

the perspective

A PUBLICATION OF THE TRUMAN STATE UNIVERSITY WRITING CENTER

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Altered Perspectives - Editor's Greeting

in this issue...

Post-election phlegm and bile: O Demographic, Where Art Thou?

by Ty Fagan

Beware P. Diddy! He's coming to kill you! Seriously! If you're 90% of Americans aged 18 to 24, you're facing mortal danger. After all, Mr. Diddy spearheaded this year's "Vote or Die" campaign, which approached the youth voting issue with a harsher, scarier tone than the older, more upbeat, but equally insistent Rock the Vote organization (which just makes me think of high-fives, smiles, and candy). And since, according to most of the talking heads I saw on that dark and gloomy day called November 3rd, 2004, the 18-24 age group showed up to vote to the tune of about 10%, that means P. Diddy and his elite cadre of Voting Enthusiasts (which includes the terrifying behemoth from Planet Quorthog known as Ashlee Simpson) are obligated to kill roughly 90% of us "young adults." Seriously, he's got a list and he's checking it twice. Like an avenging Santa with more diamonds, he'll be visiting houses all over fulfilling his threat.

In all seriousness, what in Alvis' name happened on Tuesday? In the weeks running up to the election (and well before then), I heard the pundits harping on all sorts of themes, one of the prominent ones being the imminent massive outpouring of youth at the polls. The youth vote was supposed to be huge for this election—young people were energized and informed like never before. Startled awake by a terrorist attack, bitterly divided by a controversial war, spooked by speculation about a draft, and of course, threatened to Vote or Die, we youth were going to Respond at last. We were finally going to step up from the dismal funk of apathy that has gripped us for years. We were going to Make Our Voices Heard, to Speak Out—in short, we were going to Rock the Vote, and rock it hard. High fives all around!

But that didn't quite work out. At least, for 90% of us, it didn't. That 10% figure is actually *lower* than our demographic's turnout for the 2000 election. *Lower!* I just can't figure it out. And let me state that although I am an avowed liberal who really, really, *really* wanted to Bush to lose (whoops! I meant, "Kerry to win"), I promise I'm not encouraging the youth vote because I think it would have swung the election differently. It probably wouldn't have, although it certainly wouldn't have hurt Kerry's position. Yes, young people tend to vote Democrat—but that's just the way it is *at this time*. Nothing says that young people *have* to be Dems, or that old people have to love the GOP. It just happens to be that way right now. Even if the youth vote would have favored

Bush, I would have liked to see more young people voting. I want the government to reflect the opinion of the people, and we are an important part of those people. I feel betrayed by my own brethren, sorta like after the world series. The election has left a very bitter taste in my mouth, and for this reason as much as for the outcome. All I can say is, "Vote Clinton-Obama in 2012." And by then, we won't be "the youth" any longer, so more than 10% of us can show up.

Well, with that politically charged bellyaching out of the way, let me formally welcome you, gentle readers, to the First Issue of the Sixth Volume of the *Perspective*, the official publication of the Truman State University Writing Center! We have an absolute boatload of new consultants this semester (as you well know, because you probably are one—the seasoned vets don't read my columns anymore), and many of them have jumped aboard the *Perspective* train, which is hurtling through the wastelands of small-scale quasi-journalism toward the station known as Greatness. The new staffers have contributed great stuff—some serious, some not quite so serious, some a little of both—and the overall effect is wonderful. I must apologize for the near-total lack of graphical elements. We were in the rare position of having *too much* text, and so I didn't worry too much about snagging pretty pictures. That'll change in the issues to come, I promise.

But read on! We've got consultant spotlights on pages 2 and 3, a delightful Mad Lib on page 4, a page 5 dedicated entirely to poetry with original works by Rachel Moore and me with analysis by Steve Wachowiak, and on page 6 Jenna Feldstein breaks down the *real* art and science of humor, with some examples you can try on your friends. Bon appetit!

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What's Funny

This issue, we turn the spotlight on Amanda Hackney.....

FULL Name: Amanda Lee Hackney

Year (Academically speaking): #2, like the pencil

Hometown: Uniontown, PA, Sedalia, MO, Manitowoc, WI, Kirks-ville.

