



# THE SCRIBLERIAN

Fall 2008 Edition

Sponsored by the English Department and the Braithwaite Writing Center, the *Scriblerian* is a publication for students by students. Revived during Fall Semester 2004 after a two-year hiatus, this on-line journal is the result of an essay competition organized by Writing Center tutors for ENGL 1010 and 2010 students. The Fall 2008 Contest was planned and supervised by Chair Samantha Gay with the help of Annalee Banks, Lauren Coleman, Adell DeGraffenried, Landon Mitchell, and Amanda Utzman.

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## Argumentative- English 1010

1st Place Winner: Austin Twitchell, "Band Jocks"  
For Dr. Robin Calland

Why do many individuals stereotype people of the musical persuasion as being square and nerdy? Most people's idea of a geek is someone who has no life besides his or her school work or video games; or, in the band geek's area, practicing his or her clarinet. If a group of football players walked down the halls of a high school and happened to pass the band room, they would automatically think that the room was full of greasy nerds. Most wouldn't even pause to listen to the beautiful music being put together or the catchy rhythms pulsing through the halls. I took four years of band at Cedar City High School, and there are many things that prove the contrary to these common beliefs. Many people believe that students who participate in band are nerds, but this is not true; most band students are well-rounded people because they are involved in sports, clubs, are good individuals, and consistently seem to get good grades.

Many band students that I had the privilege of playing with are involved in sports or clubs. We had an incredible cross country team all four years that I attended Cedar High. We took state several years in a row, and usually showed up many of the much bigger 5A schools. But every time a cross country meet coincided with a day we had band, it was incredibly obvious. About half the band was on the team, and many of them were important runners who helped bring home the region and state trophies. Needless to say, when we showed up for band on the days of cross country meets, we couldn't get much done because we would be missing entire sections of the band. It was like being in a nightmare where we showed up to school forgetting that it was a school-excused holiday. We would go through a normal rehearsal, get to a certain place in a piece of music (and many times more than one place), and there would be an awkward silence where a whole missing section would normally play.

Although many people in band were involved with cross country, there were still others who held key roles in other sports teams. I, along with four or five other band students, played football all four years in high school. Most of the band players who also played football started on the varsity team. I started as a junior and a senior on the varsity team as left tackle on the offensive line, and we had winning records and won region trophies both years. Not too bad for a bunch of band geeks! There were also many others who participated in other sports and clubs. More than a handful of band members played multiple sports while juggling homework and practicing their instruments. There were many who enjoyed being in German, French, Athena, and many other clubs on top of all this and also did lots of service for the community. There were tons of activities that went along with each club and meetings almost every week for most, so those involved were pretty busy. Band students don't sacrifice their athletic ability or their ability to help others when they play a musical instrument.

Just because most kids who are musically inclined seem to get good grades doesn't make them geeks. One of the sad things that seem to be prevalent in some public schools is that if a student gets good grades, he or she is thought of as a nerd and must not have a life outside of school. This generalization and discrimination is one of the reasons why band kids often receive the "geek" label. I have noticed that the majority of students who are attracted to band and enjoy it get above average grades in their other classes. Band seems to create a sort of discipline that is useful in other academics, or maybe the

stimulation one's brain gets from making music somehow primes the creator for other learning throughout the day. There are, of course, exceptions to this. There are always a few who earn an 'F' and don't get to go on the band trips, but usually these few don't enjoy band and don't participate anyway.

Band also seems to attract good kids. Individuals who would rather be out smoking cigarettes or partying aren't interested in paying to rent an instrument and practice every day. So even though band students seem to get better than average grades, it doesn't mean that they don't have anything better to do. Band just seems to attract and produce good students and helps them become skilled and more open-minded to other things.

There were tons of band students who created furniture in Woodshop, made cups and bowls that actually didn't leak in Ceramics, produced masterpieces in Art, and cooked tasty treats in Foods; these facts contribute further to how well-rounded band students are. Many also participated in the associated clubs (like ceramics club or art guild) and helped organize and plan the trips and activities. In addition, a good portion of the students in my symphonic band class took more than one AP or concurrent enrollment class in math, chemistry, history, and others. We didn't do what most people expect of band geeks; we didn't just practice our instruments all day and hang out in the band room during all our free time. We had very busy lives for high school students and we found time to fit most everything that we needed to into our busy schedules. In addition to all this, my fellow students found time to shut down another idea that most people get when they picture the average socially-challenged band student: the idea that they don't care about their appearances or have any social skills. Although there were a few exceptions, as there always are, the vast majority of Cedar High's band were clean, good-looking kids who had good hygiene and cared about their appearances. In fact, we happened to have several student body officers and representatives each year in my symphonic band class. And it takes some social skills and ability to be liked by others to achieve those positions. With all of these examples of versatility and activeness, it is easy to see that, in general, us "band geeks" are indeed very well-rounded and exceptional people.

In conclusion, we band students do not fit into the category of "geek" as many people label us. We are not socially or athletically deficient. One only has to look past this stereotype at the reality of the matter to see for him or herself. Band students are stellar people and are involved in a variety of activities that give them much of the experience that they need to be good, well-rounded individuals and to be successful in their future lives.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner: Jena Tisdale, "Ideal Person for a Concert"

For Dr. Bryce Christensen

Who is the ideal concert attendee? After a concert people usually converse about the band and other people that attended the show. At a typical rock concert there are many screaming young girls who have no clue who the band even is and boys who just want to be part of a scene. As a long time concert attendee, I have a rising concern about what qualities the ideal concert attendee should have. These girls and boys trying to follow a scene are not the ideal people for a concert. They are obviously following a trend. The perfect concert attendees show their true passion for music by using their knowledge, common sense, preparation, toughness, and respect to make every concert memorable.

The first key to being a successful concert attendee is becoming prepared. Preparation for a concert starts months before the date of the show. My mother is constantly checking band websites for tour updates. She has an edge on everyone else who waits for the box office to announce ticket sales. Bands frequently post discount tickets, presale tickets, and even backstage passes on their web pages. But, if the band doesn't have any of this exceptional information available, it is important to check what information local venues and box offices bear. Ordering the tickets in advance or as soon as possible guarantees the ideal concert attendee a seat at the show when the excitement begins and memories are made.

