

Mark Earley
Belmont High School
221 Concord Avenue
Belmont, MA 02478
Grade 11 Honors English
August, 2008

“Knowledge does not come to us by details, but in flashes of light from heaven.”

Title: Walk it Like You Talk It: Thoreau’s Philosophy of Doing

Abstract:

This unit is designed for use in an 11th grade honors American Literature course. The focus of the course centers on an examination of the American Dream through various works and literary movements. The scope of this particular unit is to introduce students to the work of Henry David Thoreau and allow them to explore his philosophy as it applies to and intersects with their own lives. Before beginning this unit students will have read a few of the works of Ralph Waldo Emerson, notably “Self Reliance,” as well as excerpts from “Nature” (Introduction), and “The American Scholar”. Students will have also explored various definitions of Transcendentalism. The unit will explore several Essential Questions (EQs) gleaned from Thoreau’s writings that will lead to active engagement with and application of the author’s ideas. By using an experiential, place-based pedagogy that emphasizes hands-on modalities students will be able to intuit the moral imperatives found in Thoreau’s philosophy.

Essential Questions:

- ✓ What is the value of nature?
- ✓ How does one develop a relationship with nature?
- ✓ What is the value of solitude?
- ✓ How does society shape who we are?
- ✓ What does it mean to live one’s ideals/values?
- ✓ What does it mean to “live deliberately”?

Grade and Subject: Honors English, Grade 11

Objectives: Students will learn and be able to do...

- ✓ Understand the relationship between literature and life
- ✓ Practice focused observation of nature and self
- ✓ Explore their own ideas about nature/self/society through reflective journal writing
- ✓ Experience nature in their own community
- ✓ Develop journaling skills
- ✓ Recognize Thoreauvian ideals in various modern contexts
- ✓ Articulate their own ideals
- ✓ Engage in stewardship of their own natural spaces
- ✓ Take an activist approach to issues concerning their local environment

Duration: 10 class periods

Literature:

Excerpts from *Walden; Or, Life in the Woods* by Henry David Thoreau: “Where I Lived, and What I Lived For,” “Reading,” “Solitude,” “Visitors,” “The Bean Field,” and “Conclusion”

Thoreau’s essays “Civil Disobedience,” “Walking,” and “Life without Principle.”

Excerpts from *Into The Wild* by Jon Krakauer: Author’s note, Chapter 8, 9, 16, and 17
“Conscience and Disobedience” by Willard Uphaus

Other media explored:

Music: “Oxygen” and “Save Myself” by Willy Mason

Film: *Into The Wild* DVD

Curriculum Outline

Lesson	Purpose	Days	Readings
1	Walk it like you talk it: Living one’s ideals	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Conscience and Disobedience” • “Civil Disobedience” and “Life without Principle”
2	Exploring your own “Walden”: Stewardship of our own natural places	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Walking” • “Where I Lived, and What I Lived For,” and “Reading”
3	Observing oneself and the natural world: Nature journaling	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Solitude” and “Visitors” • “Sounds” and “Conclusion”
4	Taking Thoreau to heart: The story of Chris McCandless	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excerpts from <i>Into The Wild</i> by Jon Krakauer: Author’s note, Chapter 8, 9, 16, and 17

Grading System

Students are required to complete a series of journals (both nature and reflective journaling) which will be graded on the following criteria:

4- Excellent Job: Original thoughts, ideas and/or opinions are presented regarding the content of the reading. The response addresses *all parts* of the question(s) with specific examples and details.

3- Good Job: The response could be further developed with more specific examples and/or original thoughts/ideas. There may be too much summary rather than actual analysis or opinion.

2- Could Be Better: The response may be too vague, too general and/or too brief, or it may only partially answer the question(s).

1- Very Sad: The response does not reflect an understanding of the reading and/or does not show sufficient effort.

Lesson Details

Day 1: Walk it like you talk it: Living your beliefs

1. In their journals, students are asked to respond to the following prompt: Is other people's opinion of you important to you? Why? Does it shape who you allow yourself to be publicly?
2. The class spends a few minutes brainstorming a list of people in the last century who have ignored or defied public opinion to effect remarkably positive social change. These are listed on the white board. Then, students spend time in groups listing moral qualities that they believe these people have in common.
3. Predicting Thoreau exercise for "Civil Disobedience" (Appendix A)

Homework: Read and annotate "Conscience and Disobedience" by Willard Uphaus (Appendix B) and "Civil Disobedience" by Henry David Thoreau

Day 2

1. Groups present lists from previous day and explain their choices.
2. Class discussion is based on the question whether morality should be consensus-driven (society) or conscience-driven (individual). In other words, are moral qualities teachable or innate? What would Thoreau think?
3. Predicting Thoreau exercise for "Life Without Principle" (Appendix C)

Homework: Read and annotate "Life Without Principle." Journaling.

Day 3

1. Triad Activity: 1 thing you've learned from the reading/1 thing you're left wondering about concerning the reading/1 *essential question* or *big idea* regarding the reading (Appendix D)
2. Class discussion is generated by sharing what groups learned from one another and from the exercise in focused listening.
3. The class reads selected news and commentary regarding fight to save the Silver Maple Forest by Friends of Alewife Reservation (FAR), legislators, and citizens from development. (Note: This is an ongoing and contentious battle to save one of the only remaining silver maple stands in the Boston area.) (Appendix E)

Homework: Read and annotate "Walking"—choose 1 notable quote from the reading.

