

Palabras

August 2002



volume 1 issue 1

www.clovis.edu/web2/palabras/index.asp

Palabras publishes original research, essays, fiction, poetry, and art by Clovis Community College students and residents of New Mexico.

Palabras is also an academic journal and accepts submissions from students across the United States who are currently working on undergraduate degrees.

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Palabras

Journal of Exchange

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SUBMISSIONS

Palabras favors an open submissions policy: anyone who would like to submit, may. Please submit work in hard copy format to the editor in **Faculty Office 509**, in e-mail format to **palabrasje@hotmail.com**, or in hard copy format to the **CCC Bookstore**. Please include a phone number or e-mail address so the editor may contact you.

Submissions should be no longer than 5 double-spaced pages, or approximately 1500 words. If documented, then in MLA, APA, or other acceptable format. If you have an essay, paper, or story longer than the specifications mentioned, please contact the editor at **505-769-4906** or at **palabrasje@hotmail.com**, as excerpts may be publishable.

If you have questions, comments, or suggestions, please write to the editor at palabrasje@hotmail.com.

Note from the Editor...

GINA L HOCHHALTER

As editor, I really resist the call to write this note because *Palabras* — a.k.a. "Words" — is not about the editor but about its writers and artists (and its readers). *Palabras* is, to simply say, a space to exchange ideas; it is a forum for expression. It is to give voice to the written worlds we inhabit as readers and thinkers and doodlers and intellectual perusers and creative maeanderers (if this latter can be constituted as a word, well...). It is, in more editor-esque terms, a place to manifest vision.



And yet perhaps my hesitation to begin writing this editor's note stems from the fact that I know how difficult it is to write (and to be heard)... and it is this point which takes me back to the journal's (not a magazine, please) point of origin:

Palabras hopes to always begin itself with **Controversy**, but this wasn't *Palabras*'s original intention. It was, rather, to create a space for undergraduate students and writers (myself included at the time) to publish their research and creative gestures (that much hasn't changed); it was also, in the beginning, intended to compete, on a certain level, with journals whose editors require that their writers hold pretty-much Ph.D.s in order to be heard in the realm of literary academics. My original dream, so to speak, was to get something going that would prove something about knowledge, and something about the educational process and students' dedication to the intrigues and results of that process.

Intensely said, perhaps—and yet I have a feeling...

Palabras has another purpose: to hear voices (hey, all writers do¹) from outside of academics, from the community of Clovis, New Mexico, and the United States. While *Palabras* for the most part honours students here at Clovis Community College, it can't help but put out a call for all writers and artists who know of its existence. This is to say that *Palabras* welcomes work written by children, adults, friends, acquaintances, teachers, employees, colleagues, bosses, and students. It is not limited in scope or discipline; it is not limited because it is hungry for perspectives.

In some respects, perhaps I'm being a bit idealistic; after all, there must be some kind of parameter when putting in one place a slew of varying perspectives from a number of contexts. I mean, how is one form of expression chosen over another, and what are the requirements for a work to be published?

I admit to you freely that there are a few expectations, such as focus and sincerity. But so, too, is required a level of dedication and respect for *the idea* and its effects on readers. Work submitted should consider depth and take responsibility for its brevity. Work submitted might comment on or represent the world, play games with language, compel readers to thought or thoughtful action. Writers or artists and their work, if controversial or eloquently opinionated, must also hope to be reviewed by readers, since *Palabras*'s subtitle is *Journal of Exchange*, which means that those who agree or disagree might respond.

Beyond this, there is time and circumstance: what's hot? if you write current affairs, or what's been going on? if you write about world or community. Yet beyond this, there is only that you wish for a work to be read or viewed.

It is with great honour that *Palabras* has been realized, and so it is with thanks to CCC and *Palabras*'s writers and readers that this first issue has been printed.

¹ Comment made by the Editor's Associate (Raymond, that is). Response: Gen Lawson says it's the Muse speaking instead of starving.

x x x

***Palabras* needs your help.** It is currently under construction and re-construction, and each issue will put out a call for submissions:

- *Pictoglyphs* (a section for artistic renderings—recall those doodles and creative maeanderings?)
- *Poetry*
- *Fiction*
- *Community* articles
- Essays of *Controversy*

LET US PRAY?

ANN PAGE

"God Bless America!" This statement has become commonplace on the nightly news as well as in newspapers. It is plastered on bumpers and billboards. The president has taken to saying it at least once in every speech. It has become the rallying cry of a nation. Even school children are exposed to it as they see a creative arrangement of the phrase made of red, white, and blue cups adorning the fence of a school. Interestingly, that same school cannot lead prayer within its walls or on any of its property. Even during a time when the line between Church and State is continually crossed, the ruling against prayer in school must continue to be followed.

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..." ("Amendments to the Constitution: Article 1," par. 1). The Constitution gives each person the right to worship as he or she chooses. Although this does not necessarily mean that a person has the right to not be exposed to another religion, it does mean no one can be forced to practice a religion he or she does not wish to. "The individual's freedom to choose his own creed is the counterpart of his right to refrain from accepting the creed established by the majority ("Wallace v. Jaffree..." par. 3). An atheist should not be forced to pray to a god he or she does not believe exists just because most people believe in Him, any more than a Buddhist should be forced to "pray" to someone other than Buddha-mind.

Allowing prayer in schools would make social issues more difficult for those students that don't have the same beliefs as the majority. School can be very difficult for children, as they can be made fun of and isolated for something as silly as having big ears or for not wearing the right clothes. Attention drawn to a bigger issue, such as religious beliefs, will be yet another shoe children will feel they have to fit into. "Reciting Christian prayers would imply that other religions are inferior. Non-Christians might become marginalized and ridiculed by the majority of fellow students" (Robinson par. 5). Ridicule for religious beliefs could even cause some students to practice another religion or alter their beliefs in order to fit in better and avoid further abuse from peers.