Another valuable aspect of the ideal concert attendee is his or her knowledge of the venue. The faultless concert attendee will probably know the layout of the venue like the back of his or her hand. This way he or she will know where the supreme spot is in the front, but if it is a venue he or she has never been before, it is a good idea to do everything feasible to find out as much as possible about the place before he or she arrives. This past summer my mother ordered presale tickets for a concert called "Rock on the Range." This show happened to be the largest rock concert in the U.S. this year. "Rock on the Range" was located in the Columbus Crew Stadium because it consists of several stages and was far too enormous for any concert venue. To become well prepared for the show, my mother looked up the floor plan for the Columbus Crew Stadium. She discovered where to park, where the bathrooms were located, and where she would be able to see all the stages before she stepped foot into the stadium. This way no time was wasted and none of the concert and excitement was missed trying to find these locations.

Likewise, the ideal concert attendee knows how the concert is set up. Most concerts have only three or four bands on the tour and begin around dark, but there are a few exceptions. Typical large tours, such as the "Warped Tour," have around seventy bands on the tour, and, on average, seven stages, which means it is an all day event. Therefore, the ideal concert attendee must do his or her homework and find out which stage the bands he or she want to see are performing on, and at what time they will be playing. Scheduling what band one wants to see allows one to avoid aimlessly wandering around and missing the bands that were the reason for purchasing a ticket. No one remembers pointlessly wondering, and the best way to prevent this and make a rock concert memorable is to check the set up of the concert.

Preparing for the show doesn't stop the day of the concert either. The ideal concert attendee must be well hydrated before even arriving at the venue. For the ideal concert attendee knowing how to dress is

just as imperative to preparation as being hydrated. Depending on what type of music the concert consists of, will help the ideal concert attendee decide what to wear. Harder music requires a darker attire, whereas lighter rock requires a more colorful and playful attire. Tina, my friend and long-time concert buddy, is a great example for how to dress. When we went to a heavier rock concert, such as Killswitch Engage, she wore black jeans and a black band t-shirt. Her make-up was composed of heavy black eyeliner, and blood red lipstick. Upon going to an Academy Is... concert, on the other hand, she sported jean shorts, a studded star belt, and a brightly colored striped tank top, while her make-up was lighter, colorful, and glittery. One thing the ideal concert attendee can't stand is others at concerts that are inappropriately dressed. Flip flops, skirts, and shirts without straps are the ultimate concert dress code violations. Rock concerts tend to include physical contact and jumping to the music. People who wear flip flops tend to get hurt when others step on their feet. Tube tops can get pulled down, and skirts can get pulled up. No one can enjoy a concert having to worry about his or her clothes the entire show. Along with knowing how to dress for a concert comes knowing what to bring to the show. Bags and purses are not necessary. The ideal concert attendee only brings what he or she can fit into his or her pockets. This person also brings a quality camera to document the memories he or she creates at the show.

Once the ideal concert attendee has arrived early at the venue, he or she will find exactly where to park to exit without the hassle of traffic. Early arrival is imperative to getting a good position close to the stage at a general admission show. The first place the ideal concert attendee will go is the bathroom. There are two reasons for this: one, so he or she doesn't have to leave the front of the crowd once the show begins, and two, because they will have first dibs on the posters and stickers that may be placed on the bathroom walls, which can be kept for memory's sake. The most important part of going to a concert is knowing never go alone, especially for women. Concerts aren't the safest place for women. Venues have a tendency to be in dreadful parts of the neighborhood, and are usually held after dark. Besides a safety issue, the ideal concert attendee knows not to attend a show without another person because he or she needs someone to share the excitement with. Taking a friend to a concert is a superior way to connect through the music. These connections can lead to unforgettable memories.

The ideal concert attendee being able to hold his or her ground is essential to concert attending. Frequently at rock concerts, there are mosh pits and crowd surfing. Moshing is where audience members of a live performance create a ring where they aggressively push, slam, punch and kick one another. Crowd surfing is where people are passed over the heads of the crowd, like "surfing" over the crowd. It is extremely important for the model concert attendee to be alert and warn others when a crowd surfer is coming. Also, the ideal concert attendee keeps his or hands around his or her chest. This position prevents his or her hands from getting trapped down by the hips. He or she must be capable of raising his or her hands for crowd surfers, taking pictures, and maintaining the space between them and the person in front of them, so he or she has room to breathe. Toughness is the answer for enjoying a show. It is highly likely that one will be kicked or punched during a concert. The ideal concert attendee will embrace the pain along with the enjoyment of the music. I myself have been intentionally punched in the face at Bury Your Dead, and unintentionally kicked in the face while at The Taste of Chaos. Of course these incidences hurt, but brought a heightened sense of awareness, enthusiasm, and exhilaration to the concert. It makes each particular concert that much more memorable.

Once more, comprehension can influence one's experience at a concert. Ideal concert attendees know to make eye contact with members of the band. This may result in them recognizing you at another

show in the future, or a member of the band may try to throw you a drumstick or guitar pick after the band's set is finished. Even though this may seem like the highlight of the night for an ideal concert attendee, there is more to it. The best part of the ideal concert attendee's night will be when he or she relaxes, sings, and dances freely with the music. The connections between the model concert attendee and the person that came with them make the concert what it was. Songs performed at a show and songs one hears from a CD eventually begin to blend together after going to concerts frequently. The connections make each show, or each song for that matter, distinct from the rest. Memories from that show will be stimulated every time the song is played.

Coupled with the knowledge and preparation is respect. The ideal concert attendee shows appreciation. Applauding after each song is one way of showing appreciation, but the ideal concert attendee does more. If the band performed well, he or she will invest in the band's merchandise, at the merchandise booth towards the back of the venue. The support the ideal concert attendee does more. If the band performed well, he or she will invest in the band's merchandise at the merchandise booth towards the back of the venue. The support the ideal concert attendee gives ensures that the band will be successful and tour again. Brooke, a long-time fellow concert attendee, always buys merchandise from concerts, especially from the smaller warm-up bands, such as Lola Ray, to help them get a good start in their tour careers.