Day 4: Exploring your own “Walden”: stewardship of our own natural places

“We are all schoolmasters, and our schoolhouse is the universe. To attend chiefly to the desk or schoolhouse while we neglect the scenery in which it is placed is absurd.”

Journal, Oct. 15, 1859

1. Excursion to Silver Maple Forest and Belmont Uplands (all day)
2. Students read notable quotes aloud from “Walking”
3. Time for contemplation and nature journaling

Homework: Read and annotate “Where I Lived, and What I Lived For” and “Reading”

Day 5:

“Each town should have a park, or rather a primitive forest of five hundred or a thousand acres, where a stick should never be cut for fuel, a common possession forever, for instruction and recreation. We hear of cow-commons and ministerial lots, but we want *men-commons* and lay lots, inalienable forever.”

Journal, Oct. 15, 1859

1. Class discussion will focus on the imperative of Thoreau’s message regarding conservation. *What value does Nature have that is beyond concepts such as money and property? How do we become responsible stewards of the natural places surrounding us?*
2. In groups, students brainstorm ways they can make an impact in the ongoing fight to save the Silver Maple Forest in the Belmont Uplands (e.g., a letter writing campaign)

Homework: Read and annotate “Sounds” and “Conclusion”

Day 6: Observing oneself and the natural world: Nature journaling

1. Excursion outside to Clay Pit Pond (on campus) to work on journal assignments
2. On this day, students refrain from using any electronic device: iPod, cell phone, Blackberry, etc. (as simple as this sounds, this will be a difficult thing to do for many of my students)

Homework: Read and annotate “Solitude” and “Visitors” and complete journal on their experience without electronic devices.

Day 7:

1. Silent dialogue on various quotes from the readings. Quotes are centered on several white boards while students write reactions to them and to one another in complete silence
2. Debriefing on what students wrote and why

Day 8: Taking Thoreau to heart: The story of Chris McCandless

1. Class reads and discusses author's note and Chapter 8 together from *Into The Wild* by Jon Krakauer
2. Begin viewing film adaptation of *Into the Wild* on DVD

Homework: Read and annotate chapters 16 and 17 of *Into the Wild* by Jon Krakauer

Day 9

1. Continue viewing *Into the Wild* DVD
2. Students discuss the irony of fictionalizing the McCandless story for profit and the nature of representing reality in both literature and film. Questions to think about: *Why does the Chris McCandless story resonate with people? What does his journey represent to us? How might Thoreau have reacted to his story and the news of his death?*

Day 10

1. Students listen to and analyze song lyrics to “Save Myself” and “Oxygen” by Willy Mason (Appendix F).
2. Wrap up discussion of work throughout the unit.
3. Students write a final reflection piece on what they've learned throughout the unit.
4. Students turn in their journals containing all nature journaling (Appendix G) as well as regular journal assignments (Appendix H) and any class work that required journaling.

Appendix A

Predicting “Civil Disobedience”

The following selections are from Thoreau’s essay “Civil Disobedience” which you will read tonight for homework. Today’s activity is a chance for you to puzzle out the meaning behind Thoreau’s ideas by looking closely at selected text in groups. Your group should analyze, discuss, and make a prediction about what you think the essay will be about based on your given selection. You will be taking notes on your work and writing it in your journal.

You should write the heading **Predicting “Civil Disobedience”** in your journal and be sure also to include today’s date.

You will be assigned a number 1 through 5 that will determine which group you are in. You will only have 15 minutes to read and discuss your selection and 5 minutes to jot down some notes in your journal so plan accordingly. After you have discussed the selection with your group and written in your journal, you should be prepared to tell the class what you’ve come up with.

Group #1: “Those who, while they disapprove of the character and measures of a government, yield to it their allegiance and support, are undoubtedly its most conscientious supporters, and so frequently the most serious obstacles to reform.” (7)

Group #2: “Action from principle, —the perception and the performance of right, —changes things and relations; it is essentially revolutionary, and does not consist wholly with any thing which was. It not only divides states and churches, it divides families; aye, it divides the *individual*, separating the diabolical in him from the divine.” (7)

Group #3: “If a plant cannot live according to its nature, it dies; and so a man.” (12)

Group #4: “Thus the State never intentionally confronts a man’s sense, intellectual or moral, but only his body, his senses. It is not armed with superior wit or honesty, but with superior physical strength. I was not born to be forced. I will breath after my own fashion. Let us see who is the strongest.” (12)

Group #5: “However, the government does not concern me much, and I shall bestow the fewest possible thoughts on it. If is not many moments that I live under a government, even in this world. If a man is thought-free, fancy-free, imagination-free, that which *is not* never for a long time appearing *to be* to him, unwise rulers or reformers cannot fatally interrupt him.” (16)

Appendix B

Conscience and Disobedience

By Willard Uphaus

[Source: Uphaus, Willard, "Conscience and Disobedience" in *Thoreau in Our Season*, edited by John H. Hicks (Amherst: U of Mass Press, 1966) pp. 22-26. Also in "A Centenary Gathering for Henry David Thoreau," a special section of *The Massachusetts Review* ed. by John H. Hicks, IV:1 (Autumn 1962), pp. 104-8 (also named Thoreau Society Booklet 17). This essay may have also been distributed by the Church of the Larger Fellowship (Unitarian). A comparison of this text with contemporary newspaper summaries suggests that a version of this essay was initially delivered as the keynote address of the Annual Meeting of the Thoreau Society at the First Parish Church (Unitarian) in Concord, Mass. on July 15, 1961. Note in the first sentence: David Henry Thoreau was Thoreau's birth name.]

