shakespeare

uses revenge to justify Hamlet's actions, thus making him a sympathetic protagonist and for many a hero. On the other hand, Hamlet kills three people in the play, encourages Ophelia's suicide, and arranges the deaths of another two people. Hamlet kills Polonius, mistaking him for Claudius; he also arranges Rosencrantz's and Guildenstern's death; and at the end of the play, accidentally kills Laertes and kills Claudius out of revenge. In place of remorse and guilt, this anti-hero has denial and apathy. Though he blames the victims themselves or the will of God, he adds insult by hiding behind others' assumptions that he is mad.

Hamlet kills three people in the play, encourages Ophelia's suicide, and arranges the deaths of another two people.

In the play, Hamlet has many soliloquies, which allow the audience into Hamlet's state of mind. They show the audience that Hamlet is not mad but that he is well composed, eloquent, controlled in his thoughts, and very intelligent.

I have come to the conclusion that Hamlet is an anti-hero because he is weak, cowardly, hesitant, selfish, indifferent, sadistic, and hypocritical, all of which are opposing

characteristics to what a hero is supposed to be. Some may consider Hamlet a hero. But the audience can see Hamlet for who he really is. He is a man, obviously not a mature man, of the same flesh and blood that everyone else is made up of, yet one who would rather take the easy way out and die instead of dealing with the obstacles in his life: "For who would bear the whips and scorns of time, / . . . / When he himself might his quietus make / With a bare bodkin" (3.1.77-83)? A true hero would.

Ice Cream Cone

by Juan Ramon Pimentel

When I was nine years old, I attended a small school in my native town, La Piedad, near Mexico City. Everyone in school knew each other because it was and still is a small town. I used to hang out with my friend Frank and four other guys. At that time, I weighed seventy pounds. During our lunch my friends and I would play soccer on the school field.

My life seemed to be easy and fun then. After school, Frank and I and our friends played video games in the local store. Our order was always a chicken sandwich and an orange soda. The six of us played video games until our money was gone. On the way home, we would chat about how we almost reached the highest score. Frank always said, "Next time I'll get it." Sometimes we cut class to ride our bikes down to the river. We loved to ride our bikes through the river so we could feel the ice-cold water splashing our legs. We were tight, like the Three Musketeers, even though there were six of us. Life could not have been better.

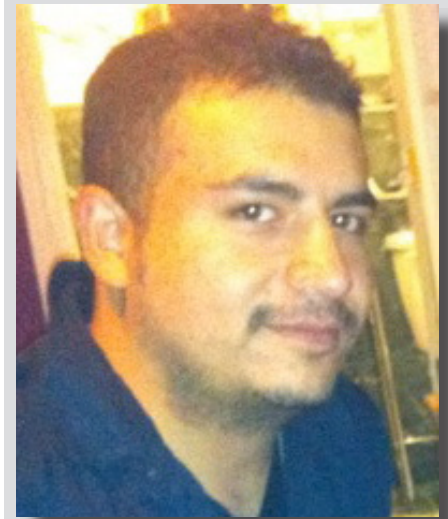
However, things began to change after a couple months. I began to gain weight. Over a period of six months, I gained sixty pounds because of my asthma medication. Personally, I did not mind, but it seemed like everyone else did. My classmates stopped asking

me to ride bikes with them. I did not understand why they stopped talking to me. One day after class I saw them going to the local store to play video games, so I decided to run home and ask my mom for money. My classmates had not invited me, but I thought it would be fine to meet them there since it was our hang out. I could hear my

I was excited because I thought that they might tell me something funny, but the next thing wasn't funny at all. It was heartless.

friends laughing inside. Frank was upset and yelled, "Daaayumn I almost got it!" When I stepped into the video game area, everyone stopped talking. I said, "Hey, guys, what's going on?" They didn't answer. Instead they exchanged looks. Even though I felt weird, I approached them. All of them began to talk about me. They looked at Frank; "Are you going to tell him?" I asked, "What?" He looked at me and then kept playing. Then again they encouraged Frank, "I dare you to do it!" I was excited because I thought that they might tell me something funny, but the next thing wasn't funny at all. It was heartless.

They told me to go home—that I was not welcome to play with them anymore. I laughed thinking that they were joking. Then, I realized it was not a joke. My friends were telling me to no longer bother them. I stared at Frank, hoping he



Juan Ramon Pimentel was born in Michoacán, Mexico in 1987. Even though he did not finish his formal education in Mexico, this has not stopped him from pursuing his dreams of earning a degree in mathematics. After he graduates, he plans to become a math teacher in a middle school setting because of teachers who inspired him and encouraged him to believe in himself and to never give up.



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did not feel the same way, but he did not even bother to look at me. Instead he continued playing. After that I felt as if my blood stopped circulating through my body. I felt my heart drop for a couple of seconds, and I could not speak. My eyes began to burn. I could not hold back my

tears. I walked home, depressed and furious.

I walked with my head down because I did not want people to see me crying.

Soon I could taste the salty flavor of my tears. When

I arrived home, I continued crying. I began to ask myself why they treated me that way, and I blamed myself.

I thought that they were the only ones who did not want to hang out with me, but soon no one wanted to be my friend. I had never made any other friends because I thought that Frank and the others would always be there for me, but I was wrong. They not only stopped me from hanging out with them, but also began to make hurtful comments about me. My classmates made the teacher stop me from playing soccer. They told him that I was too fat to run and they did not want to lose. Their comments did not hurt me, but it did when my teacher did not defend me; instead he just laughed. Soon everyone began to pick on me. Every time I entered class, they looked at me with disgust. They had that look on their faces as if I was going to eat them. I tried not to pay attention but it was difficult. Each time the teacher

asked me to stand up and solve a problem on the board, my classmates said, "Open some space for Juan." They even put their legs out to try to make me fall. I felt ashamed.

After that I never wanted to be called on in the classroom because I knew what would happen. I could not believe the same individuals who one day had said they were my friends were now my enemies. During lunchtime I sat by myself next to the director's office, knowing that if

someone wanted to hurt me I could yell for the director. Teasing not only happened in school, but after school. Often I had to walk home hearing all my nicknames. Guys from school who were not even my classmates called me "fatty," "bowling ball," "muffin," and "ice cream cone." I did not want to attend school anymore. I pleaded with my mom to let me stay home. Many times I faked having a stomachache. At night while I tried to sleep, I could hear all the mean comments about me again and again. Soon it all got out of control. Older guys from school began to chase me home. Everyone took advantage of me to have fun. I felt furious because I could not defend myself. There I was on a hot summer day running from my fears, running up hills towards my house. Since I was overweight, for me running was a punishment. Those guys made me run to my house every day after school; I had become their favorite form of

There I was on a hot summer day running from my fears, running up hills towards my house.



entertainment. I remember the sweat running down my face. My labored breathing made me feel like a fish out of water. Classmates stared at me like I had a contagious disease. Being alone made me feel depressed. Soon, I decided to stop eating because I was tired of being fat. I thought that if I stopped eating I would become slender again. But instead I became anemic.