Once the concert is over, the ideal concert attendee knows where the band's buses are parked, and heads in that direction. After every Aiden concert at Bogart's, Tina and I run to the back of the building where Aiden's tour bus is parked. We show our appreciation by telling them how much we enjoyed their show and can't wait until they come back to perform in Cincinnati again. One specific time, Tina made a shirt with lyrics to one of their songs on it and gave it to the lead singer. The next time we saw them perform a few months later, he still had the shirt and remembers Tina.

Accordingly, before leaving the parking lot of the concert venue, it is essential to check under the tires of the car. Nothing is worse than getting a flat from an empty beer bottle late at night on the way home from a concert. This incident can lead to a nightmare instead of the astonishing memories that one should take away from a rock concert.

All in all, finding an ideal concert attendee is difficult. In fact, I haven't come across one yet, but I aspire to be the ideal concert attendee. With these fundamentals of the game in mind every time I go to a show, I'm hoping that others at the concert are becoming closer to the ideal concert attendee as well. I invite anyone who wants to go to a concert to consider these qualities before going to a concert. In the future, this will ensure that everyone enjoys and creates priceless memories at a concert.

## Expressive- English 1010

1<sup>st</sup> Place Winner: Walter Gould, "Paddle Faster! I Hear Banjos!"

For Dr. Bryce Christensen

"Welcome to the Snake River! My name is Walter, and I'll be your guide for the day. We'll be traveling eight miles today, but before we get too much further down the river, there are a few things that we need to talk about."

I pause in my introduction for a moment in order to be sure that I have my crew's attention. They turn to face me, wearing their matching life jackets and faithfully holding their paddles in hand. They are a typical group of summer guests: a few families with a couple of kids each, a handful of college-aged girls, and some slightly inebriated businessmen from a conference that's being held at a hotel in town. All together, they fill the boat to capacity.

There is an almost palpable mix of excitement and anxious anticipation on board. Once the parents have ushered their children's attention toward where I'm standing in the back of the raft, I continue my safety briefing:

"If you fall into the water, you should grab your paddle, and then float on your back with your feet pointed downstream. This way, you can see any obstacles down river, and if you can't swim around one, you can use your legs to push off of it. I hope everyone is already aware that their feet make much better shock absorbers than their heads."

There is a nervous titter of laughter, and a few hands shoot up. I nod toward the nearest hand, already knowing what's coming. A younger mother of two asks, "Um, I'm sorry. Could you remind me of your name again?"

"My name is Walter," I say. "And I am your fearless leader."

She smiles and asks, "Well, Walter, how often do people fall out of the raft?"

I return her smile and assure her that while it's fairly frequent for guests to fall overboard in the bigger rapids toward the end of this section of river. We will all arrive at the boat ramp safely as long as everyone listens carefully to my instructions. I hurry through the rest of my safety introduction, covering self rescue, throw bags, and how to haul people back into the raft. After a brief lesson on river commands and paddling technique, I make sure to get everyone's attention one last time.

"I need for y'all to listen up for me again, please." I say, raising my voice above the sound of the river. My crew senses the seriousness in my tone and most of them turn and face me attentively. The group of businessmen riding up front continues to joke with each other and ignores me. My tone is more forceful as I address them again. After all, what I have to say could save their lives.

"Hey guys! I'm being serious. This is really important. I need your attention back here."

They turn my way, and shoot me a look of annoyance before putting their conversation on hold.



“I know that some of you may feel safe about swimming in the river, but I need for you to understand that there are certain hazards out here that are dangerous and make rescue nearly impossible. Unless it can't be avoided, I'm going to ask that you remain in the boat until you have let me know that you're planning on taking a swim. There are a few places on this section of river that are not safe for swimmers, so I may ask for you to wait a few minutes before jumping in. Plus, I'd rather not get in trouble for not coming back with all of the life jackets and paddles.”

My last remark seems to lighten the mood, but I notice an all-too-familiar attitude of dismissal and superiority from one of the passengers up toward the bow. He makes a few comments under his breath to the rest of the men in his group, and they laugh in my direction. I deduce that he must be their boss, and make a mental note to keep an eye on them.

I stress the point about swimming one last time, and then spend the next few minutes joking around with the crew and answering questions. A young woman wearing blue shorts with UCLA written in gold across one leg asks an unfortunately common question:

“Will we end up in the same place we started?”

Raucous laughter erupts from the group of men in the front of the raft, and I decide to pretend that I didn't hear her question in order to spare her further embarrassment in the explanation that rivers do not flow in circles.

I answer a few more questions about the mountains and local wildlife and then begin giving commands to the crew as we prepare to enter the first set of rapids. Once we enter the waves though, most of the people on board are too distracted by the roiling water to even hear my commands, so I am forced to guide the raft through the current with the oars alone- not that I'm caught off guard by this, though, as I am often compelled to steer the raft through these waves by myself. Novices have a way of becoming petrified in their first set of rapids.

As we near the end of the rapid, one of the men from the group in the bow is shoved out of the raft by one of his peers and vanishes beneath the waves momentarily before popping up alongside us, gasping for breath. I scramble to ship the oars and grab the man's life jacket in time to haul him back into the boat. In turn, the guest who knocked him overboard is then thrown into the water by his boss, whose laughter can be heard easily over the sound of the whitewater. Another passenger springs into action and helps me haul the first of the ejected businessmen back over the thwart, and the three of us fall in a heap on the floor of the raft.

“All back!” I yell, calling for my crew to paddle backwards to buy some time while I untangle myself from the pile of people on the bottom of the boat. I free myself as quickly as possible and return to the oars, shouting the command to paddle forward. We race to catch up to the second ejectee, who is being swept unknowingly toward a dangerous river hazard called a hydraulic.

