

AP Literature Pieces

2004-2005

Conflict

by Clay Charles

Time bears witness,
generations peering past,
even Eden endured not without,
forever it has been and will continue...

So often nations fight,
people suffer, leave abashed;
"intelligence" gained can demolish never
this mirror's impenetrable reflection.

Glare into that reflection; materializing there:
Mein Kampf, kamikaze, an iron curtain, cotton plantations,
global mistrust, greed, zealous hate: a cornerstone
of ardent ideals in your likeness.

Strap on gas masks, march with King Jr.,
outlast metal detectors, patience breaks such visions.

Radical Muslims to us: a flaunting Westerner to them.
Into the depths, peer brutal dictators who see only
terrorists.

Both are mirrors,
defining the others' resolve,
reflecting history:
inescapable, as it will always be

Destiny

by Sarah Armstrong

Today is one day
subtracting from the sum.
But some are unable to pay
before their time has come.
Life loans cannot be issued
leaving me lost and numb.

Why do some loose everything
while their friends all thrive?
Who decides the one to sing
while another can only dive
into an empty pool?

No Patch

by Clay Charles

'Sup with performing every day --
'Sup with gossip and scrutiny --
'Sup with little things made big --
It's just the scene, doing its thing.

Cigarettes pass from
hand-to-hand, addicted.
In turn, butts wither --
smoke spreads and is inflicted.

Accumulating, unpredictable like
a hurricane, smoke bellows.
Disease infiltrates minds of
willing smokers, poor fellows.

Deadly toxins blind
group vision, the fix
lasts but awhile. Truth stands in front,
a pillar; they simply puff lies,

and stir the mix.

Application essay

by Clay Charles

Q: First experiences can be defining. Cite a first experience that you have had and explain its impact on you.

I sit with my assigned World War II Veteran. He helplessly sits in his wheelchair, barely able to chew. I help him to eat. The hot sun beats down on the courtyard and the trees' shade offers refuge. I gaze around the lawn to see other innocent sixth graders, my peers, serving their unable veterans of war. Service: a word Webster's Dictionary describes as "an act of helpful activity." The story of true service, which was about to unfold before my eyes, is impossible to sum up with adjectives of any language. Our service is a tiny fraction of the real service these, now feeble, protectors of peace and safety offered a nation who now barely knows them, or what they did.

Who gets to drop the knife?

AN UNOBTRUSIVE THOUGHT

by Hannah Hoke

Cars, like food, encompass different styles, colors, and modifications. Each dish is unique. However, each dish serves the same purpose: to nourish. Today, there are so many types of cars to choose, from sports cars of all brands to minivans, to Hummers. On the highways in most big cities it is almost guaranteed that there will be a new car next to your vehicle, a type not yet widespread, which broadens the selection of new cars on the market, and are recommended to be bought, for safety's sake, every two years.

Everyone must work together to become more conscientious about the effects of too many cars on road. The increasing amount of vehicular traffic has an effect on the environment, on the number of traffic accidents, and on the plethora of careless drivers. Increased traffic is a larger problem as our society grows. As more new drivers enter the road, the amounts of people who talk on cell phones and who drive carelessly merely amplify the situation.

A few statistics are very revealing:

68% of surveyed Americans say they have two or more cars in their household.

47% claim that traffic in their area is all right or bad.

25% indicate they would use a car-sharing service or would rent a car by the hour.

75% say they go everywhere in a car.

93% say that traveling by car is handier than going by public transportation.

83% agree that an effective way to reduce traffic would be car-pooling.

80% of the drivers who drive alone say they are not interested in carpooling.

51% of people who drive alone say carpooling is inconvenient, and 18% of them say they can't find someone to share a ride with.

84% say they drive to work by themselves. With these statistics, it is no wonder that traffic is increasing drastically.

Our sixth grade class trip to the Veteran's Home in Boise, Idaho, changed my world. We had previously met our selected companions via mail. Pictures had been swapped in order to put a face with a name. We had spent whole class periods decorating Valentine's Day cards and Christmas cards to send to 'our' veteran. I was an innocent sixth grader, and thought myself prepared for a day with a war veteran. However, nothing prepared me for the moment we arrived.

I was not told a story of combat that seemed better suited to Hollywood. In fact, I rarely spoke with my assigned veteran. All I needed to do was sit next to him, look around, and see the price paid for freedom. Later a friend and I played revilee and taps for the group. I saw anguish on the vets' faces and remorse for friends lost in their eyes. I had been introduced to the reality of what these outstanding people did for our great country. Only after that day did I fully know why those men and women truly deserve the title, "America's greatest generation. "

Sanctuary

by Hannah Hoke

Flurries fall, weighing down unprotected branches of a lone, strong pine.

Seeking refuge from the single tree,
hiding cold and scared below a sturdy bottom branch,
a solitary, brown squirrel warms his small body against brown earth,

gaining energy to carry on. Hidden in protective, bushy greenery,

a single sparrow cries to its partner,
and takes flight.