After all that, I stayed only one more year. All the hurtful comments and my health

issues stopped me. And I never went back to school in my native town. I still remember the chases and the hurtful comments. I cannot believe that my best friends turned their backs on me because of my weight. I would never treat someone like that. Humans can be cruel. People commit hate crimes because they do not like the nationality, color, and look of someone else. But I, at least, have learned not to judge others by their outer appearance.

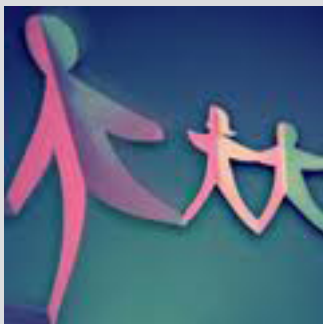




PARENT AND CHILD COMMUNICATION

by **Amanda Tamayo**

Amanda Tamayo is a busy wife and mother. Passionate about education, Amanda is pursuing her dream of teaching preschool-aged children through art and music. She is currently in Delta College’s Early Childhood Education Program. When not busy with school or home life, Amanda devotes much of her time to reading and writing. Amanda aspires to one day have a freelance writing business as well as run a small school centering on the arts.



I was shocked the evening my five-year-old son had his first violent outburst. It was as if a cork had popped—all at once he was expressing so many emotions. I had no idea he had been keeping all those feelings inside. It took over an hour for my husband and me to calm him, but eventually

he fell asleep in our arms. Still shaken after this event, I decided to research ways to help children deal with anger, sadness, and frustration. I have

come to realize that there are three important things parents can do to help their child process strong emotions. The first thing parents can do is remember that kids are always observing what the adults in their lives do to handle their own emotions, so lead by example. Second on the list is to keep open lines of communication. Kids have questions and a willingness to answer them can make a world of difference. And finally remember that children will speak to others the way they are spoken to.

I had to be really honest with myself when considering how to help my son. I had to answer

questions about whether or not I was giving him an example I wanted him to follow. The truth is I often exude stress; I’m sure my son is absorbing all the angst I let off. When children see that their parents lack coping skills, they don’t wonder why; they simply understand it as normal behavior.

A child who is allowed to ask questions and speak openly will learn that it is safe to express many emotions rather than try to contain them alone.

Ever have road rage? If your kids bore witness to that, I’m willing to bet they have what I like to call “playground rage.” In short, children emulate not only their parents’

positive behavior, but also the negative. Now, when I feel stressed I vocalize it in a positive way. I’ll say something like “Mommy feels like a prickly bear. I think a walk will help!” I’m showing him that I can help myself feel better and so can he.

Have your children ever asked a question that you were simply not prepared to answer? It’s tempting to shut them down or even make them feel guilty about asking. But what’s the message your child receives when this happens? I think it’s something along the lines of “Be very careful when you express yourself; it’s not always

wanted” or “ Certain things are bad to say; it’s better not to share.” Instead of refusing to talk to your child about certain things, make it a point to be honest (while still age appropriate) and remove shameful feelings from communication. A child who is allowed to ask questions and speak openly will learn that it is safe to express many emotions rather than try to contain them alone.

Parents are often tired, stressed, and overworked, a combination that makes it easy to become short and snappy when speaking to a rambunctious child. I used to tell my son, “You are on my last nerve” until I heard him say it to a classmate, and didn’t find it cute. At times, I’ve also been known to be rather sarcastic (I prefer “witty”)—again not a trait I want my son to possess. I’ve had to change the way I speak in order to raise a child who speaks kindly to others. For me, changing my tone of voice was the most difficult part. What helps me stay calm is to look at my son before speaking.

Other parents might find it helpful to remember being young and how it felt to be a wiggly, little kid.

When I look at him, I see a little child who has so much energy packed into a small body, I realize it would not only be pointless to snap at him for fidgeting but also mean. Other parents might find it helpful to remember being young and how it felt to be a wiggly, little kid. If all else fails, force yourself

to stay calm. Do not show your children what it is to melt down; instead, show them how to calmly express themselves.

There are many other things that can be done to minimize violent, angry behavior, but I believe these three things are the most important. Show your child healthy coping skills, have an honest open relationship free from shame, and always remain stoic when disciplining. Our culture is full of violence. Wherever you look, it’s present. Children will be exposed to it no matter what. I believe it’s more important to focus on personal interaction between parent and child rather than censor the rest of the world.





Taylor Stuart is 25 years old and graduated in Spring 2011 with an Associates of Art degree in English. She works full-time for a contractor doing payroll and finances. When she has free time, she enjoys hanging out with her two dogs, Lily and Polly, and watching as many Lifetime movies she can get her hands on. She plans to one day get a bachelor's degree in English and hopefully teach at her old high school in Manteca.



SISTER TO SISTER

by Taylor Stuart

Dear Sister, first let me start by saying that even though we are only twelve years apart, the generational differences between us seem enormous. Some of the things you tell me scare me more than you will ever know. This is mostly because I didn't have to deal with those things until I was much, much older. You are thirteen years old for crying out loud, and you shouldn't even know what some of those things are, let alone hear rumors that your best friends are doing them. All of this aside, please hear me and more importantly understand me when I say the following:

Dear Sister, you are beautiful. I know you are told this all the time by me, by mom, and even by complete strangers. It's important to know that you are beautiful in many different ways and you always will be. On the inside (which is most important), you are truly a kind, loving, and generous person. I am really reminded of this when I see you with our grandmother. The way you interact and take care of her makes me so proud of you. Then, there is your outer beauty from your gorgeous mixed black and white skin to your full

volume of hair (which you know I have always been jealous of). Recently and out of nowhere, you have blossomed into a young woman and now have womanly curves. Celebrate your new body by respecting it. Believe it or not, there are clothes that

You are thirteen years old for crying out loud, and you shouldn't even know what some of those things are.

are cute and not revealing. Also, always remember that any guy you attract solely because of what you are wearing is not worth keeping. Oh! I can't forget. Please eat lunch. I get it; I remember being a teenager and feeling really self-conscious about people judging

me based on what I was eating at school. But this doesn't mean you should starve yourself until dinner. Eat lunch so your body can stay just as beautiful and healthy as it is now. Respect your body by clothing and feeding it appropriately.