Hydraulics, also known as “holes” are formed when water pours over the top of something submerged – usually an underwater shelf or a large rock – and re-circulates back toward the submerged object, creating a horizontal whirlpool. Holes can be very difficult to escape and are especially dangerous for swimmers.

We are able to snatch up our rogue passenger before he is swallowed up by the hole, and I maneuver the raft to the bank for a momentary stop in some still water for a very stern conversation. I am able to convince the developmentally-arrested men in the front of the boat to save their antics for later in the evening when they are no longer in my care.

The rest of the trip goes surprisingly smoothly, and at the boat ramp I thank my crew for a job well done. After snapping a few pictures with some of the passengers, I bid them all goodbye and jump in a van that's waiting for me at the top of the ramp. My guests board a bus back to Jackson Hole, and I return to the starting ramp to do it all over again. As we meander down the winding road that leads back to the beginning of my next trip, I pray for an entire crew of girls from UCLA.

2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner: Geneil Perkins, "Market Night"  
For Professor Ruth Scovill

*Time – Every Thursday, 7:30pm*

*Place – Redlands, California*

Suddenly the streets come alive with sound, smell, and color. Many people set up their tables with brightly colored table cloths to better call attention to their booth. As the citizens of Redlands walk up and down the street, they can hear the excitement ringing through the air. The young children run around begging their parents for sweets and toys, squealing with delight. The teenagers stand around with their cheap purses and cell phones trying to look smooth and cool. The scantily clad girls giggle at any boy who wears baggy pants. They flip their hair to tempt the boys to come closer so they can exchange numbers and "text."

The young couples stroll up and down holding hands—incapable of keeping their hands to themselves. They whisper things in each other's ears and giggle at whatever was said. The young lady holds up a pair of sunglasses with a smile that says to her man, "What do you think of these?" He gives her a kiss on the cheek and says, "Anything looks good on you. Don't worry about it. Let me get those for you." She smiles and allows him to purchase those sunglasses for her.

The tempting aromas of spiced nuts and fresh pretzels seduce practically everyone that saunters by. Cashews bathed in cinnamon, almonds immersed in sugar, and pretzels soaked in garlic butter—the smells are enough to make any health freak run away with a greenish hue to their face. But to all of the little children, it looks and smells like heaven in a cart.

Each table tries to pawn off something different. There is a stand for flowers; geraniums, daisies, roses, and lilies enough to fill a reception hall. The scents of those flowers float through the air and tickle the nostrils of every person with a refined sense of smell. Another booth sells wind chimes in many different shapes, sizes, colors, each one produces different sounds. Everyone in the area can hear the tinkling from a mile away. Chimes in the shapes of butterflies, a stretching kitten, ballet dancer, and an ocean scene decorate the table in a rainbow of colors. As you walk up the street a little further, you encounter a whole foods booth. They sell yeast, vitamin water, protein shakes, bean sprouts, and other foods. It's under a large canopy so that nothing from the sky can fall into the food and contaminate it.

There is a man standing on the corner with his guitar serenading the crowds of people. His guitar case lies open at his feet and the case begs for money to be put into it to support the man's hobby. The guitarist doesn't usually get much money because his fifth string always sounds sharp—the musical members of the crowd don't appreciate the tainted harmonics.

One of the best activities at market night is sitting down on the curb and watching all of the people. Nothing makes a person realize how different people are until sitting down and watching them with their loved ones or shopping. Everyone looks different and everyone has something special that makes them stand out. One woman had very extravagant eyebrows. Another man walked by with a bushy beard that made him look like Santa Claus. And a young girl walks by with eyes so big, so green, and

eyelashes so long they look like they could eat someone. Each person has different mannerisms, a different walk, hand gestures—the combination is enough to make anyone laugh.

Then, the night is over. It is time for all of the stands to pack up their supplies and go home. The clothes that colored the sides of the road disappear. The hustle and bustle of people thin out and die until nobody is left. The canopies are taken apart and thrown into the backs of vans and trucks. The guitarist on the corner collects the money in his case, puts it in his pocket, packs up his things and leaves for home or another street corner to perform on. The smells disintegrate as the food booths pack up the food in boxes and coolers. Suddenly, the excess food is being sold for a dollar or less so they don't have to take it home with them. The little children are falling asleep on their parents' shoulders and in their strollers. The young couples are yawning and leaning on each other as they return to their cars. The scantily clad teenagers get stopped by the security guards because they aren't accompanied by their parents.

And suddenly, market night is over. In a whirl of color, light, and sound, it's gone. The street is long, dark, and dull—all life sucked out of it. The trees even seem to wilt a little without the lively hustle and bustle of people. The last family walks back to their car, dragging their distraught three-year-old to her car seat. She cries in protest, for she wanted to ride the pony one more time. But don't worry, little girl. Market night, in all of its wonder and glory, will be back again next week.

## Argumentative- English 2010

1<sup>st</sup> Place Winner: Wes Stephenson, "Setting the Stage for Satire in Voltaire's *Candide*"  
For Professor Eric Morrow

Voltaire's *Candide* carries its namesake protagonist across the world to make rendezvous with some of the most notorious events of the 18th century. Candide himself is not dissimilar to the film character of Forrest Gump in the sense that he is a hapless and innocent voyager through times and places of great significance, though Candide, unlike the dim-witted Gump, searches for meaning in the events and people he encounters in his journey. Through Candide's many ports-of-call, Voltaire employs the element of setting as a gateway to provide his satirical narrative enhanced proximity to and increased relevance toward the distorted societal values, self-absorbed and clueless philosophers, hypocritical religious leaders, and oppressive political systems of the Enlightenment Age.

Voltaire chose Westphalia (Germany), famed for its castled landscape and titled nobility, as the setting for Candide's childhood home. In this setting, Voltaire's attacks on the warped values relating to social status are enhanced through the common perception of arrogance on the part of the Barons and Baronesses of that region. The opening explanation of Candide's genealogy is a humorous poke at class consciousness, as Candide's mother chose to have a bastard son rather than to marry the father, a "...good, honest gentleman of the neighborhood, whom that young lady would never marry because he had been able to prove only seventy-one quarterings," of his family tree (1). Though this view is absurd to most societies, these aristocrats-on-the-Rhine were portrayed by Voltaire as preferring bastardy to an insufficiently proven line of nobility. Thus, Voltaire's tour of European societal targets begins at the same place as does Candide's journey through the lands under European control.