THE LAWN OF MERRIMACK COUNTY JAIL in New Hampshire where I was imprisoned for a year slopes gently down to the bank of the winding Merrimack River where David Henry Thoreau once paddled. Once each week I was permitted under guard to go to a nearby building on a higher level to be treated by an osteopathic physician, and as I returned to my cellblock I surveyed, for a few moments, the beautiful landscape across the valley through which the river flowed. The sight of the river, and Walden, one of my valued jail possessions, made Thoreau an ever-living presence. The principles enunciated in his great essay on "Civil Disobedience" helped sustain me.

The situation in which I found myself was different from that which Thoreau faced, but the basic issues were very much alike. Would I refuse to cooperate with what I believed to be morally wrong and contrary to the historic principles on which our country was founded? Thoreau had great faith in the moral and spiritual power that one honest person can wield. In "Civil Disobedience" he declared, "I know this well, if one thousand, if one hundred, if ten honest men only — ay, if one HONEST man, in this State of Massachusetts, ceasing to hold slaves, were actually to withdraw from this co-partnership, and be locked up in the county jail therefore, it would be the abolition of slavery in America." What applied to abolition of slavery when Thoreau lived, would apply in the present when the freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment were in peril.

Like Thoreau I found my conscience coming into conflict with state authority. In 1954, at the height of the McCarthy hysteria, the State Legislature of New Hampshire authorized an inquiry by the Attorney General for the avowed purpose of disclosing activities threatening the overthrow by force and violence of the government of the United States and the State of New Hampshire. As executive director of World Fellowship Center near Conway, I was among those summoned to the inquiry. This Center, which had been in operation since 1941, as a forum-resort, is open to people of all races, faiths, nationalities and political beliefs, and its guests come from all over the United States and other parts of the world. There, through lectures and discussions on world problems, we seek to understand one another's faiths and cultures and to strengthen one another in working for peace and brotherhood.

At private hearings with the Attorney General before the trial [22 23] I had answered all questions about myself, including my religious, pacifist and political views, but had refused on the grounds of conscience to turn over to the Attorney General the guest lists for two years. I was aware, through his own admission, that a cross-index was being compiled by the Attorneys-General of 37 states of persons suspected of having "subversive" ideas, and the likelihood was that the names of World Fellowship guests would be added to it, for harassment and inquisition. Some 600 persons were involved. They were people whom I knew to be innocent, and the Attorney General offered no evidence to the contrary.

When I refused at private sessions to submit the lists, I was brought before the Superior Court of Merrimack County on January 5, 1956 and asked again whether I would comply with the Attorney General's demand. When I said "No," I was held in contempt and ordered jailed until such time as I would "purge" myself by giving the names. It was a life sentence, in effect. I held before the Justice and the people assembled a copy of the Bill of Rights and said,

I have grown up under that, I have for years been nurtured under that. I believe in it. I am a son of American soil and I love my country; and I love this document and I propose to uphold it with the full strength and power of my spirit and intelligence. . . . In the final analysis . . . one must make up his own mind or his own heart and conscience as to what he shall do. For a year and a half the question has been before me, and my answer must be "No, Your Honor."

I could not help but feel that the Justice, also a churchman, shared my repugnance at the thought of betraying innocent people; for he said after I had completed my statement: "In substance . . . you do not want to turn informer."

The State Supreme Court upheld the lower court by a 3 to 2 decision. Later the United States Supreme Court sustained the New Hampshire courts by a 5 to 4 ruling, with Chief Justice Warren and Justices Black, Brennan, and Douglas strongly dissenting. Finally, after three years of litigation, I was once more brought before the Superior Court and given another chance to answer the question. My conscience had not changed. The sentence was not indefinite, as before, but limited to one year. I was committed on December 14, 1959.

During the days of confinement I realized how much I had been influenced by our Judeo-Christian and American heritage. Our religious tradition has characteristically despised the informer. The people of ancient Israel had been taught that "he who puts his neighbor to public shame is considered as if he had shed blood." [23 24] Professor George Williams, Harvard's church historian, points out in a paper entitled "Reluctance To Inform" that Christians before Constantine's conversion, who were often hunted down and killed, "looked upon informing as a most hazardous and odious form of defection."

This commitment to the right of conscience appeared in the early period of our country. Benjamin Ginsberg in a splendid little book entitled "Rededication to Freedom" reviews the background of our Bill of Rights and defends the indivisibility of freedom. "The American Bill of Rights," he says, "embodies the modern concept of political liberty—the concept of liberty which centers in the freedom of the moral consciousness from control by the state. . . . The principle of the modern libertarian state is to be found in germ in the enunciation of the Biblical maxim, 'Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.'" In other words, the "Judeo-Christian monotheism gave to the individual perspective a sanctuary and a loyalty which transcends the tribe and nation."