Students may feel obligated to recite prayers that go against their religious beliefs just because everyone else is reciting them. Anyone who is a terrible singer and has ever been known to lip sync to "America the Beautiful," just because it seemed necessary to do so in the middle of a singing crowd, can understand this. A student that is already being ridiculed for having different religious beliefs is certainly not going to want to draw any more attention to him- or herself by not reciting prayers right along with everyone else.

Some would lead us to believe that it is a violation of students' rights to not be allowed to pray in school. Almost immediately after the ruling was made on prayer in schools, claims began to circulate that students who wished to pray before a football game were not allowed to. As in any case where people disagree with a ruling, people will distort the facts in order to support an opposing view.

Guidelines for prayer in schools state: "...schools may not forbid students acting on their own from expressing their personal religious views or beliefs solely because they are of a religious nature. Schools... must... give students the same right to engage in religious activity and discussion as they have to engage in other comparable activity" (Riley par. 9). A school certainly can't deny a student's request to be allowed time to pray should that student take the time to request it.

People argue to have prayer allowed in school, but the arguments are always biased. They argue that it's acceptable and even beneficial to have prayer in school as long as it doesn't interfere with classroom activities, but they don't mention they only find certain prayers acceptable. Would they really be willing to allow chanting to the many gods of our Native Americans? Would they really accept the long, silent "prayers" of the Buddhists? Would they really allow the worship of the Wiccan? Would they not abhor the worshippers of Satan? They want to use freedom of religion and its expression to argue their case for prayer in schools, but they only want prayers for their religion and beliefs to be allowed.

Since the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, there have been many arguments to allow prayer in school. These arguments are further fueled



by the now constant references to God in this tragedy. As already mentioned, even the President has been making numerous mentions of God. Even many people who had previously never set foot in church have followed the lead of the majority and are now spouting the phrase, "God Bless America!" Whether this has to do with having to have some way to cope or just getting on the bandwagon, we'll never know. What we do know is that it has brought many people to believe that prayer should be allowed in school, especially now that we have been in the face of tragedy. The question still remains as to whether these people came to this conclusion on their own accord or if they have been led by the President's words and the majority's opinion.

Ann is working towards an Associate's degree at CCC. She feels that with language, one may accomplish any goal that is set.

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Perspectives

Articles or Essays of controversy are one of Palabras's favourite pastimes. If you'd like to write a refutation or an alternate perspective to Ann Page's "Let Us Pray?" (or to any article herein), the deadline is October 15th, 2002 for the November issue.



THE FIGHT FOR THE HOLY LAND

SELENA WOLFE

Editor's Note: This piece was written in November/December 2001.

Every day, we Americans hear reports about violence in the Middle East. The situation in the Holy Land seems to be nothing but an endless stream of attacks and retaliations. The news of the conflict between the desert peoples grows monotonous to American ears and it is easy to just tune out what is happening. Most Americans do not understand the conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians or why the Arabs and the Jews have so much animosity for each other. Throughout this paper, I hope to bring clarity to this confusing subject and answer some questions that the reader might have about this age-old conflict. Indeed, the Mideast conflict has been long and bloody and the prospect of peace between the Palestinians and the Israelis is dubious.

Truth be told, the Arabs and the Jews are actually cousins. Ishmael, the predecessor of the Arabs, and Isaac, the forefather of the Jewish people, were half-brothers. Their father was Abraham, patriarch of Biblical fame. God promised the Holy Land to Abraham's seed and the Jews believe that Isaac received that blessing, while Ishmael was left to wander into the wilderness and create his own great nation (Genesis 16:7-16:12). A descendant of Ishmael, the Prophet Muhammad received what he believed to be divine revelations around the year 610 CE. He began "espousing a version of pure monotheism" in the pagan town of Mecca in what is now Saudi Arabia ("Timeline-Focus..." par. 1). The people came to accept it¹ and thus the religion of Islam was born. The Jews and the Muslims serve the same God; however, both believe that they are God's only chosen people. This is the holy or religious background behind the conflict between the Arabs and the Jews.

The conflict between the Palestinians and the Jews is a bit more complicated and goes back to the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth in a small Polish town called Plonsk. A boy named David Ben-Gurion listened to his parents and their friends talk about the Russian czar's order to persecute Polish Jews. His father believed that the only

hope for his people was for the Jews to move to "Bretz Yisrael" (the land of Israel), the "biblical Jewish homeland" which was then a tiny country called Palestine. Ben-Gurion absorbed his father's words and as he grew older began to expand on his ideas. As the world became increasingly anti-Semitic, Ben-Gurion began to believe that the solution for the Jewish people's problem was to have a Jewish homeland, an actual Jewish state instead of just settlements in the middle of Arab Palestine. He began to urge Jews to move to Palestine so they could build up a big enough presence there to warrant the creation of a Jewish state (Richman par. 1-5).

Then in 1920, the British (who controlled Palestine) received a mandate over the country from the League of Nations and were instructed to "help the Jews build a national home." Ben-Gurion, who later became Israel's first prime minister, stepped up his efforts to persuade Jews to immigrate to Palestine. By the mid-30's, nearly 300,000 Jewish refugees had left Europe and come to Palestine (par. 13-15).

However, the [Muslim] Palestinians were starting to get nervous over this huge influx of Jewish settlers. They threatened violence and complained to the British that their homeland was being overrun by Jews. In response, Britain attempted to severely limit Jewish immigration and settlement. During World War II, thousands of Jews were dying in Nazi concentration camps, yet the ones who escaped that fate were denied asylum in Palestine. Ben-Gurion tried to make the most of the situation and made sure that the world heard all about the British denying the chance of a homeland to the same Jews who were enlisting in the Allied forces. This made world leaders sympathetic to the Zionist cause (par. 16-23).