Dear Sister, you are smart. I know we constantly joke that our mom ended up with the best of both worlds. First, there's me, the goody-two-shoes, smart, people-pleaser daughter, and then there's you—the beautiful, popular, outgoing daughter. It's important to remember this is only a joke. We both have a mixture of all of these qualities. Sometimes I fear that our little joke has planted a seed of doubt within you. It is

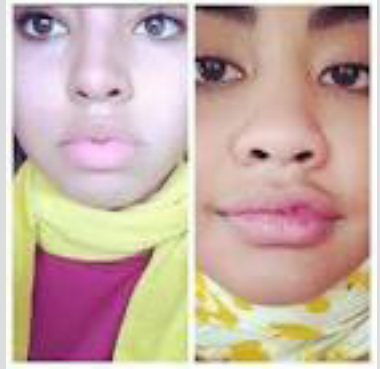
important to know you are very smart. When you apply yourself, there isn't anything you can't accomplish. I see this all the time when I help you with your math homework. At first you feel like you don't and can't understand a concept, but once it is fully explained there's no stopping you. This is why you need to remember to not stop at mediocre. Always strive for greatness. You are fully capable and definitely smart enough to tackle anything; you just have to have the confidence to do so.

Dear Sister, you are strong. As you know, people can and will be cruel. As long as you remain strong and remember that only the truth matters, name-calling and rumors won't get you down. I wish I could say that as you get older the people around

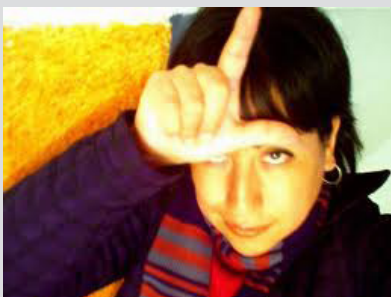
On the inside (which is most important), you are truly a kind, loving, and generous person. Celebrate your new body by respecting it.

you get nicer, but unfortunately that tends to not be the case. However, as long as you keep your head held high like you have done so many times before and know that other people's harsh words have no meaning if you don't give them any, you will be fine. You are one of the strongest people I have ever met, much stronger than I was at your age, and you will continue to develop that strength as you get older and wiser.

Dear Sister, I hope you have heard and understand all that I have mentioned. I do, however, have one last piece of advice before you completely tune me out, and this is the most important thing I could ever tell you: Madison, I could not be prouder to be your sister.



Donald Kavis, born and raised in Stockton, California, went to Stagg High School before working in the circuitboard manufacturing industry. He then came to Delta College and obtained a Crystalline Materials Electron Microscopy certificate. He plans to pursue degrees in engineering and natural sciences at a four-year university.



THE INVIDIOUS NATURE OF COMPETITION

by Donald Kavis

Since the dawn of mankind, humans have been competing with each other over things such as food, resources, and mates. Often, this competitive drive built into us has caused humans to go to war with one another—killing each other in the process. In the modern era, competition has been significantly tempered in its lethality. Rarely does a conflict arise between two people where the end result is a dead body lying on the ground.

However, competition still has the ability to bring about the worst behavior in many of us. Instances of violence springing forth from trivial rivalries are splashed across newspapers and television nowadays. Indeed, bad behavior resulting from competition seems to be commonplace in today's society. Given that most Western societies thrive off of the competitive spirit found within their populations, it isn't that surprising that some people might go overboard with its application. But while some people state that competition can only have a positive impact on our societies, I believe that the negative aspects resulting from the bad behavior

due to competitiveness probably outweigh any good that can be created from competition, given the way it is pushed in today's world.

One of the most obvious negative consequences of the competitive drive is the creation of a loser. In fierce competition, an individual who doesn't measure up to the other competitors can, in the name of competition, be labeled as a "loser." While in the strictest

However, competition still has the ability to bring about the worst behavior in many of us.

definition of the term this title would apply, there is a certain stigma associated with the word "loser." Due to the bad behavior that is often created from competition, other competitors might begin to taunt and tease the loser. Often, this mocking can become quite vicious, ending in a physical confrontation. Looking back on my high school days, I recall several instances of students getting beat up after class because during physical education they fumbled a football or failed to catch a baseball. Often the effects of a simple mistake out on the field were inconsequential to the outcome of whatever game was being played, but to the other

players involved, this mistake was considered more of a sin, a sin that marked them as much as it did the one who committed it. Thus, this justified retribution upon the "sinner." This kind of bad behavior can be very detrimental to society as a whole, creating a class of winners and a class of losers, forever separate from each other.

Another negative result from harsh competition is the "anything to win" mentality. Some people have a complete obsession with winning, occupying every moment of their existence. People such as Donald Trump and Bill Gates exemplify this phenomenon. These two people have clawed their way to the top, hurting many other people who were in their way. In order to get further ahead, they have lied, cheated, and wounded countless rival individuals and companies, all in the name of their greed and desire. They justify this by saying that it is a "dog-eat-dog" world out there, and those who do not play the game will be removed from the sport. While this attitude does have some redeemable qualities, such as the ability to acquire wealth and take care of one's self, it also fosters a socio-pathological attitude towards others. People with this mindset see other people as objects to be used, without giving regard to their feelings and emotions. Sociopaths created due to the competitive spirit of a society are against the best interests of any civilization.

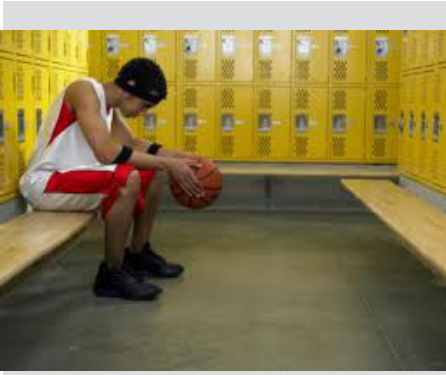
This kind of bad behavior can be very detrimental to society as a whole, creating a class of winners and a class of losers, forever separate from each other.

Possibly the most detrimental outcome of over-amped competition is the creation of bitter enemies. As was stated before, sometimes competition between rival sides or individuals can become pathological. Perhaps one team has dealt an overwhelming defeat to another team, emasculating them in the process. Looking like fools in the faces of their peers, this humiliated team wishes to strike back. This tit-for-tat type of rivalry can easily escalate out of control. For instance, in sports

this enmity has led to the theft of the opposing team's mascot, to the destruction of the opposing team's property, and to physical altercations with members of the opposing team. A good example of this happened at my high school.

In the last football game of my first year in high school, one of the offensive linemen from the other team came too close to the bench, where our offensive line were sitting. One of the guys sitting on the bench stood up and slugged the opposing player with brass knuckles, sending him to the hospital. When asked why he did it, the attacker stated that he didn't know why he did it. At that moment, he just hated his opponent. After considerable contemplation, I believe it was done in the heat of the moment. These two teams had been rivals for a long time, and due to the fierce competition, the desire to strike out against a bitter enemy became too great to control. This kind of bad behavior is repeated in many other ways in our society, often resulting in the violent





actions that lead to arrests and convictions in our courtrooms. Obviously, this has a negative impact on our society.