There was considerable discussion of these principles during the days of the formation of the state constitutions. Theophilus Parsons, a young lawyer who helped frame the constitution of Massachusetts said,

We have duties, for the discharge of which we are accountable to our Creator and benefactor, which no human can cancel. What those duties are is determined by right reason, which may be, and is well called an informed conscience. What this conscience dictates as our duty, is so; and that power which assumes control over it, is an usurper; for no consent can be pleaded to justify control, as any consent in this is void.

The framers of the New Hampshire Bill of Rights actually accepted this principle when they adopted Article 4 which reads, "Among the natural rights, some are, in their very nature, unalienable, because no equivalent can be given or received for them. Of this kind are the rights of conscience." It was New Hampshire's own Daniel Webster who declared, "The contest for ages has been to rescue liberty from the grasp of executive power."

In May, 1960, Dean Erwin N. Griswold of the Harvard Law School said when speaking at the Centennial of The Law School of Northwestern University in Chicago, that "The right to be

let alone is the underlying theme of the Bill of Rights. It has continued to be fertile soil for the cultivation of individual freedom."

As Americans, Thoreau and I leaned on the same tradition. "That government is best which governs not at all; and when men are prepared for it, that will be the kind of government they will have," he declared. My own conscience told me that the Attorney [24-25] General was exercising authority under the law that was leading to the destruction of our civil and religious liberties, the weakening of the Bill of Rights, and bringing harm to innocent people. The state's anti-subversive law was being used to snoop into men's thoughts and interfere with their lawful associations. The legislators who passed the law were men who, it seemed to me, were well described by Thoreau as men who do not serve their state "as men mainly, but as mechanics, with their bodies." They engage in "no free exercise whatever of the judgment or of the moral sense."

Thoreau argued that it is sometimes necessary to stand alone. He applied the principle of civil disobedience when he condemned Abolitionists for not at once withdrawing effectually their support, "both in person and property, against the government of Massachusetts." They were not to wait till "they constitute a majority of one, before they suffer the right to prevail through them." "I think," he said, "it is enough if they have God on their side, without waiting for that other one. Moreover, any man more right than his neighbor constitutes a majority of one already."

Again, "A government in which the majority rule in all cases cannot be based on justice, even as far as men can understand it. Can there not be a government in which majorities do not virtually decide right and wrong, but conscience. . . . Must the citizen even for a moment, or in the least degree resign his conscience to the legislator? Why has every man a conscience, then? I think we should be men first and subjects afterward. It is not desirable to cultivate respect for the law, as much as for the right. The only obligation which I have a right to assume is to do at any time what I think right."

There was an all-outness about Thoreau. He had contempt for the mere amelioration of wrong. For Thoreau reforms "take too much time and a man's life will be gone." "Cast your whole vote, not a strip of paper merely, but your whole influence," he insisted. "Action from principle, the perception and the performance of right, changes things and relations; it is essentially revolutionary, and does not consist wholly with anything that was."

I felt, therefore, that Thoreau would have supported me in my full non-cooperation with what I believed to be bad law, even if it meant prison. This was better than to have given in just once, to have exposed innocent persons to harassment and persecution, and then to have salved my conscience by setting up a committee to work for the repeal of the law. The truth is that the image of the "frail old man," built up by the newspapers, set forces loose far beyond the expectation of the politicians who sought to humiliate me and, if necessary, put me behind bars. The Emergency Civil Liberties Committee took up the case. The newly founded Religious Freedom Committee [25 26] informed the clergy of the nation on the issues. Many religious bodies passed strong resolutions. Local defense committees sprang up. Organizations like the Liberal Citizens of Massachusetts entered the fight. Letters by the hundreds were written to the papers, to the Governor of New Hampshire, the Attorney General and the judge who committed me. Many religious journals spoke out. Great American dailies like *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, and *The Providence Journal* editorialized. Guests flocked to World Fellowship with a new loyalty. I was able at the end of the year to emerge victorious, and able to say I had peace in my heart, first because I had stood firm, and second, because I held no hate in my heart against any human being.

The days in prison were for me, above all else, a time for reviewing a treasury of memories and associations, and of evaluating the years that had passed. I knew that conscience was not a miracle. Mine was an American conscience fed from childhood by the moral imperatives of a stern but tender upbringing, and by life on the land where I felt rapport with all living things. I saw more clearly what had been the effect, in my twenties, of teaching high school

courses in English Literature when I drank deep of the American tradition embodied in the essayists and poets of early New England. The words of Ralph Waldo Emerson took root and grew in my mind: “The one thing in the world of value is the active soul,—the soul, free, sovereign, active. This every man is entitled to; this every man contains within him, although in almost all men obstructed. . . .” Studying and teaching Thoreau, I learned anew the great lesson of the Declaration of Independence that authority must be resisted if its demands violate conscience.

Later, during my four years of graduate study at Yale University Divinity School, I was physically as well as spiritually at home in the environment that had given birth to the heritage that had so taken hold of me.

Finally, at one point, I am not sure whether I understand Thoreau or enter into his experience. I believe with him, with my whole heart, in the power of the one, but I cannot follow, without question, his belief that “there is little virtue in the masses of men.” How can I separate the *one* from the *many*? The *ones* are sometimes the projection of the unspoken hopes and consciences of the *many*. I cannot think of the *one* as a leader apart. Is he simply leading, or is he being thrust forward? I cannot speak of my own experience—the long years of legal struggle and the year of imprisonment—without becoming eloquent about the everlasting “we,” knowing that any moral and political victory was won through the sacrifice and prayerful efforts of the many.