Then in 1947, a UN resolution divided Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state. David Ben-Gurion's dream had finally come true. On May 14, 1948, the nation of Israel was born. Only hours later, Arab military forces attacked the brand-new Israelis and the first Arab-Israeli War began. Israelis refer to the war of 1948 as the "War for Independence." Israel pushed the Arabs back and captured some land from them. By 1973, two more Arab-Israeli Wars had taken place and Israel now had possession of one part of what used to be the state of Palestine and the Arab nation of Jordan occupied the rest. The following conflicts over the years have been explained by the Palestinians as an attempt to get their land back and gain their own independence (Herzog 11-12).

The Palestinians refused for a very long time to recognize Israel's right to exist. They claimed that the Jews had obtained their land unlawfully and had no

right to occupy former Palestinian territory, especially the much-disputed regions of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (Said 6-8). Because Israel had made an uneasy peace with its other Arab neighbors, the Palestinian people are now basically on their own in the dispute with Israel. A people with no country, no representation, and no government for so long, the Palestinians resorted to hit-and-run guerilla tactics (just like the Jews had) and acts of terrorism to make their point.

In the 1980's and early 90's, the Palestinians declared an intifada, the Arabic word for a mass uprising. The true meaning of the word implies a peaceful protest, almost like civil disobedience here in America. However, their version of intifada turned into something very ugly, almost warlike. Acts of terror were very common in Israel, with bombings, drive-by shootings, and car bombs becoming daily news (Barr). The situation came to a point where something had to be done.

The United States, ever the world's policemen, stepped into the situation at this point and President Clinton mediated numerous peace talks between the two estranged peoples. The situation in Israel is important to America because we are military allies with the country and we have made them what they are today: the most powerful nation in the Middle East. Palestine and Israel were finally able to come to an agreement at the 1994 Oslo Accords. Because of these peace talks, an independent Palestinian National Authority was created, with Yassir Arafat at its head. The most famous handshake in the world was photographed at Oslo between Arafat and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. This handshake was the beginning of an uneasy peace between the occupiers and the occupied (Halkin par. 1-3).

This peace was broken only a year ago, in October 2000, when then Israeli foreign minister Ariel Sharon took a tour of Jerusalem and visited the Dome of the Rock, a revered Muslim holy site. We in America do not understand the significance of this act because we have a freedom of religion and a policy that "all men are created equal." We could compare this brazen act of a Jew entering a Muslim holy site to letting a herd of cattle run loose through the White House. The Palestinians took this as a personal affront and Mr. Arafat called for a new intifada (Sontag par. 5).

Both sides in this long-standing conflict are trying to give the impression to the rest of the world that they are the victims in this situation. The Palestinians

are trying to appear like a dispossessed, oppressed people, trodden underfoot by the most powerful army in the Mideast with no recourse but to strike back in what small way they can. The vision they like to project is the image of Palestinian children throwing rocks at Israeli soldiers who respond with machine gun fire. This image could be compared to our own Boston Massacre, and as such, it gains the sympathy of many Americans. The Israelis attempt to portray themselves as an innocent nation full of people who have been so persecuted in the past and have lived through Holocaust and hatred: they are being attacked by fierce, uncouth desert Arabs and have no choice but to retaliate in order to discourage further attack on their civilian and military citizens alike.

But as is evident, the blame cannot be laid at the doorstep of only one aggressor. There have been grave injustices on both sides of the spectrum. Palestinian suicide bombers, car bombs, and snipers have targeted civilian Jews as well as their military enemy. As a journalist said, "bullets have replaced rocks" in the year-old intifada (Barr). Terrorist groups such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad (or "holy war") run rampant in the strife-ridden Holy Land ("The world's main..." par. 1). The Israelis have also been at fault. They have responded to the Palestinians with excessive force, using helicopters, missiles, and other superior weapons technology. Civilian Arabs have been killed by the Israeli army as well and it must be noted that of the 800 deaths that have occurred in the past year, Palestinian corpses outnumber the Israeli dead by a ratio of almost four to one (Barr par. 29).

Jewish vigilantism is on the rise as well. Settlers in the disputed former Palestinian territories are taking up arms against their Palestinian neighbors, vowing to "expel the Muslim filth." The Arabs in the towns bordering the Jewish settlements are put under 24-hour curfews, with breaks only twice a week to go shopping for food and necessities. If any Palestinian is found outside during the curfew, even to go to the doctor, they are arrested. The Palestinians can only watch as the vigilantes pillage their shops and homes. These Jewish extremists are marring the innocent image that Israel is trying to portray to the world (Kelley).

It appears to us that neither the Jews nor the Palestinians want peace or can even get along. That is because we are daily bombarded with news stories all about the extremists on both sides who are fighting to the bitter end. On the contrary, recent polls show that a majority of the people involved in this conflict want peace and want to coexist in harmony with their neighbors (Halkin par. 6-7). But the grievances on

both sides of the conflict are deeply rooted. This raises the question if peace is actually possible and if these people can live side-by-side without killing each other.

However, there is hope. Only last month [September, 2001] Yassir Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres signed a cease-fire agreement. Their plan will take time to implement, but the idea of peace is supported by a majority of the people. Arafat has agreed to crack down on terrorism and Israel has agreed to lighten up on measures taken against the Palestinian people ("Work-Plan..."). Violence is still erupting everyday between the two factions, but time will only tell if this cease-fire agreement will have the desired effect and bring a long hoped for peace to the state of Israel.

Salina received her Associate's of Liberal Arts, with honors, from Clovis Community College in May, 2002. She is interested in Library Science and CCC's Writing Center.

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In Afghanistan: CATASTROPHE OF WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS

MARIE NETCHER

There are thousands of Afghanistan women suffering catastrophic devastation by the hands of the Taliban. Afghanistan has been under 20 years of lawlessness and civil war and under each political group women have been targets of gross human right violations. One particular group known as the Taliban (religious students from Pakistan) took control intent on establishing a strict Islamic government system. These intentions have turned into violent acts of inhumane treatment by punishing women and devastating a country's main asset. Take a journey through the stories of Afghan women and feel their pain and sorrow.