Competition is a natural aspect of human behavior. It helps humanity survive in a relatively cruel world. Competition is responsible for pushing innovation in the fields of philosophy, science, and religion. Without competition, we would be diminished as a species. However, when competition's more negative aspects are ignored, the outcomes will invariably be disastrous. Numerous wars and conflicts can be traced back

People with this mindset see other people as objects to be used, without giving regard to their feelings and emotions.

to expressions of bad feelings brought about by pointless competition, and uncounted tragedies have occurred on the individual level due to bruised egos and damaged pride. In my opinion, structure is the key here. Structure can provide a line in the sand to prevent displays of ego, superiority, or nationalism from becoming excuses to act inappropriately. Structure can also allow for civility to persist between rivals after a competition takes place. Competition needs to be well structured and regulated to ensure the safety of people, and society as a whole.



THE LITTLE GIRL ONCE CALLED FAITH

by Cara Rappuhn

It was a cool, crisp day in late October, on the plains of Kansas. A baby girl had just been born, and she was perfect and healthy. Her mother sat weeping, not from joy, but from sorrow. The dreaded decision had quickly approached, and she didn't know what to do. She said a prayer and asked for guidance. She had a sick toddler at home, she was recovering from a divorce, and she was struggling with an eating disorder. Her own mother didn't even know she had been pregnant. She slowly got up from the bed, packed her belongings, and with a broken heart left the hospital, leaving her baby there. Several days later, a couple from Florida walked to the desk to pick up their newly adopted daughter. Those people were the ones I would always know as my parents.

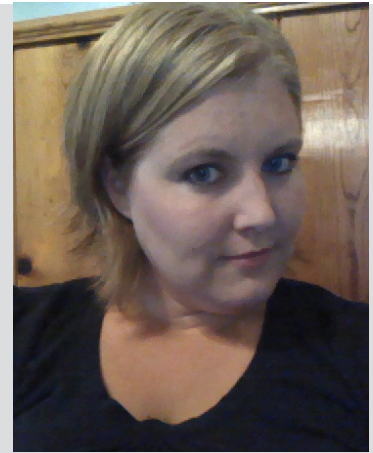
I always knew I was adopted. My parents never hid it from me and always tried to make me feel special because of it. I was their gift. The desire to be parents burned inside them. Because they couldn't conceive another child, they decided to pursue adoption. The process took months, and at times the expectation of getting a baby seemed hopeless. Just when they were ready to give up,

the man who would become my dad got a call from an adoption attorney, informing him that a baby girl had been born in Kansas and needed a family. I can't even imagine the joy he must have felt when he hung up the phone. He could tell his wife she was going to be a mom. Most expectant parents have months to prepare for their new arrival; my parents had a week. They flew to Kansas for the most precious gift they would ever receive—me.

I always wondered what made my mother walk away and leave me.

From the outside looking in, I had a picture perfect childhood. My parents made sure I had everything I needed and most of what I wanted, and they always let me know that I was special. I knew my parents were hand-selected just for me, yet I was incomplete. On the inside I felt rejected and set apart from them. There was something missing.

I never told people I was adopted until my presentation during English class at Delta College. It was something I held inside; it was my secret. As a small child, I had noticed right away I was different. The biggest difference between my parents and me was the obvious physical one. Unlike my mom and dad, I had very blonde hair;



Cara Rappuhn was raised in Mobile, Alabama, and recently moved to Lodi, California, with her husband and children. She is attending Delta College in hopes of completing her general education, so she can transfer to a university one day. Cara is a down-to-earth person who loves people, and never meets a stranger. She is currently working as a caregiver, and hopes to continue being able to make a difference in the lives of others. She likes spending her free time writing or being outside. She enjoys walking on the beach, or hiking in the mountains, but is happiest when she is curled up at home with a good book.





they had dark brown. It made me feel like I didn't belong. I always wondered what made my mother walk away and leave me. I was desperate to know where I had come from, and I wrestled with these thoughts through most of my younger years.

When I was sixteen, I thought I had found the man of my dreams. After almost a year of dating him, I got pregnant. I wasn't upset; instead I was eager to have a family that shared my blood. Young girls at sixteen rarely have the ability to become the parents they should be, but I knew I could do it. The other people in my life, however, didn't share my feelings. They all assumed I would put the baby up for adoption. My friends from school, church, and even my parents all encouraged me in that direction. They thought it was the smart decision for a girl my age. I was torn between my baby and the rest of the people in my life. The turning point for me was as simple as answering a phone call. My best friend's mom had given my number to a couple who desperately wanted children. The woman who called said she wanted to meet me. She wanted me to choose her to be my baby's mom. She wanted to meet with me right away, so she would have enough time to schedule her maternity leave and paint the nursery. She told me she wanted my baby to be a boy, and she would name him Noah. It was

I knew what it was like growing up not knowing my mother; I didn't want to know what it was like not knowing my baby.

then I realized how much I wanted to keep my baby. I knew what it was like growing up not knowing my mother; I didn't want to know what it was like not knowing my baby.

When I had my son, some of my closest friends were no longer allowed to associate with me, and I was kicked out of school. I had gone against what my parents had taught me, and I had tarnished their reputation. I was brought up in the church, so I knew what

I had done was wrong, and I also knew it wasn't something that could easily be hidden. It was a mistake that couldn't be swept under the rug; it would be as hard to hide a baby as it was to hide a pregnant daughter. My decision was

something they had to accept. The baby would be a part of my life. I had disappointed them, not only by having a baby, but also by compromising my education. I took the year off, but I was able to go back to school when my son turned one. I had missed a lot, but I was determined to catch up and not allow being a mom to prevent me from continuing my education. My life drastically changed, but I have never regretted my decision to keep him.

Life as a teenage mom was difficult. Sleep deprived and irritable, I had to go to work at McDonalds, making four dollars and fifteen cents an hour for diaper money. The days of going

to sleepovers and parties were over, traded in for runny noses and formula. My son was a good baby, but I had to learn what to do as I went along. My mom and dad taught me what I didn't know, and they took care of him while I was in school or at work. Life was hard, but it was still better than missing his first smile, his first word, his first step. There is nothing like hearing your baby say "mama" for the first time or giving you a slobbery kiss on the cheek to show you that he loves you.

One of the days in my life I will never forget is the day I graduated from high school. It was one of the proudest moments of my life. My family thought that I would never go back

and that I would compound their embarrassment by being a dropout. I had to overcome adversity and teenage parent statistics, but I received my diploma, with my son in the stroller watching me. He was two. He is almost seventeen now, older than I was when he was born. He is going to graduate from high school next year, and it will be my turn to watch him get his diploma. I like to think his determination came from knowing how hard I have worked to give him a life with me, his mom. I could have chosen to give him up for adoption as my mother had, as my friends and family thought I should, but even through the teenage stages of attitudes and mood swings, I have

Sleep deprived and irritable, I had to go to work at McDonalds, making four dollars and fifteen cents an hour for diaper money.