A bright light hits floating white powder;
sparkling rain from tall pine roofs
lightly dusts the solemn tree.

Glittering and glinting,
warm, affectionate spotlights
sneak through bows of towering trees
creating liquid;

melting away frozen winter.

The sheltering pine is rewarded by strengthening sun,
ready for another day.

A Modest Proposal

to rid the Teacher's Union of their dead-end jobs.

How will it be possible to decrease traffic and thus save society? I say we increase traffic and reap the rewards of our foresight. "Five cars in every garage!" will be the campaign slogan of future presidents.

My simple solution to this American dilemma will have accelerated benefits if we close all the lanes of each highway except one. Every mile, highway workers could act out an awful accident in which all the passengers in the cars die so that people rubber-neck, drive slowly, and cause accidents themselves. Every once in a while, a few lanes could be opened so that people would move over. A mile or so down the road, all but one lane would be closed again. Because many people will get in accidents trying to watch events on the side of the road, this simple hassle-free plan will lower the population count, slow down dangerous traffic, and allow people to talk on their cell phones.

Besides these obvious benefits, daily work could be brought in the car and could be done during rush hour, which would become reliable. People could plan on the slow, heavy traffic to finish reports, apply makeup, or call friends with whom they've lost touch over the years. Kids could be occupied in the car and off parent's backs while at home, if parents would cancel evening study hours and have all homework done in the car on the way home from school and on the way to school in the morning. It's guaranteed there will be plenty of time to finish it all, plus some time to catch up on recent gossip.

Yet another advantage to the increased traffic would be to improve road conditions. With more people on the road, road repair will be critical. Along with the staged auto accidents, bigger repair and emergency crews will also increase the number of State and Government jobs there are, probably getting homeless people off the streets. The huge number of cars will also make the Middle East very happy, resulting in fewer terrorist attacks and more global stability.

The biggest advantage to this plan, however, that society (especially law enforcement) will appreciate the most, is that drivers will now be able to talk on their cell phones and drive at the same time because stop-and-go traffic is easy to drive in. Plus, with the increased traffic it will be difficult to exceed the speed limit. A speedy driver recently pointed out to me that the dramatic increase of cars on the road actually cuts down on the population, and thus, on traffic, as a result of millions of car accidents each day.

Another unheralded benefit of my plan would be that artists would have new scenery to paint. They could paint the hazy mountains or the cloudy park; these scenes will be

by Clay Charles

Many people may know the current position of my school as far as athletics are concerned. Ever since, well, the beginning of high school, McCall-Donnelly athletics have taken a back seat to everything. The unmatched lack of school spirit is a direct example of the absence of something to find common pride in. For years teachers have been only teachers; community members, parents, and college students have undertaken the obviously unpopular job of McCall-Donnelly High School Ambassador of Competition, otherwise known as, "coach." School board meetings have been called. School board meetings have been called again. Parents, coach-parents, coach-doctors, coach-lawyers, and coach-realtors have pled in front of the teachers, and their Teacher's Union, for a full-time athletic director. After no results and an exhausted community, I have devised a simple yet elegant plan that will fix this catastrophe.

I have collaborated with the competing schools in our league in devising my proposal; surprisingly, they have all dealt with the exact same problem that we face today. Although they all solved their own dilemmas about thirty years ago, they offered quality counsel. This advice, though, made me feel that my school is stuck in colonial times while the competition speeds ahead in hybrid space-age hover-crafts. The sensation obtained while observing schools with a successful athletic program only made me abhor my school's position even more. The good advice that was so fondly offered to me was, unfortunately, insufficient. Their crude ideas like "just hire a full-time athletic director," and "it is just one job to fill," made my task seem even harder. I thought, all these schools' problems must not have been as bad as ours. However, that is beside the point.

I continued to delve into the problem by asking the Teacher's Union for a financial report of my school's budget. They apprehensively denied my request. This made me think of one thing: CONSPIRACY. Extrapolating from the Union's conspicuous nature on the subject and being the 'multiple bullet' theorist that I am, I sniffed out conspiracy immediately. I have sufficient reason to believe that the Teacher's Union is only here to maintain higher salaries for its teachers. My new plan will give everyone what they want, allowing the Teacher's Union to raise their present salaries, while offering the kids a shot at building a school to be proud of.

My plan is to make each and every teacher and faculty member a part-time athletic director while still being a full-time teacher. That way, they can add an athletic

consistent because the cars' exhaust will continue polluting (except maybe on Sundays when each family decides to carpool to church and the sky will become a little clearer). The cost of art supplies will decrease, as artists will only need the cheapest colors like black, white, and grey.