MSNCB Channel 63 aired the abuses and executions of Afghanistan people that were perceived by audiences as an exciting sport. These were similar to the scenes from the Roman time period when Christians were thrown into an arena with lions. This documentary shocked and angered me. A woman reporter went into Afghanistan to observe what was happening. She captured the story of one Afghan woman:

Zamirna was accused of killing her husband. After years of her husband watching the Taliban torture and beat women, he became abusive to his wife and their daughters. They drugged him, and after he fell asleep the daughter took a 10 lb. hammer and struck him in the head killing him. She spent three years in jail while her daughters went to her brother-in-law. He sold the girls into sex slavery. This devastated Zamirna. On November 17, 1999 Zamirna was executed by the hand of her brother-in-law in the Kabul Olympic Stadium (Antonowicz par. 1-109).

Females in Afghanistan, because women have had restrictions placed upon them when the Taliban took control, exist in a world of deprivation and isolation. The political groups isolate women by having them wear full-covered shrouds called burqas. The burqa causes headaches, claustrophobia, and reduced visibility. All makeup is forbidden and when caught wearing nail polish they will cut their

fingers off or pull out their nails from the cuticle. They have to paint all windows in their homes black so nobody can see them. If a woman is without a husband or male relative to support her and her children, she must resort to begging and prostitution, although prostitutes have been executed under the Taliban. Anaga Dalal reported on the severe restrictions: "The Taliban have banned education of women and girls; prohibiting most women from working and decreed it is un-Islamic for women to wear lipstick, show skin or leave home without a male relative" (52). If they defy these restrictions, they "risk beatings, imprisonment, torture, and death by their oppressors" (52).

Women have faced "small" infractions at any time. There was a woman accused by the Taliban of talking on a walkie-talkie. "There were 16 men beating her with a wire cable until she pissed blood" (Antonowicz par. 22 - 27). A reporter is talking to a beggar woman: "A Pushtan barges through the crowd, bends over her and strikes her head. 'Get lost, you whore bitch!' he shouts" (Antonowicz 22 - 25).

Many women have committed suicide when they were forced to marry someone they did not want, or if a group of political men came around attacking women they would set themselves on fire or jump out of second and third floor buildings.

The women of Afghanistan have lived through wars, terrorism, and restrictions. Their country has been devastated by bombs, lined with land mines, controlled by drug traffickers, and male political groups wanting to take control. Women have been beaten, raped, sold as sex slaves, forced to marry, and left to be beggars and prostitutes; yet, still these women stand strong and remember the beauty Afghanistan once was. They are waiting to be a part of Afghanistan's society once again.

Marie is a secretary for Bella Vista Elementary School, and will graduate from CCC with an Associate's in General Studies in December, 2002.

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DEBUNKING THE ARGUMENT FOR PEACE

MICHAEL MERRITT

Editor's Note: This piece was written in November/December 2001.

When facing a dishonorable enemy, waging violent warfare brings about peace while negotiating for peace brings about war. History proves this. Just look at World War II. Neville Chamberlain's negotiating with Hitler, it could be argued, helped bring about the war. The use of the atom bomb against Japan ended the war.

If I know this then why are the only college students I see on TV "peace advocates"? By watching CNN one would think that the majority opinion among young adults is, "1-2-3-4, we don't want no racist war!" Demonstrators chanting things like that are by far in the minority, but they have the loudest voice. I guess the networks like ideological young people unless they have a pro-war ideology. Since young people like me rarely get airtime on TV, we have to resort to what I'm doing: Writing in the local newspaper. It needs to be shown that we're not a sad lot of rejects from the 60's. Every point the "peace advocates" have, I can prove wrong.

First, let's start with the myth that the U.S. is waging a racist war. The peaceniks say this in catchy slogans like, "This racist war has got to go, Hey-Hey, Ho-Ho!" If we are waging a racist war, then who is the Northern Alliance? White, Christian, Americans aren't liberating Afghanistan. Dark skinned, Muslim, Afghans are.

Another rumor that the peaceniks try to spread is that the U.S. is waging a war against Afghan civilians. Leftover-lefty and California Daily columnist Russell Bates said, "I wish the people of Afghanistan victory against the forces of U.S. imperialism." Once again, I ask, who is the Northern Alliance? I guess the peaceniks haven't seen the men shaving their beards or the women taking off their veils. It appears to me that "the people of Afghanistan" are very happy about "the forces of U.S. imperialism."

At the start of Ramadan, which is the "great annual fast of the Mohammedans kept in their ninth month" (according to Webster), the "peace advocates" suggested that, in order to avoid offending the

"Islamic World" we should stop or halt the bombing of Afghanistan. Ramadan is just about over for this year, but chances are we will be fighting a Muslim nation at this time next year. Let me debunk the peaceniks' Ramadan proposal now.

I say Ramadan-ya-mama-dan. Do you know what really enrages Muslims? Women fighter pilots! Women fly F-14's off of aircraft carriers and bomb Muslim soldiers. As you know, women are considered lower than dirt in Afghanistan. They are seen as only good for... well you know what they're seen as for. The point is, extremist Muslims consider being killed by a woman extremely offensive. Because Muslims fast during the daylight hours of Ramadan, I bet dropping food on them is also offensive. How would you feel if you were deep in fasting and prayer, when all of a sudden an MRE (Meal Ready to Eat) fell out of the sky and landed right in front of you? That's worse than being killed by a woman. No wonder Osama thinks America is the "Great Satan"; how dare the "Great Satan" tempt starving civilians to eat when they're trying to fast. If the peaceniks were serious about not offending Muslims then they would demand that all women be taken out of fighter jet cockpits and that all dropping of food to civilians stop.