How many semesters have you spent at the Writing Center? One month.

Best birthday gift you've ever received: Hugs (great for any occasion). Seriously, getting to live another day (talk to me if you really wanna know what this means).

Favorite Smell(s): Outdoors

Last movie that made you cry: *Save the Last Dance*

What would your personalized license plate say? LUV4ALL ?

You have to hear just one song, over and over, for the rest of your life. What is it?

~~When music plays in your head all the time, the radio's not necessary.~~

The *Nip/Tuck* question—tell me what you don't like about yourself: I worry too much and get my hopes up too high.

Favorite Saturday morning cartoon show: Does Saturday night count? *Inuyasha*.

Favorite snack for late-night study sessions: Kettle Korn

Favorite word (in English or any language): actually, the phrase
"wicked ambiance"

What's your never-fail, go-to dance move, and when was the last time you used it?
Rotate-the-hips-while-turning-in-slow-circles; can't remember.

Your house is on fire. You rush back in to save: My Faith (cat).

If you could have a summer (or winter, or whatever) home somewhere, where wouldst it be? If the philosophy is "Home is where the head rests," well...in the mountains, not too cold.

It ticks you off when people...kill things

Who would you want to play you in the HBO movie about your life, and why? Mandy Moore – similar to me in her other roles.

If you could pick any two people, other than your biologicals, to be your parents, who would they be and why? My ex-boyfriend and ex-best friend so neither of them could have broken my heart and I'd be able to spend time with them forever (until death) instead of not talking to them at all.

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Consultant
Spotlight:
Amanda
Hackney

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...and also on Blake Simmons

FULL Name: Paul Blakely Simmons

Year (Academically speaking): Senior

Hometown: Cedar Hill, MO

How many semesters have you spent at the Writing Center? One

Best birthday gift you've ever received: When I turned 21 my mom gave me a photo album of a bunch of pictures over the course of my life.

Favorite Smell(s): New car, freshly cut grass

Last movie that made you cry: *Saving Private Ryan*

What would your personalized license plate say? ASSMAN (from *Seinfeld*)

You have to hear just one song, over and over, for the rest of your life. What is it? I think I'd have to pick "Yeah" by Usher because it already feels like it's the only song I hear.

The *Nip/Tuck* question—tell me what you don't like about yourself:

When my hair gets long it poofs out like a sort of afro.

Favorite Saturday morning cartoon show: I was more of a Disney Afternoon man, i.e. *Ducktales*, *Talespin*

Favorite snack for late-night study sessions: Red Bull

Favorite word (in English or any language):

Ingrinable, courtesy of our commander-in-chief.

What's your never-fail, go-to dance move, and when was the last time you used it? My repertoire of dance moves is so large that it is impossible to pick only one.

Your house is on fire. You rush back in to save:

My roommates, but only the ones who have given me money for the bills.

If you could have a summer (or winter, or whatever) home somewhere, where wouldst it be? I have always wanted a home on the San Francisco Bay where I could look out over the water and into the city itself.

It ticks you off when people...say "bless you" for each individual sneeze. If a person sneezes three times, one "bless you" will suffice, not "bless you, bless you, bless you."

Who would you want to play you in the HBO movie about your life, and why? Robin Williams, because surely he could make my life seem funny and interesting.

If you could pick any two people, other than your biologicals, to be your parents, who would they be and why? Indiana Jones and Hillary Clinton, because intelligence is supposed to come from the mother and Indiana Jones is just freakin' awesome.

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Consultant
Spotlight:
Blake
Simmons

writing center MAD LIBS

Note: Mad Libs is a registered trademark of, uh...somebody. Probably. Go ahead and sue us.

We at the *Perspective* know how much today's readers like interactivity and challenging material. Today's readers don't want to just sit back passively, being bombarded with words by writers who don't have a clue. Today's readers are *soooo* sophisticated. They're *soooooo* smart and clever. Well, smarty pants, maybe you'd like to generate your *own* stories. And that's just what Rachel Moore has allowed you to do with this: the FIRST EVER Writing Center Mad Lib. Grab a friend, a pen, and let your imaginations run wild. For x-tra fun, tear this page out after you're done, and we can post up the quality product in the Center!