Upon his removal from the land of his nativity, Candide encountered the armies of the Bulgarians (Prussians) and the Abares (French) during the Twelve Year War. This setting opened the door for Voltaire's critique on the absurdity of "civilized" warfare as he sarcastically describes the "heroic butchery" endured by the innocents of both countries at the hands of, as Voltaire put it, "Bulgarian heroes" and "Abarian heroes" (5). Misguided societal values that justify, and even honor, dastardly deeds when perpetrated upon the enemy by a society's own soldiers were part of the "laws of war" that Voltaire effectively brought forward for illumination (5). This insane acceptance of barbarism committed in the name of one's own country is shown in all its absurdity when Cunegonde describes to Candide the rape and slashing she endured during that same battle: "...I cried, I struggled, I bit, I scratched, I wanted to tear out the tall Bulgarian's eyes – not knowing that what happened at my father's house was the usual practice of war" (17). How ridiculous it would be for a young lady to find solace in the thought that her rapist was only following accepted customs as he committed his brutality yet, in the eyes of the brute's sponsoring country, only the enemy is unjustified in barbarism.

The earthquake that destroyed Lisbon sets the stage for Voltaire to demonstrate the uselessness of the philosopher's arguments at times when words are no substitute for action. Pangloss, Candide's perennially optimistic teacher, finds the young man badly injured and covered with stones from the earthquake. (Voltaire is believed to have created the name Pangloss, derived from two Greek words meaning all and tongue or "all talk," another sly comment on philosophers). Rather than render physical assistance to Candide, Pangloss merely offers scientific speculation:

“Alas!” said [Candide] to Pangloss, “get me a little wine and oil; I am dying.”

“This concussion of the earth is no new thing,” answered Pangloss. “The city of Lima, in America, experienced the same convulsions last year; the same cause, the same effects; there is certainly a train of sulphur under ground from Lima to Lisbon.”

“Nothing more probable,” said Candide; “but for the love of God a little oil and wine.” (10-11)

The assistance was only provided after Candide fainted away in agony.

In Voltaire’s world among the learned in France, there were many who were anxious to debate the causes of great calamities but very few who were willing to take personal action to relieve the suffering. These were Voltaire’s targets as Pangloss considered the catastrophe in Lisbon in a detached and valueless manner, similar to how Voltaire’s associates treated the very real earthquake of 1755.

France, then, was an appropriate setting for Voltaire’s caricature of the sophisticates who dispensed their philosophies and judgments for their own aggrandizement. Here, Candide listened in on the “great” wits and the critics of France, one of whom, a theater critic, is described by Voltaire as one who “...gains his livelihood by saying evil of all plays and of all books. He hates whatever succeeds, as the eunuchs hate those who enjoy...” (58). The comparison of these social commentators to the emasculated was a harsh slam against those who were Voltaire’s own literary colleagues.

Religious hypocrisy is a recurring theme for Voltaire, and he chose Holland as the setting for a destitute Candide who comes across a “...man who had been haranguing a large assembly for a whole hour on the subject of charity” (6). Holland was center stage for the protestant movement during Voltaire’s day and the hypocrisy shown in the exchange between this man and Candide was a sharp criticism aimed at those religionists. After learning that the needy Candide was undecided in his religious persuasion, the preacher casts the hungry man out of his presence (6). The orator had proclaimed the need for Christian charity only to fail the test to his own virtue when met with a needy man not clearly of the orator’s faith.

Voltaire did not believe that the Protestants owned the market on hypocrisy, and he took advantage of Candide’s journeys to Portugal at the time of the Inquisition to showcase religious opportunism within Catholicism. Voltaire created the character of the Grand Inquisitor to illustrate the duplicity of the religious elite. The Grand Inquisitor lusted after Cunegonde during the celebration of the Holy Mass and then bargained to obtain her as a sex slave. Ironically, the Grand Inquisitor and his cronies also sponsor a traditional pagan rite involving a human sacrifice in an effort to appease God. Voltaire sarcastically explains that they “...gave the people a beautiful auto-de-fe” and “the ladies were served with refreshments between the Mass and the execution” (12). Voltaire’s depiction of piety within the priesthood shows that its substance is primarily pretentiousness.

The described scenes of the idealistic El Dorado served to challenge the political customs of the day. The Church and the State were so intertwined in Europe during the 18th century that offense was easily taken by Voltaire’s description of a people without need for the civic governance of popes or priests:

“We are all priests”, said an old inhabitant of El Dorado.

Candide replied, “What! Have you no monks who teach, who dispute, who govern, who cabal, and who burn people that are not of their opinion?” “We must be mad, indeed, if that were the case,” said the old man. (43)

While the political world of Europe featured strict protocols regarding the treatment of royalty, Voltaire spoke of a king who was familiar to his subjects and who could be greeted with an embrace and a kiss (44-45). The incongruency between the political norms Voltaire created for El Dorado and the status quo within the various kingdoms of Europe brought needed circumspection to long-held traditions and assumptions regarding the relationship between the governors and the governed.

The story of *Candide* is a journey of discovery where, it could be said, the true ports-of-call are the distorted societal values, self-absorbed and clueless philosophers, hypocritical religious leaders, and oppressive political systems of the Enlightenment Age. Voltaire brought his central character to those locations and historical events that begged for rational criticism and thereby gained greater relevance and clarity for his treatise. Voltaire was wise enough to understand that, when it comes to providing valued criticism, timing and setting are everything.

