

English II Pieces

2013-2014

Ladybugs

by Vivienne Wieggers

On an ordinary spring day I sit in the grass at the park. A ladybug lands on my leg. I pick it up and notice how many spots it has and its reddish-orange color. As it crawls over my hands, I try to keep the bug on my fingers, but it flies away. It buzzes around and eventually disappears reminding me of a sunny day like this one eight years ago.

My sister, Emily, and I are sitting in the yard of our house inside of a bright, artificial-red, ladybug tent. The sun shines through the material, and shadows are cast across our faces where the black spots on the outside of the insect tent are. We play that we are inside of a live ladybug: she is our ship. We are caught in a storm and our insect is sinking. We need to prepare our life boats and abandon ship, but there is no way to save our host friend. We unzip the door and I am shoved out of our sinking ship onto the grass.

My sister stumbles out behind me and we begin to swim through the air. We reach the end of the yard, safely reaching the empty beach. Emily tenses and falls onto the gravel shaking uncontrollably, I have seen this before. The game is over and I know that my sister is having a seizure. I start crying, then realize what I need to do. I run inside, grab the phone, and call 911 as I run back outside. When I return to what I believed to be my dying sister, she is rolling around on the ground laughing. Then I know I have been tricked. The operator suddenly starts her famous line "911, what is your..." but she never finishes because I have hung up the phone.

I run over to my laughing sister who has calmed down a bit. She takes one look at my tear-streaked face and starts laughing again, saying, "I got you so good!" I start to yell at her, saying that what she did was not funny, and that she was really mean. She stops laughing and apologizes. I forgive her and we go inside, tired from our games. The phone starts to ring again and I answer. It is the 911 lady calling us to make sure everything is okay.

The woman tells me that they need to send an officer over to our house to make sure that we are safe. I don't understand why, I give the phone to my oldest sister, Mary, who did not hear my crying and running through the house searching for the phone. She talks to the operator and then

Technology

by Noah Stapp

When I was about five, my family purchased our first modern computer: a brand new iMac. The shiny, bright white plastic and clear, square screen hid a gateway to technology. By today's standards, it's a piece of junk; but back in 2004, it was blazing fast. This amazing new tool opened up a whole new world to me: the world of computers, the world of *beeps* and *boops*. I was enthralled by this fantastic discovery; I had used computers before, but only old, slow ones that could barely search the web. At first, my childish mind focused only on computer games and the internet. But, a few years later, our new computer would open my eyes to the rapidly-growing realm of transistors and chipsets. Since then, up to this very day, I have been infatuated with computers.

Once we got our computer, I began tooling around on it daily. I dragged files from folder to folder, typing this document or that document. At five years old, I mostly just played games and did schoolwork on the computer, but I still learned some useful things: where files are, how to type on a keyboard, how to use a mouse and keyboard in tandem. These skills, especially the typing and hand-eye coordination, would help me massively in later years, once I took up piano and had to type quickly. Even though I knew how to do things that the average computer user did not, I still knew close to nothing about the hardware or the software the computer ran on. My young mind was focused on the practical and the entertaining: the bright flashes, pretty graphics, and *pew-pew-pews* of computer games enthralled me. Learning arduous, difficult tasks like programming and how computer components worked seemed more like work than fun to me then. Seven years later, at the age of twelve, I would take on a foreign and seemingly impossible task: building my own computer.

When I started to need a computer for schoolwork, and wanted to have a more powerful computer, I decided to build my own. It would be cheaper than buying a pre-made one, and would be more efficient for the price. When the parts arrived, it was time to finally put everything together and make it work. The sleek, metallic motherboard, the bulky, fan-cooled graphics card, the shiny chrome processor: the parts were there, but they

tells us that there will be an officer coming to our house to check on us. Mary then yells at us, saying that we are going to be in a lot of trouble when our parents get home.

I start crying again and so does Emily, then the police officer shows up. He notices that we are shaken up and asks us if we are okay. Mary responds, repeating to him the same story that we had told her, when she had asked. The police officer asks why we are crying and we truthfully tell him it is because we think we are going to be in trouble by our parents. He starts laughing and tells us that everything will be okay and that we don't have to tell our parents. I argue with him, saying that I have to tell my mom. The officer talks to Mary for a bit and when he leaves I call my mother. I tell her the story and she starts laughing. She thought it was a good lesson on the seriousness of the types of tricks people play. She concludes by telling me that I had a much more interesting day than she did.