Appendix C

Predicting “Life without Principle”

The following selections are from Thoreau’s essay “Life without Principle” which you will read tonight for homework. Today’s activity is a chance for you to puzzle out the meaning behind Thoreau’s ideas by looking closely at selected text in groups. Your group should analyze, discuss, and make a prediction about what you think the essay will be about based on your given selection. You will be taking notes on your work and writing it in your journal.

You should write the heading **Predicting “Life without Principle”** in your journal and be sure also to include today’s date.

You will be assigned a number 1 through 5 that will determine which group you are in.

You will only have 15 minutes to read and discuss your selection and 5 minutes to jot down some notes in your journal so plan accordingly. After you have discussed the selection with your group and written in your journal, you should be prepared to tell the class what you’ve come up with.

Group #1: “Most men would feel insulted if it were proposed to employ them in throwing stones over a wall, and then in throwing them back, merely that they might earn their wages. But many are no more worthily employed now.” (76)

Group #2: “If I should sell both my forenoons and afternoons to society, as most appear to do, I am sure, that, for me, there would be nothing left worth living for. I trust that I shall never thus sell my birthright for a mess of pottage. I wish to suggest that a man may be very industrious, and yet not spend his time well. There is no more fatal blunderer than he who consumes the greater part of his life getting his living. All great enterprises are self-supporting...you must get your living by loving.” (78)

Group #3: “Does Wisdom work in a tread-mill? or does she teach how to succeed *by her example*? Is there any such thing as wisdom not applied to life?” (79)

Group #4: “Just so hollow an ineffectual, for the most part, is our ordinary conversation. Surface meets surface. When our life ceases to be inward and private, conversation degenerates into mere gossip. We rarely meet a man who can tell us any news which he has not read in a newspaper, or been told by his neighbor; and, for the most part, the only difference between us and our fellow is, that he has seen the newspaper, or been out to tea, and we have not. In proportion as our inward life fails, we go more constantly and desperately to the post-office. You may depend on it, that the poor fellow who walks away with the great number of letters, proud of his extensive correspondence, has not heard from himself this long while.” (84)

Group #5: “The news we hear, for the most part, is not news to our genius.” (84)

Appendix D

Triad Activity

Inspired by Michael Kennedy, Newton High School

Get into groups of three. Each student will be assigned a number 1-3.

Each student will be asked to write a response to the following in turn:

1. One thing I've learned from the reading...
2. One thing I'm left wondering about concerning the reading...
3. One *essential question* or *big idea* regarding the reading...

You will have 90 seconds to share your responses with your group members when your number is called. When your time is up, you will then listen to the next member of your group who is called. You will not be allowed to respond verbally or otherwise while a group member is sharing his/her response.

Appendix E

Listen to silver maple forest
By Virginia Fuller
Guest Column February 9, 2006 Belmont Citizen-Herald

In a perfect world, Brian O'Neill deeds the Uplands to the Department of Conservation and Recreation, as Darrell King suggests in his Guest Perspective [Jan. 26]. It's a generous gesture, giving the wealthy Mr. O'Neill a nice tax break while giving Belmont the open space that most people seem to agree is the best use of the land. In the face of such generosity, the town reciprocates by forgiving Mr. O'Neill his debt of close to half a million dollars.

The happy exchange follows the news that neither the Uplands nor the rink site are in the FEMA flood insurance zone, indicating that the former may be as valuable for water storage as the latter. This breaks the logjam, making housing on the rink site acceptable to our friends in Arlington. And that is the very moment that Mr. O'Neill decides that the rink site is the perfect place for 40B.

Sounds like everybody comes out a winner. Sounds like smart growth to me.

Now, this may also sound like a fable - and it is. But it is a fable that would be far more desirable for our town than the alternative:

Requiem for a forest

For weeks, from early morning to late afternoon, the air has been filled with the merciless whine of chainsaws, punctuated by the thunder of trees falling to earth. The sound is unremitting, as shadowed thickets and hidden copses are destroyed, driving out the wildlife forever, transforming a forest into a landscape of devastation and ugliness.

"Humanity is cutting down its forests, apparently oblivious to the fact that we may not be able to live without them." - Isaac Azimov

The floor of the silver maple forest is now littered with the bodies of trees that are still tender and green in their broken places. Some are barely saplings, while others before the clear-cutting commenced could have been said to be majestic in their girth and strength. In what were once lush secret glades, stumps and branches and boughs have lost their grace, piled one upon the other in harsh angles that no longer have the symmetry of nature but the disorder of destruction.

"The tree which moves some to tears of joy is in the eyes of others only a green thing that stands in the way." - William Blake

The hollowed out places within those trees that provided homes for the woodpecker and other cavity nesters gape open to the sky. What was once the great Mother Tree is now a pile of deadwood and upended roots. From above, unfiltered by any canopy of leaves, the sun's rays touch the ruined land.

Clear-cut is the term. Then there will be cleanup. Then there will be pavement.

"How can you expect the birds to sing when their groves are cut down?" - Henry David Thoreau

Gone now is the magical orchestration of the sounds of nature, of its unseen creatures busy with a complex array of tasks and pursuits. Gone the message to each of us that we hear in solitary contemplation - the birdsong, the scampering but unseen feet, the sudden swoosh of a wing or a wild call high overhead.