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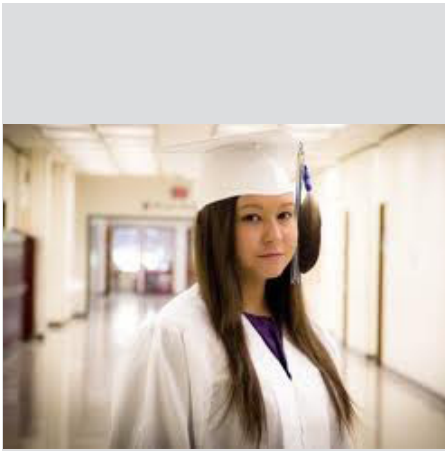
My mother chose to give me up for adoption. She could have had an abortion or left me to die in a trashcan, but she chose to give me a chance at life. She didn't know who would raise me, or where I would end up, but she walked away. When I was twenty-one, I got my birth records from the hospital in Kansas, in hopes of finding something that could help me find her. It took several months to receive all of my records.

When I finally got them, I ripped open the envelope, and the first words I read were my mother's name: Mary Jane. I can't describe the way it felt to finally hold this part of her in my hands after all

the time I had spent wondering. I still didn't know anything else about her, but I had her name to hold onto.

I searched many weeks for her. Knowing the chances of finding her were slim, I never gave up. I called the information number for the town I was born in, and the operator gave me the names and numbers of the people who shared her maiden name. I called number after number, the need to find her growing with each one. One day a man called, and he knew the date of my birthday before I could tell him, and he also knew the reason I had left the message on his machine. He was married to my mother, and he





was able to give me the answers I desired most. But he wouldn't. She had never told her mom and dad she had been pregnant. He wanted to give her some time to tell them, and he wanted her to answer my questions herself. The search was over. I had found my mother, but the wait to hear her voice wasn't. Waiting was worse than not knowing anything about her for all those years. She finally called, and we talked for several hours, and before we hung up, we planned a trip. I was going to Kansas!

When I looked into my mother's eyes for the first time, I saw both heartache and relief. The

heartache was from the life that could have been, but the relief was from the life that was. I looked closely at her, trying to see a glimpse of myself in who she was. I had her blue eyes and her blonde hair. She reminded me of me. We enjoyed each other's company and stayed up late that night, talking about our lives and about how, in so many ways, they had been separate. We ended our visit by going to a Kansas City Royals baseball game. We had nosebleed seats, but we shared what would be our last night together laughing over foul balls and home runs. I will never forget the time we spent together; I treasure it to this day. I understand better now her choice, and I have an inner peace about what she had to do. I know I wasn't her discarded baby; I was the hardest decision she had ever had to make. One thing she

She knew it was faith she needed to follow through with her decision to put me up for adoption.

said that was special to me was about the day I was born. She had chosen not to look at me, but she overheard a nurse talking in the hallway, and she heard I was a girl. That day, before she left the hospital, she named me Faith. She knew it was faith she needed to follow through with her decision to put me up for adoption. I was her daughter, I always would be, and we shared a blood bond that will never be broken. She will always be the woman who gave me life

and who loved me enough to walk away. I never regretted my decision to keep my baby, but she has spent the last thirty-three years with regret over

her decision to give me up. She will forever be my mother, but will never be my mom.

The family that was chosen to be mine has loved me, has cherished me, and has always been there for me. They made all the decisions about where I would grow up and what school I would go to, when I could wear make-up, and who I could date—the decisions my mother never had the chance to make for me. They are the ones who molded me, socially and emotionally, training me from birth, but it was the decision made by my mother to let go and walk away that ultimately shaped my life. If she had kept me, both of our lives would have been dramatically different. It was because she had given me up for adoption that I was able to make a different decision when I was faced



with a similar situation. Rather than choose the life that my mom and dad wanted for me, I chose my own path. My decision to keep my son changed my life, and it also changed their lives as well. I have a deep love and appreciation for my adoptive parents because of what I have been through. I have been able to give closure to my past and rather than blaming my biological mother for her decision, I thank her for it.

I still keep in touch with my mother, but I haven't seen her since my trip to Kansas. I hope

that one day I will be able to hear her voice again, but the letters we share are far more than I had ever hoped for, and I am grateful we had the opportunity to meet. She contributed to who I am biologically, but she chose to put what was best for me above all else. She knew she couldn't take care of me and wanted more for my life than she could provide. She will always be an important part of who I am. To her, I will always be the little girl she had once called Faith.

I was the
hardest
decision she
had ever had
to make.





Tamara Piazza is married with five incredible children: Cierra, Ned, Steven, Linda, and Tanner. She began taking classes at Delta at the urging of a co-worker who would not accept any excuses from her about why she couldn't. Her husband and children have all been very supportive and proud that she is able to work full-time and maintain a 4.0 GPA. She is halfway to her goal of transferring to the University of the Pacific to obtain a B.S. in Business, and enjoying every minute of the journey.

The Peripheral Canal: What it Means for the Delta

by **Tamara Piazza**

The controversy surrounding a peripheral canal and the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta is not new to the people of California.

In 1982, California voters resoundingly rejected a ballot initiative that proposed construction of a canal that would convey water from Northern California to Central and Southern

California by bypassing the Delta. What has changed in the last 29 years that has caused this idea to be resurrected? Is it the best solution for California's water issues? Most important, will a peripheral canal ultimately help or harm the Delta? It appears that once again Californians will be asked to answer these questions with a vote on a ballot measure scheduled for the November 2012 Statewide General Election. While this ballot measure will not specifically fund a peripheral canal, it will lay the foundation for it by providing the needed infrastructure. My goal in researching this topic is to determine how to vote on this measure.

The Delta is one of the largest remaining wetland areas on the Pacific Coast, and its functions are

vital and diverse. The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) reports that the Delta provides a migration path for

salmon; a home to over 500 species of wildlife, 20 of which are endangered; and water to approximately two-thirds of California's population. The Delta also supplies a recreational area for fishing and water sports. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

The original intent behind both projects was to transport only water that was surplus to the needs of the Delta.

reports that Delta water exports to the south began in 1951 via the Delta-Mendota Canal, as part of the Central Valley Project. By 1972, the State Water Project also began water exports to the south through the California Aqueduct. The original intent behind both projects was to transport only water that was surplus to the needs of the Delta; however, over the last fifty years exports have increased at the Delta's expense. "California as we know it today was built largely on this fantasy: That arid cities in the south could indefinitely satisfy the thirst of a growing population by importing water from the north" (Weiser). The reality is that the demand for water provided by the Delta is unrealistic and has led to its decline; therefore, long-term solutions are needed to restore the ecosystem while ensuring



a sustainable water supply for California.