I smile at the memory. That little ladybug's landing on me, brought back such a traumatic memory of my sister playing a joke on me, such a long time ago. Although it is now very funny, ladybugs will always remind me of Emily.

Shredtacular

by Ben Crogh

My face begins to crystalize:
humid frozen air rushes across
frigid cheeks. Fogged goggles
force a large cloud to invade my lens.
The snow settles like marshmallows:
perfect conditions at the table today.
The lift line never seems to move; we
wait for half an hour just to get up,
and take our time gliding down.
White trees fill my peripheral, presenting
a cream blend I can't wait to
stir up.

Quiet

by Noah Stapp

I like to have quiet and alone time, rather than constantly being social. Quiet activities, that can be done alone, appeal to me more than do projects that are loud and involve others. I need time to recharge my energy in between social activities. Being alone allows me to be free from judgment

were dissembled; like a dissected corpse, the brain and muscles were separated. It took hours for my father and me to put everything in the case: the wires from the motherboard needed to go here; the cables from the power supply went there; fans were connected to this socket. It was like a jumbled maze of wires and sockets, of transistors and circuits. I must have done and redone the wiring three or four times before I had every piece plugged in properly.

Once everything was together, I hit the power button. The whirl of the fan and the hum of the hard drive signaled that it started. The boot menu appeared, ready to have an operating system installed. Even though it was challenging to build a computer, I learned something: I learned that I could transform a pile of components and wires into a fully-functional, working computer: I had the know-how; I had the ability. Building my first computer was akin to driving down a bumpy road: a scratch here, a scrape there, but you get to your destination in the end.

Now that my computer was assembled, I began learning as much as I could about computers and technology. I discovered how computers stored information: in little chunks of data called "bytes." Graphics appearing in a game were just "pixels," tiny little specks of color on a screen that together made up an image. Web pages were groups of information sent to my computer from a host server and then displayed on my screen. I was beginning to see how the great web of technology was connected, strand by strand. I decided, only a few months ago, that I would learn to command the powers of computers: I would learn to program.

At first, the odyssey of programming was very difficult. Simply grasping the concept that these commands written in this programming "language" would do something when executed was difficult, but I persevered. My first-ever program was a traditional one: making the computer display the phrase "Hello World!" When I ran that program and saw those words appear on the screen, it was amazing. I, a teenage boy, had commanded a computer to display words that I chose. I could harness the great power of computing to design and execute things I had only dreamed of in the past.

My mind was hooked; I began programming more and more, doing more complex things. Just a few weeks ago, I began using "loops," chunks of code that repeatedly ran -- if or while a specific condition were true. I can now make simple games with branching trees of decisions, and am learning more every day. Only a decade ago, I was just opening the door into the massive, ever-expanding world of technology. Now, I have built my

and pressure, allowing me to really be myself. I enjoy spending time alone, as it helps me think and recharge.

When I am alone, there is no one to judge me, no one to pressure me into doing things. Everything I do is my choice and mine alone, which gives me a real sense of independence and freedom. In many social situations, people are judged for anything and everything. But when people are alone, they are in control of their actions, something I really enjoy. Being alone is really great, as it allows me to do whatever I wish, without fear of being judged.

When I am at a social event, there is the constant fear of being judged. I have to always worry about my manners, my appearance, that I am not too quiet, that I am not too loud. It creates a lot of annoyance and often just feels like a chore rather than something fun. Reading a book or playing the piano does not require these thoughts; I only focus on the activity I am doing now. I prefer to read, play piano or video games, and listen to music because these activities do not require me to constantly fret about others' perception of me.

I like doing things by myself because I think better alone, and because I enjoy quiet. When doing things alone, I can think better and more clearly, not needing to speed up or slow down for others. In school, you often need to slow down or speed up to the pace of the rest of the class, which can stifle learning at a good pace. Homeschooling allows me to go at my pace, instead of at the class's pace. I prefer quiet time and doing things alone because only then do I not need to cater to the whims of others.