If the peaceniks had read the Koran as I have, then they would know that there is no passage in the Koran about fighting or not fighting during the holy month. In fact, the prophet Mohammed himself led his followers into combat during Ramadan in the Battle of Badr in 624 A.D., winning even though his troops were outnumbered. Remember that when the "peace advocates" call for us to stop fighting during Ramadan next year.

Although I don't respect the opinion of the peaceniks, I forgive them for being so misguided. It's said that if you're young and not a radical then you have no heart; if you're old and not a conservative then you have no brain. I'm 19 and have a heart and a brain. I'm sure the 60's were a very exciting time but they're over. Now most young adults know in their hearts and minds that we're in a fight for our survival. When somebody hits you, you hit back. Network television shouldn't concentrate on idiots who don't know that.

Michael's taking classes at CCC in Liberal Arts for "something to do." He [might be] working towards an Associate's, and then may go on to receive a Bachelor's from ENMU.

CHARACTER COUNTS! AT MARSHALL JR. HIGH SCHOOL

JUDY WILLIAMS

In answer to the ever-growing concern about the lack of character in today's youth, educators are taking the initiative at Marshall Junior High in Clovis, New Mexico to teach their students skills that are essential for a successful life by utilizing the curriculum called *Character Counts!*. The caring and dedication of Marshall's teachers show in the way that they integrate *Character Counts!* into their classroom activities.

The Clovis Municipal Schools have adopted the curriculum from the Josephson Institute called *Character Counts!*. The focus of this curriculum is to teach students valuable character traits that are lacking in too many students (and young people) today. The program focuses on six pillars of character defined below, and a more detailed explanation of the program can be found at <http://www.charactercounts.org>:

Character Counts! teaches the following traits: **TRUSTWORTHINESS** The goal of this pillar is to instill honesty, courage and loyalty in students. This trait will build an excellent reputation for the student and ensure successful relationships in the future. **RESPECT** is treated as a way of life; you will be respected when you respect others. This pillar covers everything from tolerance to good manners and focuses on being considerate of others. It also teaches non-violence and anger management. **RESPONSIBILITY** Students are taught the importance of finishing what they start, perseverance, accountability and self control. **FAIRNESS** teaches that there are different points of view, following rules, sharing, and listening. **CARING** is taught to ensure students realize the importance of kindness, forgiveness, thankfulness, and compassion. **CITIZENSHIP** Teaches the importance of doing their part in community, cooperation, voting privileges, and respecting laws, authority and the environment.

Superintendent of Clovis Schools Dr. Neil Nuttall explains that the Clovis Municipal Schools

participate in *Character Counts!* by "Selecting a *Character Counts!* Pillar every month to focus on." The individual school sites decide how to present the pillar, and which way would best leave a lasting impression on the students involved.

Marshall Junior High teachers have varied techniques in presenting these important traits to students. Social studies Department Chair Larry Cloud utilizes American History to teach the pillars of character to his students. "I use a lot of different ways. [With] the American Revolution, for example, Respect is taught by talking about the character of our early leaders. The truth that they believed in and the connection that truth has to God's word. Students learn about courage under fire, loyalty, and how those traits have deteriorated over the last few decades."

In School Suspension (ISS) coordinator Sheila Holley takes advantage of the program to teach her students what they did wrong, and how they need to adjust their attitude or behaviors to remedy the situation so that they do not repeat their mistakes and return to ISS again.

School wide the teachers and staff are encouraged to turn in the names of students displaying good character and a drawing is held to pick a "Kitten of Character." The reason that they were nominated is read aloud over the intercom and the student is rewarded with a tasty pizza for lunch.

These pillars can be addressed in every class, says Joan Elliott, Math Department Chair. "I address all of the traits in my teaching. When grading papers you need to be Trustworthy. Homework is your responsibility. I don't just give zeros; I give lectures on Responsibility when kids don't hand in their work. My main focus is Respect. If a student puts down another student by saying something like 'stupid,' that student has to stay after school with me and have a lesson on Respect."

The teachers at Marshall Junior High have taken *Character Counts!* and made it their own. They seek and find ways to teach their students the traits that are so important to learn in order to succeed in life. The faculty and staff at Marshall not only teach character, they live it.

Judy has worked with Clovis Schools for 12 years: as an Educational Assistant, as a Computer Lab Manager, and now as Finance Secretary at Marshall JH. She has an associate's degree and is working towards a bachelor's degree in University Studies first and eventually psychology.

JOB EMPOWERMENT AND YOU

GENA HANKINS

Give a person an idea, and you can enrich their life. Teach a person how to learn, and they can enrich their own lives.

--Author Unknown (Webb, par. 6)

An alarm clock rings. It has been set to wake up a part of you that has been asleep for a long time. You get up, stretch, walk over to the mirror, and the reflection staring back at you is startling. Something is different, not in a bad way, but in an unfamiliar way. Wait a minute; no, it couldn't be, do you think? Could this be empowerment?

Companies today, for the most part, still use the Command-and-Control form of leadership: where management shares knowledge among themselves, uses supervision as an information filter, where the employees have do-as-told attitudes, and where efficiency and problem-solving are their sole responsibility. In this instance, think of the brain like Humpty Dumpty sitting on a wall, lifeless, waiting for things to happen. There is no stimulus because all he does is follow orders. On the flip side, empowerment leadership can be different, better in a sense. It is ability. It works by everyone searching for a better way, sharing knowledge and information, accepting valued opinions from non-management sources, thinking efficiency as a team, and by sharing tasks. This brain is that of Peter Pan. He is always searching for a better way, is stimulated and full of life because he knows that what he does will be recognized and that he does make a difference (Webb 2001, par. 4-5). Empowerment is confidence, power, and leadership, and is one of the hottest business trends there is.

For some, empowerment may be embedded deep within because of fear and, therefore, unattainable. Failure keeps popping into your mind. How do you release this fear?