In 2006, due to the crisis in the Delta and, subsequently, court-ordered reductions of exports, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger established the State of California Governor's Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force. The Task Force was assigned the responsibilities of developing recommendations to repair the Delta's ecology and preparing a strategic plan that would recommend measures to sustain the Delta while ensuring a reliable water supply. In 2008, the Task Force presented the Delta Vision Strategic Plan, which identified seven goals with specific strategies and actions. These goals were based on the following core issues and concerns

surrounding the Delta and its water supply: drought; increased urban development; the establishment of a new governance structure; urban and agricultural pollution, resulting in degraded water quality; sea level rise, resulting in tidal salinity intrusion; catastrophic levee failure caused by earthquakes, floods, and land subsistence; and extinction of endangered fish species, such as salmon, Delta smelt (a native fish), and steelhead. Although the goals appear to make sense, two of the recommendations have caused significant controversy. The Task Force promotes a dual conveyance facility or peripheral canal to carry water directly from the Sacramento River to the export pumps, effectively diverting

water before it enters the Delta system. The Task Force also advocates the establishment of a California Delta Ecosystem and Water Council to replace the Bay-Delta Authority.

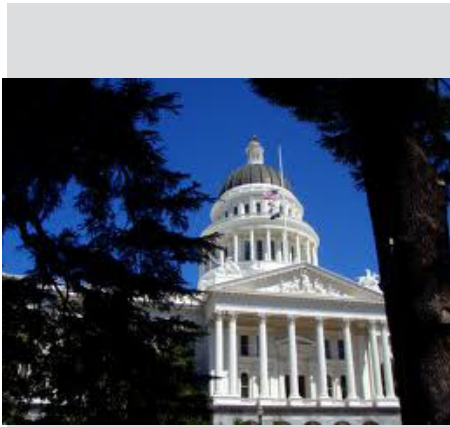
While San Joaquin County and other Northern California cities, counties, and stakeholders agree that the Delta is in trouble and needs urgent attention, they disagree with the Task Force's recommendations. San Joaquin County's position is that a

The Task Force promotes a dual conveyance facility or peripheral canal . . . effectively diverting water before it enters the Delta system.

peripheral canal would irrevocably harm the Delta, and that other more viable alternatives could be completed quicker and at less expense. In order to gain a better understanding of the County's opposition, I interviewed Dr. Mel Lytle, San Joaquin County's

Water Resource Coordinator. Dr. Lytle's knowledge of the past, present, and future of California's water problems, specifically the Delta's role in the equation, was invaluable. According to Dr. Lytle, "Water in California is no longer just a necessity; it has become a commodity." This statement appears to be substantiated by a recent lawsuit filed against billionaires Stewart and Lynda Resnick, owners of the nation's largest corporate farm and underground water storage facility located in the Central Valley, for allegedly selling water at a profit to nonmembers of their water agency. The Resnicks operate the Westside Mutual Water Company, in addition to controlling 48 percent of the Kern Water Bank. Between 2000 and





2007, the State of California paid the Resnicks \$30.6 million for water that was originally stored in their water bank as part of a program to protect fish native to the Delta (Burke). Dr. Lytle stated that the Resnicks' farming operations were the last to be developed in the Central Valley, and although they are "last in time, last in right," the State has promised them water that isn't available. Knowing that they are at risk of not receiving their allotted water due to decreased exports from the Delta, the Resnicks are one of the major proponents for a peripheral canal. At Dr. Lytle's urging, I looked to see which agencies and representatives comprised the membership lists of the various task forces and committees advocating a peripheral canal. As he suggested, I found that the majority of the members listed were not representatives of stakeholders in the Delta region; therefore, do they really have the Delta's interests at heart? Representatives of the County disagree with the Task Force's report because they believe it ignores the system of water appropriation and water rights in California, and it doesn't acknowledge local governance or other regionally focused water resource solutions. Finally, the County fears that if a peripheral canal were built, the removal of fresh water inflow would degrade the Delta's water quality and there would no longer be a common interest to protect water quality or to maintain levees.

Water rights in California are complicated and a major source

San Joaquin County's position is that a peripheral canal would irrevocably harm the Delta.

of contention. Between senior and junior water rights holders, there appears to be a "water war" that has been waged in both the Legislature and the court systems. Senior water rights holders are those that were "first in line, first in right" and are given priority over junior holders; therefore, the junior holders are legally last in line for water during drought.

Many of the large agribusinesses in the Central Valley have had their water allotments decreased in drought years, causing them a loss in profits. As a result, the agribusinesses must use their money

and power to influence legislators, judicial officers, and voters to change current law so that their water allotments can be increased. Unfortunately, their goal does not seem to take into consideration the needs of senior rights holders or the environment where the water originates.

In addition to Dr. Lytle, I spoke to Mr. Brandon Nakagawa, Senior Civil Engineer for San Joaquin County's Water Resource Division. Brandon, whom I consider a friend, scoffed at the arguments the Task Force used to justify its recommendations. He wanted me to recognize the recommendations as "scare tactics." Brandon's arguments against a peripheral canal made sense on a basic level, especially when he pointed out that some of the Delta levees have existed for over 100 years and have never failed due to an earthquake. While levee failure due to an earthquake is a possibility, wouldn't a seismic event of that magnitude also affect a cement canal running through

our state? The most troubling aspect to me was that in the event of a levee failure and subsequent saltwater intrusion of the Delta water supply, those of us who rely on Delta water would suffer as there is no provision for us to be able to access and divert clean water from a peripheral canal. In addition, the State as a whole would no longer be invested and committed

to ensuring the levees are adequately maintained or repaired.

Both Dr. Lytle and Brandon explained to me that the water in the Delta is supposed to drain out toward the San Francisco Bay; however, the pumps used for exporting actually cause the water in the Delta to flow backwards. Due to this anomaly, salt loads and urban wastewater from the Central Valley are being re-circulated through the Delta system instead of being discharged out to the Pacific Ocean. Peripheral canal supporters insist that bypassing the Delta would eliminate use of the pumps, thereby restoring the natural water flow in the Delta channels. Opponents counter that diverting a large volume of the highest quality water before it enters the Delta would deprive it of the ability to dilute storm water discharges and repel saltwater intrusion from the Bay.