A Life of Writing

by Baylie Holsman

Ben Crogh is a sophomore at both McCall-Donnelly High School, where he takes journalism, and at The North Fork School, where he takes Honors English. He thinks both classes are helping him to become a better writer. "I enjoy writing, and North Fork has helped me get a lot better at it," Ben says. He hopes to pursue journalism as a career after college. "I want to go to a ski town for college so I can practice writing and get my name out there," Ben says. "Plus, I will get to ski every day." He has many plans for himself over the next several years.

The editor of *Powder Magazine* has also influenced Ben to become a journalist. Ben emailed the editor over the summer of 2013 and sent some advice for Ben as he

own computer; I have made my own programs. Once I stepped into the world of the future, I never looked back.

Vortex

by Noah Stapp

Spiraling down into the black maw of death,
waves and debris crash like an avalanche.
Dark, stormy skies glare down on roaring seas. Walls of
water crash:

Psssssssh-Crpusssh, deafening surfers' ears.

Thunder and lightning in furious, unforgiving, sky:

Kaboom!-Kaboom!-Zttttth!

Into dark depths of Hades, each surfer falls.

Water Celebration

by Vivienne Wiegars

In Thailand there is a festival called *Songkran*, which celebrates the new year. For one day in early summer, the whole country has an enormous water fight! The festival was originally a blessing ceremony for an excellent year, (good crops, luck, and kindness) placed by the elders in each community. The elders would wipe beige-colored talc on people's faces, say a prayer about a good year, then lightly sprinkle them with water.

As years have gone by, the blessing ceremony has evolved into a countrywide water fight: people still wipe substances on others' faces but it is not talc! Sometimes it is vibrantly-colored powder, in other cases it is bleaching deodorant powder mixed with water that burns and reddens eyes.

In large cities all over the country, civilians run around splashing buckets of water and squirting water-guns of all shapes and sizes. Small trucks drive through towns with tarps in the back filled with extremely cold ice water: groups sit on the edge of the trucks and chuck water out onto the people. No one gets mad, because it is a blessing, although not traditional, and the water is very cold. Some Thai people drive around in cars and watch hidden from the crazy, soaking wet, outside world.

In small island towns, the festival is different. The people still run around with water buckets and squirt-guns, but the islanders are much more creative. They make homemade water-guns that are extremely powerful and

pursues his future career. "He told me to get out there and make my work interesting," Ben says. "The best advice he gave me was to write something that captures the attention of a reader. Write something they don't want to put down." Ben reads the magazine whenever a new issue is out. "It gets me pumped up for skiing," he says, "and it helps to read what I want to write about." Ben has his heart set on journalism, and envisions a life of adventure while doing what he loves.

***editor's note: Ben just received *Honorable Mention* for his collection of poems, *Linked* in the 2013 Idaho Scholastic Art and Writing Award Contest. The judges' "appreciated that you are having fun with language. Congratulations!"

Chill

by Ben Crogh

Furious air races up down; left right;
slow fast. Pines and aspens
congregate in a dance hall during the midst of winter,
waltzing with each flurry of ice crystals.
Yellow pine needles excite adrenaline,
through the ease of falling without a care.

Concrete jungles fill with red faces,
people abroad in commute. Every corner
of the city, every ally, stashes
cold, uncomfortable humans
looking for escape from the metropolis.

Lisa Wood

by Vivienne Wieggers

Lisa Wood owns and manages a small combined boutique, consignment, and kitchen store called Bella Kitchen, in McCall, Idaho. Mrs. Wood enjoys owning a business in a small town and interacting with her customers and other people who come and visit her. Mrs. Wood has a very upbeat perspective, believing that her work is not a job: it is a new exciting experience every day.

Before Mrs. Wood opened her business in McCall, she was a probation officer in Boise, Idaho. Working as a probation officer was not her passion, and she realized she needed a change. One day she was eating lunch with her stepfather, telling him her dilemma. He said, "If you don't like your job, it's up to you to make a change." Talking to her relative put many thoughts into Wood's mind about what she

shoot much farther out into crowds of people. Small, adorable children stand on the side of the road with their fathers and chuck water out of buckets at people passing by. They yell, running with hoses and watering siblings as if they were thirsty plants.