"The Last Bash"

by Rachel Moore

1. Adjective

One upon a time there was a(n) _____ armada of dangerous spaceships headed for Earth. The Ruler of the World, _____ IV, and all of the Ruler's top advisors were stumped. One advisor said to just give up all the _____ on the planet. Another said that they should build _____ and use them to escape. The Ruler knew none of that would work. All their plans were too _____.

6. Adjective

So instead of spending their last days in _____ despair, the Ruler declared a worldwide party until "further notice." There were _____ and _____ fireworks. There would be _____ to eat and all the purple Kool-Aid anybody could _____ in a lifetime. The Ruler and the Advisors were very good at spreading joy. That was how they had gotten their jobs.

7. Plural noun

8. Adjective

9. Plural noun

10. Present tense verb

They also planned to give every child a(n) _____ with sparkles. Every adult would receive two of these. There would be _____ tournaments of all sorts, with the _____ prizes given to everybody. They also passed out free _____ so people could have safe sex.

11. Noun

12. Adjective

Not that it much mattered if they were safe about it. The world was about to be conquered and _____ anyway. All the people in the world had their last great _____ party.

15. Plural noun

16. Past tense verb

For four whole days everybody was as happy as they had ever been. Then the invasion force came down.

The admiral of the armada looked down and said, " _____

17. Adjective

18. Adverb

_____ ." In his language, that meant, "Hey, let's go join that party.

19. Past tense verb

20. Noun

Maybe we could use this as a vacation planet instead of a slave planet.

And that is how Earth became the intergalactic party station that it is today. The End.

p.4
Writing
Center
Mad
Libs

poetry corner

by Steve Wachowiak

To stave off the boredom of a slow morning at the Writing Center, I sat down with fellow consultant Rachel Moore to kill some time. She had mentioned previously that she was working on a short story for her class on fictional writing, so out of curiosity I asked whether she wrote in that form often.

"I've been working on short stories because I'm in Fiction. I'm probably a better poet," Rachel replied. I asked if she had any samples of her poetry with her; she went online to bring up a poem of hers titled "Snow White," included here in its entirety.

Those of you who know Rachel are probably familiar with her light-hearted sense of humor; the serious nature of the poem she chose to share surprised me. "This is atypical. Usually I write silly poems," she assured me.

"Snow White" looks at the traditional heroine in a realistic light – what would the princess really have thought about the fairy tale? Contrary to the Disney interpretation of the story, this Snow White wasn't thrilled with her situation.

Rachel wouldn't say whether she intended the poem to have a wider meaning. When I asked if it was a feminist commentary on society (as it had appeared to me, you may judge for yourself), she shrugged and parried my question, giving me no solid answer.

She was more willing to talk about her own experiences as a writer. Rachel said she remembers writing even as a child; "My mom used to take dictation on the typewriter for stories I told her when I was a wee lass." Here at Truman, she's continued her writing and has had the opportunity to present her work through Windfall and local poetry slams. "I like giving poetry readings, I've done it a total of once. No... Twice."

Snow White

"And in that sleep of death what dreams may come..." ~ Hamlet, W. Shakespeare

Mother daughtered in the mirror
Daughter mothered in the mirror
Mirror, mirror on the wall
Who's the favorite toy of all?
Whose reflection does the king love best?
Ha! He loves himself the best.
But his voice in the mirror never told her so

It never warned me I'd lay here dead;
Poisoned by a hand that should have been my mother
For her love of a voice that should have been my father
A loveless orphan in wakeful death am I,
Inheritor of smothering reflection.

Soon Prince Charming will come and claim me
I can't even choose to stay dead

I must run to him for my chance
At a matriarch's position
Always listening to a mirror
But with a secret precious hope
Of mothering daughters to be queens
So they may silence speaking glass
And break the past reflections.

-Rachel Moore

p.5 Poetry Corner [now with analysis]

Is there ever a bad time for pudding?