With the proper vision and goals set in place, it is easy. Empowerment is an "open invitation for responsible initiative" (Simmerman, par. 14). For example; imagine you are in a rowboat heading upstream. You are paddling just as hard as you can,

but are getting nowhere fast. Employees who have little or no understanding of the goals at hand, may be sitting in that boat. Without proper direction, they cannot get enough momentum to move the boat forward. Empowerment utilizes the positive energy from within employees, and a clear direction from management, to produce high levels of overall achievement. It is said that once you empower people, you do at least one of the following: "you help them recognize the power that they already have, you recover power that they once had and lost, or you give them power that they never had before" (Ciulla, par. 3). In a nutshell, it means increased productivity, trust, and responsibility. By working together as a team and striving for the same goals, success is inevitable.

While this is all fine and good, the real challenge lies within management. They are the ones who have to define empowerment within their organization. They will set the path for you to take, will give you direction, and will equip you with the proper tools and training needed to adequately feel comfortable doing your job. By coaching, and not controlling, they are able to take the appropriate actions necessary to achieve company directives. The setting of goals, desired results, employee behaviors, and success are a few of the tools used to obtain the desired outcome. Once the employee has an understanding of what is expected, work can begin on the practice of these traits, along with their supervisors serving as "guidance counselors" lending a hand to the employees when questions arise. Empowerment also cuts down on the time a supervisor/manager is needed for minor work obstacles. It's up to the individuals to act on them, and to decide how far they are willing to go.

Managers aren't the only ones with a tough job; the employees play an equally important role as well. Motivation is the vision to see what is needed to obtain or acquire future goals. It can overcome all barriers. Leadership styles influence the level of motivation, and empowerment increases ambition thus leading to increased profit. Trust between team members is essential to finding corporate success, and without teamwork, you simply cannot succeed.

Empowered teams unite education with the

Trust between team members is essential to finding corporate success, and without teamwork, you simply cannot succeed.

workplace. Shared knowledge leads to achieving efficiently completed tasks; therefore, training is crucial (Webb, par 12). Training on what is expected from both the employee and employer should be a big part of the overall picture. Training provides everyone involved with a clear understanding of what is needed to achieve the desired outcome.

Along with training comes communication, and the ability to clearly and easily understand the goals at hand. Did you know that 55% of all communication is nonverbal (Mathis, par. 7)? Today's technology promotes the use of cell phones, pagers, and e-mail, thus increasing the ability to communicate in this day and time and making it all very simple and painless. Real communication, or saying what you mean and using your own words to produce results, still remains as challenging as ever. The bottom line is that you can communicate all you like, but if the communication isn't clear and concise, your message can get twisted or lost. The power of listening plays a crucial role in the communication process. To be successful at this, one must learn how to remove the communication barriers that hinder the flow.

People generally don't like change; it can be a scary thing. By creating a sense of unity between and within team members in a positive environment, they will not be as reluctant to try something new or different. It takes twenty-one days to turn change into habit, but through the use of peer support, proper training, motivation, and teamwork, the transition to becoming empowered can be an easy one. Empowered employees are more motivated, responsible, and productive. It's a win/win situation for everyone. Those who understand their part in the overall scheme of things, and have a clear under-

standing of their personal benefit, are able to act upon decisions or opportunities that may come their way. Think of the rewards you can reap from making empowerment a part of your work habit.

Job empowerment enables people to step forward and take charge, thus eliminating the need for "they" in an "us-against-them" mentality. The goal is to create an atmosphere of shared knowledge and mutual benefit, in which everyone works together, toward the same goals thus benefiting and strengthening the organization.

Job empowerment enables people to step forward and take charge, thus eliminating the need for "they" in an "us-against-them" mentality.

The positive side of empowerment has been talked about, but what kind of negative impact could it have on a business? It is all about perception. What one employee may

deem as an acceptable solution, another may not feel comfortable with at all. A substantial problem also lies with the types of employees that a company has. Are they exemplary, average, or poor performers? While empowering may give them the ability, whether or not they choose to act on it remains unseen. Only you can be the judge of this. Once employees are empowered, they may soon find that roadblocks have been put up hindering them from doing their job. Roadblocks and their size vary depending on the employee (Simmerman, par. 6). The word "they" is commonly used to pass the blame off on others. Who are "they"? A Company's greatest asset and its biggest liability are its employees, so why must empowerment bring out blame?

Each company must analyze their own personal goals to ensure that empowerment would work in their setup. Empowerment is, however; opportunity and the chance to help others make a difference within the organization. By empowering your employees, you are building a trusting relationship with them that will last a lifetime. So, the next time an opportunity comes your way, don't let it pass you by! Remember...Empowerment exists in everyone. By incorporating teamwork in a positive setting, empowerment can work for you! Are you ready?

Gena takes courses at CCC for job enhancement and self improvement. She is a technical writer for ENMR.

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WANT TO SUBMIT YOUR WRITING OR ART?

YOU MAY TAKE YOUR...

Research, essays, fiction, poetry, and art to

Gina L Hochhalter in Phase V, Office 509

Ramon Jones in Phase I, Office 141

Paul Nagy in Phase I, Office 141

Janett Johnson in Phase I, Office 141

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Business

The Deadline for publication in the November issue is October 15, 2002



FOREST

GEN LAWSON

I am simply here. I no longer know why, if I ever did know at all.

There is only a forest that goes on and on, endlessly, a sea of bark and leaves and grass. The trees are tall and thin, like wands, and like wands

they feel magic. Small brown and black birds flutter through them, singing and building nests, and sometimes a shy deer will step out of a grove. There isn't much else and yet, it is so beautiful here.

I am a grounds-keeper--someone who would be called, in other times and places, a Ranger. I walk along the paths and replace stones that have shifted, and tend to the trees should they become ill or wayward. I look after the wooden bridges where they cross over water or gullies, and watch for trespassers, even though there never are any. I suppose I've taken this job upon myself, for something to do.