On the islands people do not drive cars, they drive scooters. Pedestrians stop islanders on scooters by walking into the middle of the road and waiting until the drivers stop. Then they dump water on the scooter drivers and flick colored powder on their drenched bodies. When the civilians move out of the way, the drivers make their way into music-filled streets. People dance to booming music. They twirl and move fluidly with the music, spraying water with hoses in the air. On the streets there are enormous metal trash cans filled with water with which people fill buckets and squirt-guns. Some small children jump into the water-filled trash cans and splash people with their free hands.

Songkran in Thailand is a wonderful escapade. Experiencing these activities is a whole new kind of fun. Taking part in this foreign, welcoming festival is very different from anything people experience in the United States. The craziest part of *Songkran* is the people's attitudes, because they are all so happy and thankful to be there and to be receiving all the blessings. From delightful and charming children to soaking-wet, color-stained adults, *Songkran* festival is breathtakingly amazing.

Infamous

by Baylie Holsman

Clouds, black like charcoal, travel rapidly
towards green, grassy fairways. Blue, clear sky
retreats into the horizon. Steel
golf clubs swing,
wet metal enticing quick flashes of lightning.
Thunder booms:
rumble-crack, rumble-crack.
Golfers run inside, the game
obliterated by heavy drops of rain.

wanted to do. So she left her job as a probation officer and started a new business in the beautiful town of McCall.

Wood's favorite part of being a small town business owner is meeting people. She loves interacting with her customers every day. Being in a small tourist town, she gets many different types of customers from all over the county. "Meeting them is very interesting," she says. There are "so many people with different personalities, it's just really fun." The environment of the small store has had a great impact on her life.

Wood is a proud employer. All of her employees are genuinely kind and have had experience working with the public. These are qualities that Wood looks for when she is hiring. Working well with others is also very important for being helpful to customers in Bella Kitchen. "Out of eleven years of being a business owner, I have only had to fire two people, because they didn't have the qualities I was looking for," Wood states proudly. She is very pleased with this because many of her employees have worked out.

It is very difficult to select products that the public might enjoy. Wood brings items into her store that she likes and thinks the public will be fond of. "It is very hard to sell something you personally don't like," says Wood. Quality is also very important at her store. Being in a kitchen store business can be challenging because companies try to sell "cheap" items for much more than they are worth. Making sure every item brought into the store is top quality is very important to Wood. She states, "I don't want to sell things that are just going to break after one or two uses." Many customers admire her and her store for dedication to quality.

One of the most popular items sold at Bella Kitchen is Lilly Pad Silicone Lids. These lids fit on any and every bowl, keeping food fresh. Suction creates a seal on each bowl, equivalent to reusable plastic food wrap. She says, "People love them. I think I have literally sold a thousand of them." Wood's favorite item to sell is a good knife. Many people have very unsatisfactory knives, that do not cut food very well. "Getting a good knife changes people in a small but happy way," Lisa says.

Lisa Wood has learned many valuable life lessons being a small town business owner. "The biggest thing is to be happy with what you have," she says. She is very happy to have her small store in such a beautiful town, with amazing people. She has also learned that when a change is needed, go make one.

Jubilation

by Ben Crogh

Pre-game is filled with sitting; the hot sun burns only one hemisphere. Minutes before the game begins, I am jostled then thrown into the middle of the soccer field. This is where the fun begins. *Whamm-o!* As the game commences, the play turns into a brawl. My sides are quickly covered with cuts from bristly grass. I try to roll as straight as possible, but this field has an overabundance of potholes, and I am ricocheted from one to the next.

Well into the first half, the only keeper I have passed by is the one with the yellow jersey. That might be due to how hard the blue team boots me when they get the chance, or it might be that the goalie is not very experienced. Regardless, I am enjoying the time I have out on the field, as I do every day. This is districts, and the teams are some of the best in the league. My parents have starred in tournaments overseas, and once, even in the World Cup. Some of my buddies have also played high school games, but the furthest any of us have gone is to state.

This blue team is really playing well; I think that they may take home the big "W." Sure the white team is playing well and trying their hardest, but from what I feel, the skill is not there. White has been fouling a lot, which may mean they are not comfortable with their playing ability. If they could stop passing it to number thirty-five, then they actually might have a shot on goal.