The answer to this question, posed by Captain Murphy of Sealab 2021, is a resounding, "Nay!" The same goes, by the way, for limericks. Limericks are the sitcoms of poetry; they're short, sometimes clever, and all basically the same; plus, half the time you know what's going to happen before it's over. They're silly nuggets of poetization, and it's an entertaining little challenge to scribble out a limerick or two. I've done the latter--that is, scribble out a couple Writing Center-themed limericks that express in bizarre terms my unconscious fears about client retaliation. I've also included one of my all-time favorite limericks, the anonymously-generated Three Line Limerick. Send in lim'ricks of your own and we could make this a regular installment. Keep them sort of clean, though. I guess. Or not. If they're really good, I'll print them even if they're a bit naughty.

There once was a WC client
With a manner so cruel and defiant,
When I questioned her theses,
She exclaimed, "[Bovine feces!]"*
It turns out my convictions are pliant.

-Ty Fagan

And speaking of mean clients lurking,
Just yesterday, stupidly smirking,
I told a guy, "Your assignment
Needs gross realignment."
Now my poor limbs are no longer working.

-Ty Fagan

There was a young fellow from France
Who waited ten years for his chance.
Then he muffed it.

-Anonymous

* Eds. Note: expletive edited for propriety's sake. And for rhyme. **

** Eds. Note to eds. Note: Obviously, this was a cheap way for me to finally make the theses/feces joke happen in print. Mission accomplished.

getting serious about humor

By Jenna Feldstein

For some reason, which is not to be discerned here, writing consultants are not funny. Some of us may have thought at one time or another we were funny, but sadly for those around us, we were mistaken. However, there are ways to become funny. Below are some serious ways to find a sense of humor (if you would like a copy of my sources for further study, just let me know).

There are four categories of humor:

1. Pain - We laugh at pain as long as we are not experiencing it, because then it isn't funny, but painful. [Eds. Note: cf. the great remark by Mel Brooks: "Tragedy is when I cut my finger. Comedy is when you fall into an open sewer and die."]
2. The unexpected or ironic- After your pathetic attempt at joke telling, you may find the other person laughing, not because your joke was funny, but because it was supposed to be funny and wasn't, which is, therefore, ironic. [See all music ever generated by Creed for a fine example of this type of humor.]
3. Wordplay - Some words are funny, like "Uranus." [Eds. Note: we won't go into that. "Uranus," I mean. We won't go into "Uranus." There's some more wordplay.]
4. Sarcasm, or lying - Only to be attempted after mastering all of the above, because sarcasm done poorly is just fabulous.

Here are some everyday examples of how, where and when to use sarcasm:

- Someone trips or falls down:
"Walk much?"
"How was your trip?"
- Your friend hits a curb with her car:
"Curb check, it's okay, *it is still there.*"
- Someone makes a really dumb comment in class:
"You are so pretty!!!"
"My fern made that point yesterday." (Bonus points for using a word as funny as "fern.")
- You meet a very short person for the first time:
(Running and pointing)"De plane! De plane!" [Eds. Note: We at the *Perspective* do not condone or recommend teasing differently sized people. Their teeth leave marks on your ankles.]

There are other ways to be funny*, including:

1. Personal Appearance: Wear a stupid hat.
2. Have odd things about your person: Own a weird pet, such as a llama or a weasel. Carry around something, like a spoon, always.
3. Behavior: Sing to yourself in public, it's okay; your mommy always said you had the voice of an angel.

*These ways often lead to people laughing *at you* as opposed to *with you*. But you will still be funny--just in a different way.

" Gimme, gimme gimme! I need, I need, I need!"

Hey gang. If you've gotten this far, you may have actually read the whole shebang (or maybe you just turned straight to Jenna's article, because you are her). You may have noticed that we have a record number of individuals contributing to this publication, and that the subject matter is more in-depth and exciting as a result. That is a triumph worth celebrating, but we can do even better. If you're one of our gracious readers who is technically not on the *Perspective* committee, despair not: you can still contribute any time you wish! We welcome all writing of all kinds, and for that matter, we'll take art too. Painting, movie reviews, essays, haiku (see last year's late spring issue), photography...anything I can somehow cram onto a page with my outmoded computing machine. Or even ideas for stories 'n articles--we're always open to trying new things. We want to serve your interests, and there will *always* be room for your contributions. Email stuff to tyfagan@truman.edu or drop it in Ty's staff mailbox, and keep it comin'!