"Who among those people with a cultivated spirit, or whose heart has been wounded, can walk in a forest without the forest speaking to him?" - Honoré de Balzac

Before the bulldozers, before the chainsaws, in a world in which this desolate landscape does not yet exist, I walked one day in the silver maple forest. I was not there alone, for the forest teemed with life. Along its mossy banks, tracks told stories, and deep within the tangled thickets, the denizens of the forest pursued their lives beyond my sight in their secret, hidden world. And as I walked, I thought about the choice that faces our town.

It is not too late. Not too late to listen to the words of those whose legacy of language and wisdom implores us to think carefully. Not too late to save those trees and the wildlife that lives among them. Not too late to step back from a decision that would impoverish our town in ways that are not financial and take something precious from our children. Not too late - but the clock is ticking.

Virginia Fuller is a Hurley Street resident.

Effects of Construction in the Silver Maple Forest

Bordering Alewife Brook Reservation

by Tufts University Student Team Jesse Smith, Chloe Starr, Nora Katz & Melanie Hall

A classroom assignment for Environmental Health and Safety course (ES-27)

Professor David Gute, Department of Civil & Environmental Engineering, Tufts University

May 1, 2006

The Brian O'Neill Properties Group from Philadelphia, PA plans to create a residential development in the town of Belmont. The development would be in close proximity to Little River and the Alewife Brook reservation, which is a part of the Mystic River watershed and eventually flows into Boston Harbor. The Alewife Brook Reservation is an area commonly used for recreational purposes including hiking, bird watching, running, and containing athletic playing fields and a playground. The water in this area is already one of the most polluted regions of the Mystic River watershed. Development in the Belmont Uplands would be likely to increase to increase the level of pollutants in the water and adjacent soil.

This development would destroy 40 percent of the 15-acre silver maple forest. The silver maple forest is one of the only stands of silver maple in the Boston area. These trees are known for having a shallow fibrous root system, which holds the river bank. The trees themselves also provide nesting areas and a food supply for the various animals of the habitat.

Cutting down these silver maple would create many environmental problems that could be detrimental to human health. It would lead to expansion of the flood plane because the root system of the silver maple holds the soil in place and prevents runoff of potentially dangerous levels of minerals into the watershed. Also, this increased flood plane will carry pollutants into residential areas. Although this is not accounted for within the development plans, it seems a likely effect of destroying the root system that currently prevents erosion.

Other related problems include that the new development would create additional sources of pollution in the area. This building project would result in an increased discharge of sewage and pesticides into the river and groundwater. Also, a new residential area would require new infrastructure, such as stores, to service the increased population. New building in an area can lead to urban runoff, further polluting the watershed. The increase in sewage and pollutants from the development could seep into the groundwater and spread into the soil. Also, as the Little River feeds into the Mystic River watershed and from there into Boston Harbor, the pollution would travel downstream contaminating a greater area.

The proposed development also presents issues concerning environmental justice. The town of Belmont will garner economic benefits from the new building, however the environmental burdens will be felt more by communities downstream. The construction will be located on the Belmont Uplands, meaning that pollutants in water will flow downstream away from Belmont. Directly downstream of the planned building site is the Alewife Brook Reservation, which provides a large amount of the open green space available to many communities and which may be harmed by the added pollutants. Another environmental justice consideration is the O'Neill Group's use of Chapter 40B, a state statute allowing for fast track approval processes, and the implications of the chosen building site for affordable housing.

In order to effectively consider the above issues, first consider the building proposal. The Belmont Uplands is a privately owned area composed of 15.6 acres in the Mystic River watershed. It is located upstream of the Alewife Brook Reservation and next to the Little River. It is also home to a Silver Maple Forest, a rare type of maple tree. This area is privately owned by the Brian O'Neill Property Group based in Philadelphia. The O'Neill Group has submitted a proposal to build a 300 unit residential housing complex on this land.

The proposed apartment complex will consist of 75 affordable housing units, fitting into chapter 40B requirements, which will be discussed later in this paper. It will be four stories high, consisting of five residential buildings and a community building. The total square footage of the proposal is 382,706. There will also be 3.4 acres of impervious coverage for surface and garage parking with 500 parking spaces.

There may be economic benefits that would accompany the development of the Belmont Uplands for both the developers and the community of Belmont, according to O'Neill Properties in a letter to the Belmont planning board. The proposed project will add \$714,000 of annual revenue and will have a fiscal impact of \$7.7 million over ten years. The increase of available housing will increase the tax base, benefiting the town. However, this will also increase the number of people using town services, drawing from that tax base (1).

The plan will also have extensive impacts on the environment in the Belmont Uplands. The silver maple forest is made up of wetland and upland plant ecosystems, dominated by the rare silver maple. The proposed building would require cutting a significant number of trees, which will create extensive ecological consequences.

