

# Week 24: "Pride;" "That is the Last Time I Will Ever..."

## The Dream Team

By Tanya Miller

HARWOOD UNION HIGH SCHOOL, GRADE 12

How could we possibly lose? I've never been an extremely confident person or athlete, but by the time we had qualified for the Junior Worlds Lightning Championship, my 14-year-old ego went straight through the roof. After a week of sailing in Milwaukee, my team had qualified through the Junior North American championships, making us the best team in the country for our age. My brother Chad was the skipper for our boat, and our friend Dan was the tactician, leaving myself to man the dangerous waters of the bow. We three teenagers went home with a new confidence, desperately looking forward to the following summer that we would be spending in Finland.

The Dream Team's confidence plummeted, however, when we began the week's races. We were witnesses to the back of the pack, the agony of defeat. Our first encounter with the boats left us discouraged. Burgundy, the first boat we were given, felt like it was going to fall apart with even the smallest gust of wind. Its boat speed was so slow that it left my team paranoid. We felt that something must have been wrong with us; there wasn't. We struggled with bent booms, halyards that kept popping out so our sails came down in the middle of the race and a broken eye ring on the mast that holds the spinnaker pole. The latter made me responsible for holding the spinnaker pole, which speared me several times in the shoulder, thanks to the gusts of 20-mile per hour wind. We ended up coming in sixth out of 10 with the Brazilians leading the way for a consecutive third time. What could have possibly made this happen to us, the Dream Team?

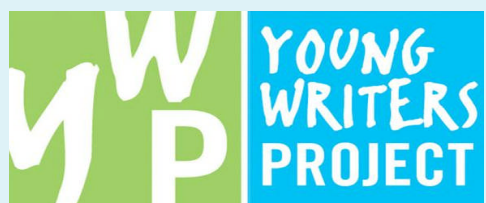
My reactions ranged from jealousy of my fellow teammates from our club who had done better, to anger at the blatant acts of cheating by the Greeks, to outrage at the boat conditions. This was not my finest hour. I don't know why I expected to win the Championship; I just figured that because we were the best in our area that we would cream everybody else. I was beyond presumptuous; I was just another arrogant American. Looking back, I am so embarrassed to have been a part of that cliché.

When I arrived home after a grueling 10 days of racing and traveling, I was exhausted. I sat down at my computer and e-mailed everyone whom I had met in Finland. I immediately regretted my poor behavior toward the other competitors. I had been willing to blame everything except us, the Dream Team. We were perfect in my eyes. It didn't occur to me that we had done anything wrong, I just then realized that we were far from perfect. We couldn't just sit around whining about our friends who had gotten in on a stupid technicality, nor about the Greeks cheating, nor about the boat conditions. Everyone had to use the same boats; they just knew how to sail them better than we did. I'm not saying it was completely my fault – we really did have some terrible luck – but I realized that I have to take some responsibility for what happens to me and to those around me.



## CHILLING BEAUTY

Samantha Owen, a senior at Essex High School, says this about her photo project: "Winter can be a very interesting season when it snows. I used the snow in my photos to show the beauty and detail in nature that might be overlooked otherwise. The sparkling snow can be seen as a single snowflake or in masses that cover trees, mimicking the exact lines of the branches. I decided to take the original colors out of the photos and use a sepia tone because this seemed to bring out the photos' features. I really wanted to share the different aspects and angles of winter that many people miss."



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DEADLINE APPROACHING:

### CHAMPLAIN COLLEGE WRITING CONFERENCE

Don't miss out on this year's CC Young Vermont Writers' Conference. Held on Memorial Day weekend, this conference is a great experience. **Deadline for applications is April 1.** Go to: [www.champlain.edu/write/](http://www.champlain.edu/write/) for more information and application forms. Or call: (802) 865-6451

## On the Web

at

[youngwritersproject.org](http://youngwritersproject.org)

**CHANGE YOUR HIGH SCHOOL!** A special challenge on the site: Tell us one thing you'd change to improve your high school. Your voice matters: Educational leaders and the Vermont Principals Association are developing a program aimed at helping students get more voice in school decisions and curriculum. Your voice will help focus that project.

## That is the last time I make that mistake

By Miranda Axworthy | ESSEX HIGH SCHOOL, GRADE 9

The distorted guitars and hardcore screams of metal blasted into my ears as I felt my ribs being slowly crushed. The people around me had decided to cram me into a space that was half my size, and they were relentless about keeping me there. The flow of the crowd was moving to the right and I had no choice but to go with them. I wasn't even sure if my feet were on the ground anymore. In any case, I was completely at the mercy of the metal heads around me.