2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner: Corbin Allred, “Dr. Strangelove and that Big Red Button”  
For Professor Eric Morrow

Where filmgoers are concerned, Director Stanley Kubrick leaves nothing to be desired with the release of his 1964 masterpiece *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*. When it comes to satirical genius, never in the history of filmmaking has a director tackled a subject so relevant to the time and so timeless in its relevance. The threat of nuclear war has haunted the minds of Americans ever since the world’s talent to destroy life became more developed than its ability to sustain peace. So how can a film about such serious topics be laugh-out-loud funny? The film *Dr. Strangelove* sets the highest standard for satirical films not only because of its pinpoint-accurate and uncompromised performances, but also because of its powerful and poignant message about humanity’s desire to do right in such a wrong way.

The amazingly diverse and plural performances of the late Peter Sellers are just a few of the delights this film offers viewers. Sellers’ portrayal of Group Captain Lionel Mandrake is spot on. This English military-man character represents the one bright and shining hope for humanity. At one point during this film, Mandrake pleads with the mad General Ripper for the mercy of the world. However, in a satirical spin on the “victory at all costs” mentality, Ripper takes his own life and with that seals the fate of the world. This jab at a military mentality—that it is better to die than be made to look wrong or weak—is yet another dark and subtle undertone that educates as much as it entertains. This example of satire cleverly parallels the unspoken perceptions of the general public in regard to military past and present. During the Cold War terrors of the 1960s, it is clear that the military did represent themselves in this manner, and instead of strengthening the people’s faith in military, the military actually perpetuated the problem of nation-wide paranoia and distrust by attempting to mask their own fear, confusion, chaos, and uncertainty by feigning strength with blind aggression.

In yet another spin, Mandrake’s courageous but ultimately vain attempt to prevent world annihilation is touching in its subtlety, and heart-breaking in its reality. The Mandrake character depicts a level of irony that is chronically existent in a militarily driven government. Namely, those with principles and moral fortitude who should have power have absolutely none and, in the case of *Dr. Strangelove*, are not even American. It is easy to see how this relates to the general public perception of government and military leaders. During times of crisis in recent past and even in the world today, government and military officials have been perceived as unqualified, ignorant, arrogant, and even inept. It truly seems that the wrong man for the job somehow always gets hired. In addition, Kubrick cleverly asserts what has long been the world’s collective opinion of the United States government: though it controls the most powerful country in the world, it is completely lacking in reason and ethics. Similar to what may be real-world negative opinion, not one American character in this film seemed right for his job. The Mandrake character drove these satirical messages home in an amazingly effective way, and this tactfully humorous performance alone keeps the viewers hanging by a thread of hope throughout the entire film. Sadly, the cancer of ignorance had already infested the upper echelons of American government and military, and regardless of the treatment the diagnosis was grave.

Sellers again wows with his sharp and undeniably frustrating portrayal of Merkin Muffley, the inept United States President. Kubrick exercises extreme tact with his image of this character. Too often



filmmakers settle for the cliché one-dimensional portrayal of political leaders as arrogant, ignorant, and power-hungry. However, Kubrick's vision combined with Sellers' talent gives us so much more. The President is depicted as weak. He cannot even control a phone conversation with a drunken and abrasive foreign leader. His passive aggressiveness and inability to dig the country out of its self-made grave strikes a familiar chord with viewers and reveals a real-life public concern. What if the president cracks under pressure? What would that mean for a country in crisis? Kubrick continually emphasizes "worst-case-scenario" plot points and really gets into the minds of viewers with this approach. Kubrick and Sellers show that President Muffley's intentions seem honorable, but his inability to enforce his will while sitting in the highest office of the most powerful country in the world is not only frustrating and embarrassing, but it also jeopardizes the welfare of the world. Kubrick again succeeds with this particular example of satire. Though this character depiction was very humorous, it also makes the valid point that some leaders should not lead, and that even the president, at times, should not or rather cannot preside. Instead of hating this character, viewers are compelled to feel sorry for him and cringe at the introduction of his childlike frailties and utter incapability. How can imperfect human beings be entrusted with the power to protect or destroy the world? Kubrick's statement seems to be that they cannot.

Yet another highlight of this film was the introduction of Dr. Strangelove himself. Again Peter Sellers hits the nail on the head. Though he only appears in the last few minutes of the picture, his impact is brilliant and stirring. We do not see him early on in the film, but his presence becomes evident later as he injects himself into the most important room on earth and is welcomed by the leaders of the free world as a valuable advisor to the crown. The thought of having a nationalized Nazi giving political advice to the highest office in the land is hilariously terrifying and preys on the fears of an already paranoid and suspicious society. This is a perfect example of satirical execution as Kubrick sheds light on an absurd but strangely possible explanation for the shady inner-workings of the American government. Even in real life, it is easy for society to feel like government leaders are guided by some dark force, especially during wartime. Poor decisions by the government and military always seem to far outweigh good decisions, and leadership as a whole falls into question and under mass criticism. This example of satire plays on the sad fact that, at times, the government seems to be governed by evil.

However, Kubrick begs the question of what is worse in leadership—evil or ignorance? George C. Scott is as captivating an actor as has ever graced the screen. He is unapologetic in his portrayal of General Buck Turgidson. Turgidson's "kill them before they kill us" mentality is another direct reference to the instincts some members of society have to mask fear with aggression. Turgidson's endless attempt to persuade the president to strike first and never trust a "Rusky" foreigner pokes fun at the perception liberal citizens have of conservative society. Generally, conservatives are perceived as pro-war, pro-gun, prejudice, bigoted, and paranoid. The Turgidson character plays on these perceptions in a clever and humorous way. In an ingenious twist to this satire, General Turgidson's suspicions that the Russian "spy" was taking pictures of the war room were initially passed off as the ravings of a paranoid and panicked military-man. However, these suspicions proved to be warranted later on in the film as the Russian was revealed to be a spy, and the "top secrets" were suddenly no longer secret. This witty spin shows that even if decisions are rash and paranoia seems extreme and unwarranted, in dire circumstances, some panic and paranoia may be undeniably valid.