One of the biggest environmental issues surrounding the construction on the Alewife Brook Reservation is the proposed destruction of part of the silver maple forest located there. The silver maple, *Acer saccharinum*, is a fairly prolific low-lying tree located throughout most of the US. It is characterized by its ability to tolerate short term flooding and a shallow fibrous root system. (2) There is currently a 15-acre stand on the edge of Little Pond, part of which is encompassed in the Alewife Brook reservation. The trees located in this forest are fairly old and one of the largest,

older growth stands located in the Boston area. It may also be home to the 2nd largest silver maple in the United States, the proverbial "mother tree" of the forest. (3)

Silver maples are also characterized by large, leafy crowns and thick trunks, both of which provide excellent shelter and nourishment for the birds and mammals located around the pond and in the forest. Their buds are critical to the food chain of the squirrel (4) as well as serving as food for birds and white-tailed deer. The protected pond and streams provide a safe haven for ducks and small mammals to raise their young and the forest, in its swamp-like location, is a perfect place to build nests and homes. Recent sightings along the banks include pheasants, killdeer and great blue herons. Less common ducks that have been seen include hooded mergansers and wood ducks. (5)

There are a variety of mammals and rodents that make their home along the riverbanks, in the protection of the trees and their root systems. There is a beaver dam located along the river, and some silver maples showed beaver teeth marks. Scat has also been observed from coyotes, fox and minks. (5)

With the proposed destruction of part of this forest and its replacement with a commercial development, the site stands to lose not only a great old growth forest, but also an entire ecosystem and habitat to many animals. If these animals get driven out, where will they go? Is someone's backyard an acceptable alternative? The end of this forest will also mean the end of the intricate root system tying the bank together and could increase the floodplain height. The construction of the proposed O'Neill housing project will have significant effects upon both flooding in the surrounding area and water pollution level. Currently, the land in question is covered with silver maple trees and various other forms of plant life, which absorb water and filter out potentially dangerous materials. To replace these with the 300-unit housing development would increase the dangers from flooding and would introduce a variety of harmful substances to water that is already significantly polluted.

In an area that already suffers from flooding (6) it is important to keep the land as vegetated as possible. An acre of vegetated land can transpire literally thousands of gallons of water each day (7), allowing the soil to absorb more rainwater during a storm. It has been hypothesized that the construction of this development will increase discharge by 2.26 million gallons per year.(8) In contrast, buildings and parking lots not only compress the soil, reducing its porosity and ability to absorb water, but their insoluble materials prevent water from being absorbed into the ground at all. Instead, with nowhere else to go, precipitation drains to the lowest level in the drainage basin. This causes much more frequent and severe flooding. In the drainage basin of the proposed construction area, the lowest point is Little Pond. (9)

Little Pond and its downstream distributaries already suffer from flooding problems. In Cambridge, reports of Combined Sewer Overflows are not uncommon. A combined sewer is divided into two parts: one which carries sewage, and one which carries rainwater. When flooding occurs, the two substances mix, and polluted water is eventually discharged into nearby streams by the pipe (9).

While this construction will no doubt increase the flood plain in the area, it is impossible to calculate by how much because the current flood plain may not be accurate. Tufts University's own Steve Kaiser obtained data suggesting that the ten year flood level has risen almost a foot in the past 20 years(10). The 100 year flood level has increased at least 29 inches since 1982(11). The replacement of 4.4 acres of the forested land with buildings would no doubt very significantly increase this level even more. A new 100 year flood level would have several

consequences. State Building Code requires that the lowest floor of any building be above said level. By its very genesis, the construction could put itself in violation of this code.

In addition to increasing flood levels, the construction project will add pollutants to Little Pond, which already fails to meet quality standards. The Alewife Brook is classified as Class B - meaning it should have water that is safe for swimming and fishing. However, in 2002, only four of 27 water samples taken actually had acceptable levels of fecal coliform (12). It has been hypothesized that the development will add 0.180 mg/l of lead to the pond annually. While this might not seem significant, lead, being a model human toxicant, has no safe, threshold level. In addition, 0.176 mg/l of zinc and 0.047 mg/l of copper will also be added to the pond each year.

These two consequences of construction, increased flood level and more polluted water, will greatly increase the dangers to homeowners who live directly around Little Pond. These homeowners have fenced yards that are not greatly elevated from the current water level, and a significant storm could put part of their yards underwater. This water, contaminated by the above-mentioned toxicants, would be absorbed by the soil, contaminating it as well. Several of the homeowners around the pond have small children. Small children undergoing neurological development are especially susceptible to the harmful effects of lead, and a major way that they are exposed to lead is through soil consumption (13).

The proposed building on the Belmont Uplands also presents interesting issues regarding environmental justice. According to the constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, "The people shall have the right to clean air and water, freedom from excessive and unnecessary noise, and the natural, scenic, historic, and esthetic qualities of their environment; and the protection of the people in their right to the conservation, development, and utilization of the agricultural, mineral, forest, water, air, and other natural resources is hereby declared to be a public purpose." Based on this guarantee to the citizens of Massachusetts, it is clear that many aspects of the building proposed in Belmont would violate people's right to a clean, healthy, quiet, and safe environment.

A major problem facing Eastern Massachusetts residents is the lack of open green space. With the extensive development in the Boston area, much of the open space for recreation has been developed already. Along the Mystic River Watershed, there are very limited areas of open green space and the use of these 15 acres of forested land will greatly decrease the town of Belmont and neighboring communities' access to natural open space. The problem of diminished open space becomes an environmental justice issue when attention is paid to who is harmed most by continued development. Belmont will directly lose its open green space with the proposed construction, but the community has other more open space than its neighbors. While the new housing complex would decrease the community's open space, it would not eliminate it (14).