In November 2009, Governor Schwarzenegger called for a special session of the legislature in order to pass the 2009 Comprehensive Water Package. The package consisted of four policy bills that included creation

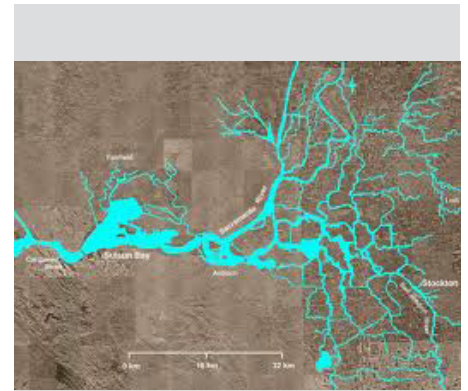
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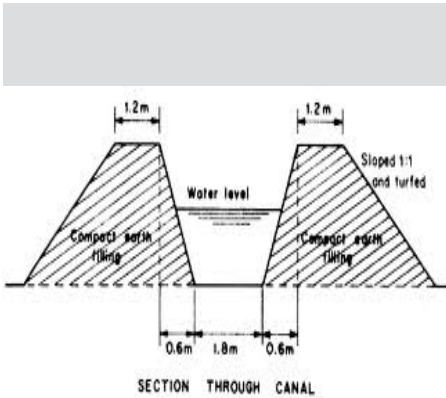
of a Delta Stewardship Council. The Delta Stewardship Council is tasked with creating a Delta Plan that will guide state and local actions in the Delta, making determinations on whether a state or local agency's project is consistent with the Delta Plan, and acting as the appellate body if a claim is made that a project is inconsistent. Critics believe that

the creation of a Council without representation of Delta communities—along with authority to be judge, jury, and executioner—clears a path for building a peripheral canal without requiring

that the people of California approve the project. If this is true, the only say we will have in the construction is whether or not we will approve funding for it. The first opportunity to make our wishes known will occur with our vote in the 2012 General Election.

As a result of my research, I find that I am adamantly against the construction of a peripheral canal. After reading numerous claims and opinions, and taking into consideration the enormous construction expense proposed during a time of unprecedented fiscal deficiencies, I have concluded that a peripheral canal is not in the best interests of the Delta and those dependent upon it. I have learned that there is just not enough water in dry years to support the current export levels and supply the Delta. In addition, the original concept of the State Water Project included additional water storage projects that were never completed, and this failure has directly contributed to the





current water shortage. Several suggestions being made by San Joaquin County officials and others should be evaluated and implemented before we resort to allowing our Delta to collapse. I just don't see how building a large concrete structure, estimated to be as wide as a 100-lane freeway, would be environmentally friendly. I just don't see how building a peripheral canal—large enough for an oil tanker to travel down the center of our state—would be necessary. I hope that the voters of California really look at the consequences and join me in voting “NO” on any and all bond measures or ballot initiatives that support building the Peripheral Canal.

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THE TENTH MUSE

by Maximilano Canales

One of the worst punishments one may have to endure in life is to be unable to quench the constant thirst for knowledge and to find the desire to do so to be forbidden in the eyes of society. This is what Juana de Asbaje y Ramirez had to face throughout her life. She was born in the town of San Miguel de Nepantla and lived from 1648 to 1695. While she is better known as Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz, in the literary world she is referred to as “The Tenth Muse.” She lived in the Colonial Period in Mexico (1492-c.1800), a time when women weren’t allowed to pursue an education or to be considered independent thinkers.

In Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz, Gerard Flynn points out her desire, thirst, and her calling to God at a young age: “She had learned to read when she was three years old . . . when she was eight years old she wrote a dramatic poem to the Eucharist” (14). Because of Sor Juana’s astonishing skills, her mother sent her twelve-year-old daughter to Mexico City with her uncles. As a result of her intellectual ability, the viceregals took her under their protection when she was sixteen. In A Sor Juana Anthology, Alan S. Trueblood writes that Sor Juana, at the age of twenty, “entered the Convent of Santa Paula of the Hieronymite order, where she was to remain cloistered the rest of her life” (5) in order to seclude herself from the distracting and conflictive life of the viceregal court. Trueblood explains that Sor Juana opted for this path because she was

an “exceptional woman who had the temerity to value cultivation of her mind above all else, including marriage” (5). She wrote an extensive array of lyric poetry, some “centering on her connections with the viceregal court, love poetry, poetry marked personal in tone rooted in her

Because of Sor Juana’s astonishing skills, her mother sent her twelve-year-old daughter to Mexico City.

individual situation, light verse, [and] religious lyrics”(viii). When I was in the third grade, I read “You Men” by Sor Juana. At the time, I did not know much about her. Because of the sophisticated language and complexity of the poem, I wasn’t able to understand it. In college, I came across one of its translations and the seed of curiosity germinated in me. I didn’t choose to write about her because she is Mexican as I am, but for other reasons. First, I admire the timelessness of her thoughts as presented in the poem “You Men.” Second, I think highly of her because of the bravery and determination she constantly demonstrated by sharing her perspectives in a society where intelligent and capable women like her were considered unacceptable. Third, I identify with the constant suffering she went through in order to obtain an education; she was a woman living in a society controlled by men, and I am an immigrant caught in the very long process of becoming a U.S. resident. We have each been kept from living up to our full potential.

individual situation, light verse, [and] religious lyrics”(viii).

When I was in the third grade, I read “You Men” by Sor Juana. At the time, I did not know much about her. Because of the sophisticated



Maximiliano Canales will be 21 on July 6. He came to this country in 2005, looking for a better future for his family. Knowing no English, he entered high school and worked hard everyday to become a better person and to pursue a future career to help his family back in Mexico. He says the following: “Ever since my mother’s assassination, my life changed and my way of seeing life changed with it. My mother was working for a political party back in Mexico. Because of her beliefs and relationships she was killed. Since that time, I always keep in mind to help other people when they need it and care more about the people around me. I think education is one of the most important things in life. I always keep in mind what my grandfather once told me, ‘If you are going to do something, do your best, if not, do not even bother.’”

Maximiliano would also like to thank Paula Sheil and Jerry Morgan for helping him improve his writing skills. Without their help, he believes he would not have been able to make it this far.





Because of the unfairness in how knowledge was imparted, and the diminished value women were assigned, Sor Juana wrote “You Men.” In this poem, she criticizes the Machismo of the society of her time and makes fun of the hypocrisy of men who condemn prostitutes but use their services. She calls men “silly” for blaming womankind for the faults men are responsible for. Sor Juana uses antithesis to make note of the faults men assign to women’s behavior. After winning their trust and breaking their good name, “[men] still expect [women] to behave— / [they,] that coaxed her into shame” (lines 7-8). Men

expect women to be pure, but lure them into sin. They hold womankind responsible because it is “weak” when actually men’s persistency is to blame. Because of this, Sor Juana compares man to a child who “makes a bogeyman, / and then recoils in fear and cries” (lines 15-16). In another example of antithesis, Sor Juana alludes to Thais, a famous prostitute of her time, and Lucretia, an honest and virtuous woman. She says that men pursue Thais when they are courting, but want a “Lucretia once [they] fall [for them]” (line 20). She states that men lack common sense for not accepting responsibility for their actions: “[they] cloud the mirror, / then complain that it’s not clear?” (lines 23-24). Sor Juana expresses how men destroy women’s purity and virtue when they make women sin.