A disturbed road construction engineer suggested another plan: when there became too many cars on the road, two of the lanes could become exit ramps from which the people could not escape. Each exit road would usher drivers straight to the car compactor factory. The people would be told to exit their vehicle, and that car would be smashed to the size of a fast food chicken nugget that they could hold in their hand. But this solution seemed ridiculous to me because it would cut down on overall traffic, causing people not to have time to finish work, kids not to have time to finish homework, citizens not to have time to talk on their phones, and would result in an undesirable increase in population. It would be preposterous to ask that people stop driving and take public transportation or carpool to work. That solution would be absurd.

I must assure everyone that I, presently, will not benefit from this plan because I already am a slow driver, talk on my phone, do my make-up in the car, read the newspaper, and buy the safest, newest car each year to replace the unsafe, previous year's model. I am proposing this plan in the best interest of America, and to benefit those drivers who experience frustrating traffic each day. After all, the ultimate goal would be merely to decrease population and excessive traffic.

Pastoral

by Toby Johnson

You can feed the pigs today, Luther.
Yer old enough now. Carry
their mash in yon bucket
as you seen me done. 'Reckon yer old enough
to shoot a gun too. Practice with Tom's, you can trade him
work
for bullets.
Only don't shoot no birds,
but the jay and the jackdaw.

director's salary on top of their original one. Each staff member would be in charge of his own section of a sport. Scheduling dilemmas would evaporate. Funding would not be a problem. All of a sudden, financial support will arrive from the school board. Parents and kids no longer will have to organize their own fundraisers: no more carwashes, no more selling produce. Participation rates will increase drastically because there will be more opportunities for all kids. School pride will increase and success will go up. In fact, the utopia of sports' exceeding demand for excellent academics would be reached. Kids would live on buses, study on buses, and attend school only for sports. The traditional school year could even be shortened in order to provide longer off-season preparation for our teams, and increased vacation time for overworked teachers. Parents will finally cheer at games instead of furiously yelling, ticket sales will increase, and perhaps new athletic facilities could be constructed from the stuffy, pedantic classrooms. What a bright future for our children!

My close friend and respected colleague perused this proposal and decided that hiring a single athletic director would absolutely be the best thing for the students and the school. He said that perhaps the teachers' salaries would be required to take a cut, but that in the long run, school is for the growth and maturation of the kids. His plan was based on the best interests of the students only! What a joke. I laughed in his face just like I laughed under my breath when the competing schools told me to hire just one athletic director. That just will not work. Never in the history of school have decisions been made simply in the interests of powerless children. Only by offering the real "players" -- the teachers -- a carrot will anything be accomplished. I need the absolute best for my school.

My colleague also pointed out that overall education of students would drop if all the teachers were busy scheduling games and practices. Dropout rates and the members of students ineligible to graduate would increase, he said, because every day would be training for a particular sport. However, I still maintain that his wild, 'single bullet' thinking is simple athletic suicide.

The problem is simple and, therefore, shouldn't even be a problem. One part-time athletic director is counterproductive and a change is desperately needed. Happily, I am a graduating senior this year. I will be _ of the way across the country once school begins in August. I leave my community with a refined and easy way to solve their ancient problem. Now it is up to teachers, parents, and student to unite and engage in the athletic

Application essay

by Clay Charles

Q -- If, for a period of time, you could live the life of any individual (fictional or non-fictional), who would you choose? How does this choice reflect who you are?

I review the brief and mentally prepare for the task at hand. My alias has been placed on the guest list; my false identification claims me for Russia. My name is checked as I enter. The valet parks my car. Inside, the symphony plays while people eat and dance. I spot my target on the balcony above.

Suavely introducing myself, I casually talk about the economy and world affairs. Casually, I interrogate him about his drug operations as if I am conversing about the weather. I sip my stirred martini and laugh inwardly. I absorb vital information from my adversary without his even knowing, like pulling water into a syringe. My brain remains cognizant of everything around me. I note his guards, the nearest exit, and what I'll do if any situations arise. Leaving, I warn my opponent that he has not seen the last of me. I arrogantly walk out with all that I came for. Phase One is complete, but nothing will stop me from completing my objective in the days to come. Nothing.

Many of my personality traits reflect the mystery and focus of James Bond. Like James' associates, no one knows who I truly am. I am perceived as a different person by each of my peers, while the real Clay lies introverted underneath. James' quick thinking and resourcefulness enable me to elude rushers on the football field and to make something out of nothing. My Bondain ability to think and to respond quickly is valuable on the basketball court, where I help my team evade bad conditions. I also use James' gift of maintaining composure in troublesome situations. My mind proceeds at a logical pace in problems with homework, friends, family, and sports. Like Bond, I give my full effort to accomplishing my goals. Nothing is more fun than actually living the incomparable life of Bond. James Bond.

revolution.

Produce

by Hannah Hoke

Today on Holiday,
that seems like yesterday,
an orange mannequin
comes within my radian.

The orb hangs tenderly
on a pine happily.
The tangerine's parable
is not so horrible:

Oranges generate
Fruits that decorate
Life with the ornament
is utter enjoyment.

However curious
the fruit is spurious.
Removing tarnishes
its beauty garnishes.