Kubrick's message is clear and the end result is the culmination of terrors realized. It is truly a profound film if you are willing to look at the core elements. Satirically, the film is an enormous success. It is truly

funny in its sadness. No other film has more effectively merged the tragedy of human imperfection with the hilarity of human folly. The film *Dr. Strangelove* does set the highest standard for satirical films because of perfect performance, impeccable writing, and an unapologetic and bold message. It shows a picture humanity fighting tooth and nail for peace in an imperfect world. The only problem – we are still fighting. The film also leaves the audience without answer to a very important question. Who is guarding the self-destruct button?

## Expressive- English 2010

1<sup>st</sup> Place Winner: Nicole Spencer, "Intersections"

For Dr. James Aton

In the far southwest corner of Utah, Snow Canyon State Park is nestled at a crossroads of geological features. The sparse vegetation of the Mojave Desert clashes with the relative cool of the Great Basin Desert. Thrusting up Navajo sandstone formations, the Colorado Plateau mixes with these two deserts—creating a unique environment for plants and animals to thrive in. The Great Basin Desert acts as a calming force, among these three geological features, causing this small patch of land to be dryer than most of the Great Basin Desert, yet significantly cooler than the rest of the Mojave terrain. From the south, the Mojave Desert, which claims the lowest elevation and highest temperature, brings a variety of plant species that flourish in this mixed landscape.

One such plant, the blackbush, sports fuzzy white flowers, in the shape of a brush used to clean out baby bottles; these soft blooms are in sharp contrast with the cruel spines that cover the branches of this plant. Beyond their obvious purpose of keeping the plant from being eaten by hungry herbivores, the spines also act as a safe harbor for lizards and other small animals, protecting them from searching foxes. The blackbush is joined by the creosote bush and the narrow leaf yucca plant, both of which have adapted to the low precipitation and hot conditions found in the deserts of Southern Utah. The creosote bush acts as an upbeat character in this harsh landscape when it breaks into flowers with yellow petals. Its fleshy, green leaves appear to be ill-equipped to endure the endless assault of the sun, but on closer inspection, the leaves are incased in a waxy layer that helps the plant retain moisture instead of sacrificing it to the atmosphere.

Next to the four foot creosote bush, the narrow leaf yucca plant seems short and squatty. Its narrow, pale green fronds reach upwards trying to stretch itself as high as possible. Winding around the fronds like serpents, grey plant fibers grow in irregular curling patterns. With the combination of the pointed fronds and the reptilian hairs, the plant seems as though its bite would be venomous.

The exit of the sun and its challenge of heat brings another challenge in the form of nocturnal predators. As the sun lowers and is blocked by the sandstone and volcanic cones, a gila monster slips from its hidden burrow and begins to search for eggs to steal. At times, the gila monster must persuade parents to surrender their young, but a bite from this venomous lizard quickly ends all discussion. Most animals do not have to experience this however since the orange and black beaded scales of the gila monster act as a warning. The gila monster is joined by a sleek kit fox, whose long body easily winds between unruly bushes and leaps skillfully over small rocky chasms. The fox isn't picky about its food selections and will willingly eat anything from rabbits to plant life. Tonight, however, it seems that it will not have to find a palatable plant as it has just picked up the scent of a desert cottontail near the entrance to its burrow.

The kit fox crouches in the scrubby brush, resembling a house cat with larger than normal ears, as it stares fixedly on the small light colored rabbit ahead. The fox moves forward and suddenly launches itself in the direction of the cottontail like an Olympic sprinter. The cottontail becomes aware of its stalker and narrowly manages to twist out of the fox's snapping jaws as it begins its zigzagged pattern

toward the safety of its burrow. The fox, realizing it has missed its opportunity at the rabbit, begins a new search for food.

After their night of hunting, the gila monster and kit fox return to their burrows to hide from the approaching sun and its overpowering rule. As the sun sends burning rays across the sagebrush, sandstone, and lava rocks, the stage of the desert prepares itself for another act. Hikers trek dejectedly across the petrified dunes, the heat rising from the rock assaulting them from all directions. As they approach a tall desert willow, its small, pale green leaves twitch and shake as an array of brown sparrows flee and rise into the air above them. Farther down the rock strewn path, a fleeting flash of brown and white is seen. A cottontail has become aware of their presence and uses its distinct white tail to alert any other cottontails to the possible danger. The hikers cannot help but feel they have been shunned by the inhabitants of the desert who flee at their approach. One inhabitant, however, does not flee; it escapes their notice all together.

Pressed up against the gritty rock face, a leopard lizard blends seamlessly with the sandstone. As it moves away from the rock, the pinkish brown color of its scales changes subtly into a yellow brown that matches the illuminated sand beneath the rock. The ability to alter its coloration and become almost invisible makes it easy for the leopard lizard to ambush its prey of spiders and small rodents. Unfortunately, the movement from the sandstone onto the desert floor places the lizard into the path of a waiting gopher snake.

Gracefully, the gopher snake wraps its long body around the lizard and gradually tightens until the lizard goes limp in its cream and black coils. As the gopher snake begins slowly digesting the latest of its meals, it becomes aware of a bird watching from a few paces away. The gopher snake quickly decides it is in danger and begins to flatten its head, shake the tip of its tail, and make a sharp rattling noise to mimic a desert rattlesnake. This tactic has served the gopher snake well but ironically the bird watching is a roadrunner and has no qualms about digesting a poisonous rattlesnake.

The roadrunner snatches the mimicking gopher snake and trots away with a fourth of the snake still dangling from its beak. Later in the day, after the snake has been digested, the roadrunner dutifully eats its feces in hopes of reabsorbing some lost water. As the roadrunner proceeds through its familiar patch of desert, it passes a desert tortoise determinedly trudging towards a burrow or a cache of water. The tortoise continues on, making an occasional poink as it stops to eat low-growing shrubs. The tortoise matches the land perfectly; its colors blending with the brown reds of the sandstone and the black lava flows. The rough-lined skin shows the wear of the elements and how the tortoise has become in tune with its surroundings in order to survive.