One of the first things I noticed was that there were no flowers in this endless and perfect forest. I thought that interesting, because flowers are everywhere usually, annoying me with their brightness and extravagance. So, I was surprised when I one day saw a spot of yellow on the ground.

As I came closer to it, I saw that it was a flower, though not any kind I remembered ever seeing. A few feet away there was another, and another beyond that. Pretty yellow flowers, in a line. I followed them, and they led me to a fountain, and a pool, and a bench with a lady sitting on it. As soon as I saw the lady, I fled.

I came back later, on different days, and found places from which I could watch her without being seen (or so I thought). She would sit on the bench, or look into the fountain, or tend the rows of flowers, different colors, that grew in bright spoke-lines out from the pool. I could never see her clearly, but she seemed tall and fair, with long honey hair like new sap.

Fiction 11

One day, she looked up from the bench and gestured to the place I was hiding. "Come here," her finger said, but kindly, with a "please." I stood, frozen, in the bushes.

"Yes, you," she said aloud.

Trying to appear calm and fearless, I walked to her. As I grew near, I saw that she was horribly beautiful, with a circlet of vines and leaves in her hair that I'd never noticed before. I felt that she must be a Queen, the ruler of this place, if it had such a thing as a ruler.

So I knelt at her feet.

"Do you like it here?" she asked.

"Yes," I replied, pausing after, not knowing how to address her.

She went on, showing that a dignifier was not needed.

"Would you do something for me?"

"Of course," I said, without thinking about it.

"By the fountain," she said, "is a cup. Would you fill it and bring me some water?"

"Of course," I said.

I went to the fountain, and there was the cup. Shaped like a half-egg and translucent, with shifting swirls of color, it felt warm and magic in my hands. Dipping it in the pool, I filled it and brought it to her. She took it from me, graciously, and I bowed swiftly and fled back to my familiar forest.

I did not go back to watch her for a long time. Yet, I began to miss her. I tried to hide better, and she seemed not to see me.

One day, as I was tending a path, she stepped out of a shadow. She said, "why do you watch me?"

"Because there is no one else," I replied.

"I would wish to be your friend," she said, and disappeared.

In the days after that, I ventured closer and closer, until soon I was tending the lawns and trees openly near the pool. Sometimes she would watch me. Other times she was not there. Still other times, she would see to her flowers. Soon I was tending the flowers, too, but only when she was not there. Perhaps I thought she would be jealous.

One morning, she summoned me again.

"Why do you never speak to me?" she asked.

"Because you are the Queen of this forest," I said, thinking that it was obvious.

"Do you think that means that I am not human?"

she arched one eyebrow.

"Yes."

"Then what makes you think that you are?"

I looked, surprised, into her face. Her eyes were stars, in free fall, as she gave me a look that was nearly a touch.

I fled again to the forest.

For a long time I did not see her. Then, one day as I walked, I found tools on one of the wooden bridges. Left there for me, by her, I knew. For a while I left them there.

Later I began building a home, in one of the great trees. I built it slowly, and with great care, and soon there was an entire house in the tree, with different rooms for the times of day, and one room circling the trunk, safe in case of storms. At first, I climbed up and down the trunk, until she left me a rope. Then, I whittled a pulley and arranged a counter-weight, and that made it easier to ascend and descend.

I sneaked back to the pool, and while she was gone (for she was not there when I arrived), I carefully stole a flower from each of her spokes. There were six, in the colors of the rainbow-red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and violet. I planted them at the base of my tree, roughly in the shape of a heart.

One evening, I returned to the tree to find her standing and staring at my stolen flowers.

"If you plant it thus, it will grow."

"Yes," I said, "but it would not grow if it was not right."

This time, it was she who fled into the forest.

The next day, she was back.

"Would you show me your house?" she asked.

I demonstrated the pulley, and walked her through my wooden castle. By this time it had grown large, a child of my labor and joy. She said nothing as I showed her different rooms, decorated with the forest and things I had found. Pretty stones in mosaics, and the feathers of birds.

She said little, but made almost imperceptible exclamations at things she found pretty. I made a note of these, intending to bring her the things that I now knew she would like.

We stood together in my northern room, and watched the sun set. As night rose behind us, unseen, she said that it was time for her to leave. I

escorted her to the rope.

I waited several days before going to the fountain, in the meantime making for her a fan of bird feathers. I felt I could not go without an offering of some kind.

She was sitting on the bench, waiting, as if she knew I would be coming. Perhaps she did. She smiled as she took my gift.

"Would you like to see my house?" she asked.

I was surprised. I'd not thought that she had one.

It was underground. She took me to a grove of small trees, one I'd not noticed before, and we descended into the earth on weathered steps overgrown with moss and lichen. There was no door; the steps led simply into a hallway of dark stone. On the wall were hung lights, in which she inspired illumination as we walked.

Her home, also, had many rooms. There were cavernous halls, hung with tapestries, where the ceiling disappeared upward into darkness. Rooms with flowing water and underground lakes, with tinny dripping water and accretions of sulphurous rock. Rooms for sleeping, and eating, and playing, although they all looked lost and unused, as if they were lonely.

The last room she showed me was a library, and I felt my desire flare. I walked to her shelves, reaching for the leathery spines of the books. Her look was one of approval, and I caressed them, lost loves found anew. She spoke.

"You may come here, whenever you wish. My house is not closed, nor is it private, nor," she paused, "am I even certain that it is mine."

I smiled at her, and she smiled back.

It was a new thing, the sharing of smiles.

In later days, we grew closer. Sometimes she would accompany me in my journeys of maintenance. Other times I would sit with her by the pool, or we would simply walk. Always we were talking. At first, it was about the books, our common ground. Later, we discovered that the common ground was more extensive.