Halftime is such a drag for a ball like me. Both teams are at different ends of the field, insulting each other, and yelling about what they want to do to them. As for me, I am kicked around by some little immature kids who are there with their parents. Some of them do not even know how to kick a ball correctly. Toe pokes really dig into my sides and make me sore for the rest of the game.

Smack! Boom! Thwack! Second half is much more intense; this is where teams really apply their effort. There are some players whom I enjoy being in possession of because they really know how to treat a ball right.

Score is three to five: the home team is winning. Oh wait. There is a penalty in the eighteen yard box. It's a penalty kick! *Whack!* It's good! That puts the away team up one point, and trailing only by one point. Can the white team pull it off and score once more to end up with a tie? This is the really exciting part of the game. There is no telling

Noah

by Noah Stapp

Raven, ear-length hair; olive, sun-kissed skin, dark brown eyes dimly glow like gems in a mud cave. Socrates, Plato wile away my hours, stories beguile my quiet days. The speed and terrain of mountain biking draws me, like a fly to meat.

Music

fills my ears; my fingers

press ivory keys.

Golf

by Baylie Holsman

Golf is the hardest game I have ever played. It is a straining mental game and also requires physical ability. When playing golf, I never know if I am going to do well that day. It is unpredictable, like opening presents on Christmas morning; you never know what you are going to get. Competitions can make the stress much worse by adding on pressure.

Each shot a player takes counts, and if he cannot recover from a bad shot, then the game becomes stressful. Carrying a heavy bag also takes a toll on a player's mental state. A bag full of steel-shafted clubs feels like hauling rocks around on your back. The mental and physical part of golf is very important, even if it seems like a piece of cake.

One shot can determine my score for an entire round of golf. It can be the breaking point of my best or worst score so far in the season. The amount of thought that goes into every time I hit the ball feels like I am taking the SAT. This thought process occurs for four to five hours straight, and is mentally draining. Studying for a test is about as difficult as playing eighteen holes of golf. One of the best ways to stay focused during golf is to not worry once you have messed up, but to figure out how to fix your mistake.

Competition adds an entire new layer of stress while golfing. Not only am I trying to beat my previous score, but now, I am fighting for first place against other girls. I feel as if I am competing against everyone, including myself, and there is a possibility I will not win at all that day. Competing also causes me to worry about other players' scores, as well as my own. I then begin to forget to focus. It is like when a kid plays with a toy, near another kid playing

who will win.

The ball is set for a restart and there are only three minutes left on the clock. Will the hard effort put forth by the white team lead them to victory or will the lead and good skills of the blue team lend them the win? As the end comes near, I am booted into the sunlight one last time. The flying sensation puts a hectic feeling into my stitches, and I soar toward someone's win.

Dark Forest

by Noah Stapp

Tendrils of shadow, born of shadows themselves, drift among oaks like dead souls searching for heaven. Gnarled branches, ropes of the hanged looped around them, jut from every tree. Bright, ghostly moonlight casts an illusion of peace; shadows creep ever closer, offering a hand to the depths of the Underworld.

School

by Noah Stapp

Walking down white hallways, fellow inmates jostle around, guards watching over. These children, full of adventure and energy, their every move guarded and regulated by wardens. Prisoners in jail, they shuffle down stone halls, silent as mourners. No longer free to act as they see fit; only obeying rules dictating what, when, and where they can act.

Alone

by Baylie Holsman

Milky clouds of warm breath hang in chilly, still air. Water drips off sharp ice: rain falling from dark sky. Quiet envelops a town. One lonely deer walks slowly in early hours of a winter morning

with a different toy: all the attention of the first kid goes towards the toy he does not have.

I went to State during my freshman year of high school. The competition was rough, and I could cut the tension with a knife. I was extremely nervous, not only because of the competition, but because I was playing Varsity as a Freshman. I felt like an elephant was sitting on my chest when I went to hit my first ball of the day. So many eyes were on me, and I was terrified of hitting a bad shot. Being so nervous acted as a motivator, and also weighed me down, because I did a lot of overthinking.

Golf is a very competitive sport. Although the physical activity is minimized, the mental ability it takes to play is straining. The work that goes into practicing and playing is intense, and can cause a player to become very irritable. Staying focused is the best piece of advice I have gotten from professionals, but sometimes it is not so easy.

searching for food to salvage,
before cold winter months
set in.