I sang as many of the words as possible by figuring out how the song was going. I had never actually listened to this band, but blending in was for my own safety. If the others in the crowd knew I wasn't really into metal, I was doomed. As it was, I wasn't quite sure if it was possible to survive the show. I suddenly realized that I couldn't breathe, so I used all of my strength to push myself away from the guy in front of me so I could snatch a couple of quick breaths, but, almost immediately, the crowd shoved me back to suffocating.

Just as I was sure that things couldn't get any worse, someone landed on me. You got it: crowd surfers. Oh, how I hate them. My neck was bent into an awkward position as the bouncers tried to get the guy off of the crowd. After what felt like forever, he was gone. I straightened up quickly, not wanting to be caught off guard again, but barely a minute had gone by, when there was another one. My face was pressed into someone's back, and I couldn't breathe for a few panicked moments, but then the weight lifted and air returned to my starving lungs.

The second song was ending. How many did they have? I was sure it couldn't be more than

five, since they only had a half-hour set, but I didn't know if I could last. The only reason I was there was because one of my favorite bands was next. After the fourth song, I heard the singer stop to talk. Unfortunately, this didn't calm anyone down. I started listening to what he was saying.

"So, I'm sure you all have heard of something called..." he paused for effect before shouting, "THE WALL OF DEATH!"

Oh, no, I thought, although I had no idea what the wall of death was. I'm dead. I'm gonna die. Oh, I am so doomed.

As what could have been my last thoughts raced through my mind, a huge space opened up in the crowd, right next to me. I turned toward it and my eyes went wide as I realized what would happen. When the band started playing again, everyone was going to rush each other. The name didn't help with the vivid image in my head. I turned desperately to the guy next to me.

"Get me out of here, man," I begged. "I'm serious, I'm gonna get killed."

He grinned and got me out of harm's way, although I did receive some of the aftershock.

When the set finally ended and the band I wanted to see had played their time, I hurried out of the crowd and searched for my best friend, who had gotten separated from me. I hoped she was okay.

When I found her, we swapped stories. We agreed that it had been among the most fun, and most terrifying, experiences of our lives. Although it had been amazing, I made a mental note: That was the last time I was going to be in the second row of a metal concert.

## No way I will ever do that again

By Katrina Smith | MOUNT ABRAHAM UNION HIGH SCHOOL, GRADE 7

I recently came across someone as they were filling up their gas tank. They looked fairly young and had probably never filled a gas tank before. I know this because of their reaction after their mom came up to them: "And that's the last time I will ever fill up a gas tank."

That got me to thinking ... How many times have I personally said that? I remember saying that right after I let my worst fear, a spider, crawl up my leg in daycare. I bet a lot of people say that after they are caught talking behind someone's back, or have a big project in school and wait until the night before it's due to make it: "That's the last time I will ever wait that long to do a project." Here's another one: "That's the last time I'll ever not pay attention to my

my teacher."

So, we all say it many times, but do we ever really mean it? Kids in my classes wait until the last minute to do their projects. When they get the grade they say, "I will never wait until the last minute again." Then for the next project they do it again. The pattern keeps repeating. You just have to break the chain. And do you ever really pay attention to a teacher? I mean, think back to when you were a kid; sometimes you would just zone out in class and then when they send you out to do your work you're ripped back to reality. You sit there going "What exactly are we doing again?" My advice? Think twice before you say you won't ever do something again.

## The wisest child

By Hanna Kingston

MOUNT MANSFIELD UNION HIGH SCHOOL, GRADE 9

The little child with the emerald eyes  
He lies in the grass and looks up at the sky  
And he sees not the moon nor the stars or the sun  
He sees empty space for him to fly  
He knows that a star is a great thing to be  
But he fears not the others who want destiny  
For stars are small and the heavens large  
And there's room for us all to be seen

## Troublesome pride

By Emma Seaver

HARTFORD MEMORIAL MIDDLE SCHOOL, GRADE 8

Pride can get you into trouble.  
If you're too proud  
You could get hurt. Being proud  
of acing your science test  
and being so proud you can't  
apologize  
are two different things.  
You ace a science test,  
You get a pat on the back.  
You can't say sorry  
you get your teeth kicked in.  
Pride can be dangerous.

## It takes time to be an adult

By Will Roberts

FAIRFIELD CENTER SCHOOL, GRADE 8

This is the last time  
That I shall cry or whine  
Or pout or fight or mope and moan  
I shall truly be divine  
Because that's what adults are  
And I am just a boy  
To make this large transition  
I must be smart and coy  
Too long have I goofed around  
Expectations are at hand  
To grow up, speak out, not cry or sulk  
And do the best I can  
They say effort gets you far in life  
And that's what I should do  
I try to learn but can't discern  
The itsy-bitsy clues