One day, as I walked, I found a circlet of silver on a path. This puzzled me, because it did not seem like a thing that she would leave for me. Still, there was nowhere else for it to have come from. When I arrived at the pool, she was sitting quietly and looking into the water, perhaps trying to see another future.

"Do you know what this is?" I asked, holding it out to her as I approached.

She looked at it with surprise and amusement, then took it from my hand and placed it on my head. She stood very close to me, as I trembled in the wake of her proximity, and held my blue gaze with her warm brown one.

"It is a gift from a power higher than I," she said. "It means that you have been christened."

"Ah," I said. "Then who am I?"

"The Queen of Air," she said, and kissed me.

I remember in the days afterward, playing the memory over and over, trying to carve the imprint in my mind into a relief, so that as the waves of time washed over me it would be one of the last things to erode. I still remember it so well. The way her lips, petals, brushed mine softly. The way her hair was braided, and silky to the touch. The dress she wore, a dark one of browns and greens, and the circlet of polished stones around her ankle. A stray wisp of hair that dangled across her face, and her sigh. I remember the moment that I understood what her crown of leaves and vines must mean. I remember the taste of her mouth, and an unexpected heat that rose within me, and a hunger.

This time, I believe that we both fled. But that I do not remember.

I had a new thing to think about, now, as I sat in my treetop with the breeze against my face. This new thing was a thing called "love," and it both frightened and enthralled me. I wondered if she also thought of it, or if to her the kiss was nothing magic but merely a token to be given away. In agony, I pondered, but without an answer.

I was walking, thoughtful, along a path when she fell into step beside me.

"May I ask you something?" her voice was light, hesitant.

"Of course," I smiled, and stopped walking, turning to face her.

She looked at the ground, shy.

"Did you mind?" she glanced to my face.

"No." I reached out and pulled her to me.

It was different, this time. It was like a storm at sea, as a wild passion blew us to a different shore.

A little later, as I held her close to me, she whispered, "I would wish to be your lover. I would wish

for our love to grow as you planted."

"Is it forbidden?" I asked, a thought carried over from a different time and place.

I felt her smile.

She said, "where earth and sky are magic, nothing is forbidden."

I am simply here. I no longer know why, if I ever did know at all.

There is only a forest that goes on and on, endlessly, a sea of bark and leaves and grass. The trees are tall and thin, like wands, and like wands they feel magic. Small brown and black birds flutter through them, singing and building nests, and sometimes a shy deer will step out of a grove. There isn't much else and yet, it is so beautiful here.

Gen is a police officer in Santa Fe.

Fiction

WHAT I LOOK FOR?

MARK REINHOLZ

What is it that I look for?

When I dream of you.

Do I see the women that came to me as a child?

Who are you? That you become me?

Do I know that the star in your eye is for me?

How do we become one without becoming none?

What is it that I look for?

When I see the face in the mirror:

Am I seeking something new,

Or an old life that I thought I knew?

What is this person that I am trying to build?

Is it a house for one or two?

What is it that I look for?

When I round a corner.

It is a face that has no answers, or

Is it an answer that has no face?

Am I facing the new,

Or hiding around the corner from the old?

What is it that I look for?

Now that I look for you.

So I may speak

Of all the wonders, I have seen.

To share? To care?

To burden with my despair.

What is it I look for?

I look for the heart that beats with mine.

I look for the soul that sings a song with me.

I look for the eyes that read my lines.

I look for the truth in me.

What else can there be.

What is it I look for?

I look not for you, but

Me.

Mark is a technical mechanic for the Chemistry Department at Montana State University—Bozeman.

EXORCISMUS

CHRISTY MENDOZA

I lie silent,
in the form
of the cross.
Whispering
the commandments
over and over,
keeping
my mind
from unwanted
thoughts of you.
Still
you trespass,
sinning with others.

Even in prayer
I am alone.

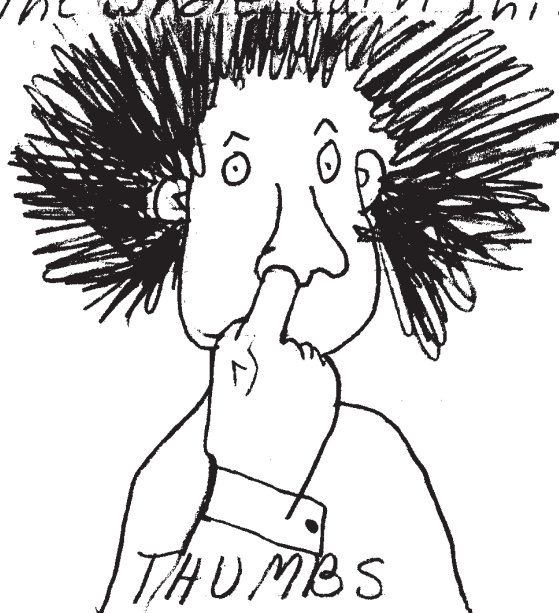
Relics burn
like memories.
Your name,
a holy chant
of useless syllables
over and over,
until you are no longer
life,
breath,
spirit.
Sanctum, sanctorum
Cloister me
from this sacrament
of you.

Even in prayer
I am alone.

Christy is Instructor of Drama/Theatre at CCC.

Poetry 14

3-26-81 Warning DANA
Inside everybody's nose
There lives a sharp-toothed snail.
So if you stick your finger in,
He may bite off your nail.
Stick it farther up inside
And he may bite your ring off.
Stick it all the way, and he
May bite the whole darn thing off.



3-26-81 THUMBS DANA
Oh the thumbsucker's thumb
May look wrinkled and wet
And withered, and white as the snow,
But the taste of a thumb
Is the sweetest taste yet
(As only we thumb-suckers know).

Dana L Hochhalter created these 20 years ago when she was 10 years old. Her teacher, Mrs. Richter, selected them to be read aloud for the performance of "Paint Your Wagon." She is currently living in Clovis.