Then she declares that nothing can satisfy men. “They whimper if [woman] turned away / [they] sneer

if [woman] gratified [them]” (line 27-28). The one who takes care of her honor is “ungrateful” while the one who succumbs is called “lewd.” In the end, no woman can be seen in a positive way with such expectations; one is accused of cruelty and the other of looseness. “Who can understand man?” Sor Juana may think. If a woman returns a man’s compliment, he disapproves of her, but if denied, he gets offended.

Consequently, Sor Juana sees it as a blessing from God for a woman not to need a man. “God bless the woman who won’t have you, / no matter how loud you complain” (lines 43-44).



Sor Juana speculates on

who has the greatest guilt by using wordplay: “with the man who pleads out of baseness / or the woman debased by his plea?” (lines 51-52). Or who is more to blame, “the woman who sins for money / or the man who pays money to sin?” (lines 55-56). In her time, this was a bold question to ask society, since men ruled the church and society. She advises men to “either like them for what [they’ve] made them, / or make of them what [they] can like” (lines 59-60). If a man makes a woman sin, then he has to stay with her; but if a man wants a virtuous woman, then he should keep her that way until they get married.

Sor Juana writes that men are like spoiled children who are quick to judge and who don’t know what they want. She wonders about the kind of women men want. If they are easy, they are called ladies of pleasure, and if not, they are accused of cruelty



or lesbianism. Sor Juana compares men's arrogance to a mixture of the world, the flesh, and the devil, the worst enemies of the soul.

In the foreword of the book A Sor Juana

Anthology, Octavio Paz comments that Sor Juana's "lot as a woman writer punished by haughty opinionated clerics reminds us of the fate that has befallen independent intellectuals of our own century in societies

ruled by intolerant bureaucracies" (viii). Because of the timelessness of her thoughts, determination, and bravery and the fact that I identify with her in the battle to live up to one's full potential, I declare myself one of her admirers. I have become an admirer of "The Tenth Muse." Her mastery of poetry allowed her to discuss issues such as machismo and sexism, which are still prevalent in today's society. Even after three hundred years, we still retain some of these ideologies in some parts of the world. Through the use of antithesis,



metaphor, and wordplay, Sor Juana conveys her view of society in her time. Sor Juana was strong enough to fight a constant battle against the macho society for several years. But in the end, she couldn't fight any

more and had to sign in blood a clerical contract. In this contract, she agreed to renounce her pursuit of education. Three years later, she died administering aid to her fellow sisters affected by the plague.

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Sor Juana writes that men are like spoiled children who are quick to judge and who don't know what they want.



Evangelina Lomas attended Merrill F. West High School in Tracy and was a cheerleader all of her four years. She is looking forward to her second year at Delta College. Her goal is to become a registered nurse with a focus on labor and delivery. She also has a strong passion for cooking. She enjoys reading books and listening to music but writing essays and poetry has always been her strong point.



What's So Beautiful about It?

by Evangelina Lomas

"Evangelina?" my English teacher called while taking roll. "Here," I replied as I raised my hand. Automatically, my classmates' heads turned and looked at the girl with the long, unusual name. The person I was sitting next to turned towards me and asked, "What's your name?" "Evangelina," I said, but by his confused facial expression I could see that he still didn't understand, so I quickly added, "But I go by Eva." Throughout elementary, middle school, and high school, Eva was the name I went by.

But as I grew older, I began to dislike my nickname simply because Eva wasn't my name. And I felt as if I had taken on the identity of someone with another name.

The name Evangelina comes from the word "Evangelio," which means "Old and New Testaments" from the Bible. In English, Evangelina means "good news," which relates back to the Bible and the testaments. I was named after my great aunt, who also went by Eva. In Spanish my name has an accent to it as

if there were an H and a K in it because in Spanish the G is pronounced as an H. When I first began to tell people my name, I pronounced it the Spanish way, but the reaction I received made me resort to saying my name in English.

So I'd try to educate them about how the G in my name is pronounced as an H, but that made them even more confused.

Everyone would say the same thing: "But there's no H or K in your name." So I'd try to educate them about how the G in my name is pronounced as an H, but that made them even more confused. To make the situation worse I have five syllables

and ten letters in my name. I felt as if my name gave me a disadvantage in school because while all the other kids had normal and simple names that flowed nicely when they were said, I was stuck with the name Evangelina.

Whenever one of my teachers made us do group work, I knew that my name would be the topic for a while. So when the person who was writing down all the names on the top of the paper always asked, "What's your name?" I'd tell him, but after a whole lot of "Huh?" and "What?" I'd just take

the paper and write it down myself. My name also gave me a disadvantage on math tests. Every Friday my teacher would give us 60 seconds to answer as many math equations as we could. Since it was a race against time, all the kids in my class were ready and set, prepared for the finish line. Then BANG! The buzzer went off and away the kids went. Of course, with my ten-letter name, I was still at the top of my paper while the other kids were already done with half the problems because their names weren't as long. I would go home and complain to my mom about how long my name was and every time she'd say, "Why? You have such a beautiful name." I would think to myself, "What's so beautiful about it? None of my classmates can pronounce it correctly." I found myself in a tough situation, at odds with my very own name.

When I was in high school, things began to change for me and my name. Maybe it had to do with my self-esteem and improved confidence, but suddenly my name appeared to be beautiful to me. When I was in elementary and middle school, I went by the name Eva, which is the first three letters in my full name Evangelina, but in high school the nickname Eva really got on my bad side. Everyone at my school had the typical names, such as Brittney, Sarah, Kayla, Alex, and Kate, and I didn't want just a typical name. My close friends called

I felt as if I had lost my sense of independence when I was going by the name Eva.

me Evangelina—a rare and beautiful name. I felt as if I had lost my sense of independence when I was going by the name Eva. I would rather have a unique name with a powerful and meaningful past to it. I think that in my younger years I was uncomfortable with myself, and all I wanted was to fit in with everyone else. But in high school I matured and found myself in a large group of students. I realized that I would rather stick out than blend in with everyone else.

I have accepted myself as well as my name. When I was younger, I didn't appreciate my Spanish culture and background, but when I matured I realized that my background was what made me who I am. Knowing that my name Evangelina means "good news," which relates to the Old and New Testaments, I can take my culture and religion seriously. My middle name is Rosario, which is "rosary" in English, so that also has a religious sense to it. It's amazing how all you have to do to accept yourself is to simply look at your name and understand its background. I can proudly say that my name is beautiful and that it makes me who I am today. So go ahead and ask me about my name and all the letters and syllables in it, because I'll speak loudly and clearly about what's so beautiful about the name Evangelina.