Each plant, reptile, bird and mammal has also had to become in tune with this unique world where the Mojave and Great Basin Deserts intersect with the Colorado Plateau. Only the plants that grow narrow, pale leaves to keep as much moisture as possible do not instantly shrivel from the ceaseless heat. Animals must devise a way to conserve water and energy, either by only emerging at night like the kit fox, or like the roadrunner by re-consuming its food. Only these well adapted species of animals manage to roam here, able to submit to the whims of the sun and still have the drive to search for food.

2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner: Mitchell Millett, "Simple and Unnamed"

For Dr. James Aton

There are many places in this world that hold great beauty and big names. Their trails are well paved by the frequent footsteps, and their images are burned into the minds of thousands. To me, none of these can compare to my favorite place.

I jump onto the four-wheeler and turn the key as the engine shrieks so loudly that it overcomes all the other sounds around me. The golden sun is still high and peering through the clouds, so I am in no rush as I thoughtfully move up the curved road to the simple field behind my house. The tread of my tires move from the hard asphalt to the soft settled dirt of the trail, and my cares begin to fade into the wide-open space around me. I begin to pick up speed on the long dirt road. The dust takes life as it chokes the air behind me, and it buries the past in its thick cloud. I drive through the thick sage brush as the locusts hum their song of welcoming from the stubby cedars that out-line the trail in small, sparse groups. The trees and the shrubbery tighten into thick bunches the deeper I travel. The trail seems to be springing in new life as blades of soft green grass stick out of the light brown dirt. The once obvious trail fades into the natural life around it, and my human mind tells me to turn around.

Just ahead, I see an upward slope of lava rock. Its shiny surface reminds me of black diamonds sticking through the earth with sharp jagged edges. I am up for the challenge they present to me, so I force my four-wheeler up the slope hoping their sharp surface won't cause any harm to my tires. The engine screams even louder as my thumb tightens on the throttle and drowns out the song of the humming locust. When I reach the top of the shimmering black hill, I see that the once-dreamy sky has turned very dark. There are small spaces of light that beam through the dark edges of cloud, creating long angelic cylinders in the valley below. Although there is no trail, I make my way down the slender ridge. Soft green grass seeps through the edges of the sharp lava rock beneath my tires, and I know that this is a truly special place.

I stop all movement when I reach a small pad of dirt at the bottom and let the engine rest. For just a moment, all is silent, and the storm of dust from behind clouds around me like a thick haze. The dust slowly sinks back to the earth and the plain, unnamed meadow stands clear. The wind gently sways across the valley, bending the tall grass back and forth in a synchronized sway. Although the wide open meadow is bursting with the color green, it somehow seems thirsty and dry. The blades of grass, like a multitude of people, are all completely different from each other. Some stand tall, some short, and all are unique in color. Though it is all green at first glance, I see many shades. Just green, but then some yellow and tan sick out, and I see the wide variety of browns, golds, and ambers as they sway alongside their colorful friends. Beautiful yellow and orange sun-flowers stand in the midst of tall grass, holding their heads high to the streaks of sun.

It is still quite warm, but seems subject to change at any moment. The dark clouds shadow the ground and leave only small circles of light where the sun tries to break free from their darkness. I stare at the fighting sky as the sun and the dark clouds seem to be at war. The sun tries to find a break in the clouds' reinforced darkness, but is steeply outnumbered by the rolling evil that will soon overpower it. It knows that it will lose, but the sun fights with all its might to keep its dark enemy from littering the earth below with its wet electricity. The wind joins the side of the clouds and ripples the long grassy meadow like the

cheer of a thirsty crowd. The bright yellow sun-flowers hold great hope for the sun as they look to it whenever it makes a showing. This gives the sun the power to keep fighting. The sun looks for any loose holes so it can see the faces of its peddled friends below. The wind whistles with excitement as the black clouds close in all gaps and the tall grass bounces with thirst. The bright sunflowers bow their heads in sorrow as their friend loses the fight. Almost in slow motion, the first tiny rain drop comes into focus. My head, still looking upward towards the sky, watches the tiny drop of water fall. It splashes on my face making my eyes blink and flutter back open to what seems like can only be a dream around me.

One by one the drops of clear water fall from the sky but are hardly noticeable as they lightly tap the earth around me. The wind whispers its last words and is almost completely absorbed by the falling rain. I listen to it gently fall and feed the thankful grass. The mountains around the valley seem closer than they are as they stand tall in the distance. The green of the meadow fades into the deep blue of the surrounding peaks and brings a splash of color to the dark evening. The mountains stand strong, but their edges are soft and curvy with the blue pines that cover them. Not a single trace of the sun is now seen through the thick rain clouds, but the landscape is lit up by the occasional streak of lighting in the far distance. The rain still falls gently and makes the dark clouds run downward from the sky.

Like a wet, watercolor painting, the clouds run from the sky hiding the tops of the mountain in its thick mist. The lightning begins to strike closer and the boom of the thunder shakes the earth. Yellow, blue and purple lights simultaneously zigzag across the sky, pulsing their fury, seeming to draw their lines closer and closer to where I sit frozen in place on my four-wheeler. The closer they get, the louder and more frightening the thunder becomes and the harder the rain falls in the crowd of tall grass below. Like standing in a shower, I have now become completely wet. Streams of water drip off the tips of my nose and chin.

My wet, black hair sticks to my forehead and the sides of my head. As I had suspected, the cool rain has caused the once moderately warm day to send spasms of shivering electricity up and down my spine. I don't mind the cold as I watch the beautiful light show ripple across the dark sky. The thunder shakes everything around me like the steps of a huge dinosaur closing on its prey. The rain dances across the valley, massaging my shoulders as it rhythmically pounds against me. All of my tensions have disappeared. All of my cares have completely vanished.

As I look around at my unnamed valley I feel at peace with my life and the things going on around me. Nothing seems to matter except for this moment in time. How could anyone be mad, angry, or stressed in such a simple yet magnificent place? Not just any beautiful old place that millions have touched and millions have seen, but a place that is mine. This place, which is untouched by the human hand, has its own story to tell. Many years from now this unnamed place may be altered by the human hand and given a fancy name. To me, it will always be a place to find peace. It will always be my simple unnamed valley.