Building in Belmont would negatively impact the neighboring communities of Cambridge and Arlington. Each of these towns has a significantly lower per capita income, \$31,156 and \$34,399 respectively (9 &15) than Belmont, where the per capita income is \$42,485 (16). These two towns are most likely to see an effect from the building in Belmont on their own available open space near the water, specifically the Alewife Brook reservation located adjacent and downstream of the Belmont Uplands. As was discussed earlier, construction would result in added pollutants in the river from erosion, runoff, and sewage water, which would pollute the reservation. Citizens of Arlington and Cambridge have very little open space besides the reservation, which, because of its proximity to the T-station, it is the easiest and least expensive to reach. While citizens of Belmont have other natural areas to utilize, these other communities do not. Also, they would not

receive any of the economic benefits from the building in Belmont, but would have to deal with its impact on their environment and related health and safety issues.

Another concern has to do with the Massachusetts standard that each community provide at least 10% of their housing as affordable (17). Belmont currently falls far short of this standard, but the O'Neill group has agreed to make 25% of the housing units affordable. To assist with reaching the 10% goal, the state allows local Zoning Boards of Appeals to approve developments with relaxed regulations if they have at least 25% of the units as affordable housing in a statute called Chapter 40B. The O'Neill Properties Group has been found eligible for using 40B by fulfilling this minimum requirement, which will reduce local barriers to the approval and zoning processes. Also, reaching the 10% requirement will make the town eligible for more state funding, further increasing Belmont's economic gains from the development.

The citizens of Belmont have expressed concern that medium income affordable housing is being built in their community, but the placement of the construction would keep the units well out of the public eye. The 40B statute was designed to prevent this type of snob zoning that communities often utilize to keep lower income housing out of their towns. In Belmont, however, the O'Neill group is exploiting this statute to get through the zoning process quickly. In the end, both the O'Neill group and the Belmont citizens will come out ahead. The proposed building site is located between Route 2 and Little River. This area is acceptable for commuters to Boston who would live in the luxury housing units, however it does not provide a good living environment for families. The air and noise pollution from the adjacent highway and the contaminated river would be detrimental to the health and safety of people spending a large amount of time outside, especially children who have more exposure to contaminants in the soil than adults. It is interesting that the poorer residents of Belmont, those requiring low to medium income housing, would be placed in an area of the town where their health would be at a greater risk, but where they would be out of sight. This raises the question of who deserves to live in a clean and safe environment. (18 & 19)

After looking at the O'Neill proposal in terms of the ecological, environmental, and justice impacts, we believe that the negative effects outweigh the economic gains for Belmont. Loss of animal habitats, increased flood level, and potential social injustice would result from this development. With all these possible negative effects, the risks posed to health, safety and the environment exceed any potential benefits. Therefore, we recommend that the site should not be developed to the current plans. The O'Neill Group should look into developing on different land because of the ecological uniqueness of the site in relation to its immediate surroundings.

We decided to divide this paper into four parts, regarding the division of labor. Melanie concentrated on background information and the proposed building plans. Chloe wrote about the ecological concerns. Nora focused on the environmental justice issue. Jesse researched the health concerns related to the flood plane. We worked together to combine these topics in our introduction and conclusion. Also, we discussed our topics together a lot because many of the issues we tried to address are related and our arguments benefit from each other's knowledge base.

- (1) http://www.town.belmont.ma.us/public_documents/belmontMA_document/uplandsindex/50018b95c, Town of Belmont, April 2006
- (2) http://www.na.fs.fed.us/pubs/silvics_manual/volume_2/acer/saccharinum.htm, USDA Forest Service, April 2006
- (3) http://friendsofalewifereservation.org/2003_04_mothertree.htm, Friends of Alewife, April 2006

- (4) http://www.na.fs.fed.us/pubs/silvics_manual/volume_2/acer/saccharinum.htm, USDA Forest Service, April 2006
- (5) http://www.friendsofalewifereservation.org/wildlifeinventory_davidbrown.htm, Friends of Alewife, April 2006
- (6) http://www.cambridgema.gov/SearchResults.cfm?newSearch=1&search_string=CSO, City of Cambridge, April 2006
- (7) <http://ga.water.usgs.gov/edu/watercycleevapotranspiration.html>, USGS, April 2006
- (8) Charles J. Katuska, P.W.S., Project Impact Calculations, Belmont Uplands Project (Belmont Office/R&D Buildings) Acorn Park Drive, Belmont/Cambridge, February 2, 2004
- (9) <http://www.cambridgema.gov/>, City of Cambridge, April 2006
- (10)
<http://www.mysticriver.org/publications/Chapter%203%20Water%20Quantity%20and%20Floodi ng.pdf>, Mystic River Watershed Association, April 2006
- (11) http://www.friendsofalewiferesvation.org/2005_03_uplands_paulsen.htm, Friends of Alewife, April 2006
- (12) http://friendsofalewiferesvation.org/2003_03_waterquality.htm, Friends of Alewife, April 2006
- (13) <http://www.nsc.org/library/facts/lead.htm>, National Safety Council, April 2006
- (14) <http://www.mass.gov/Belmont>, State of Massachusetts, April 2006
- (15) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arlington%2C_MA, Wikipedia, April 2006
- (16) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belmont%2C_MA, Wikipedia, April 2006
- (17) <http://www.mhp.net/termsheets/40BQA.pdf>, Massachusetts Housing Partnership, April 2006
- (18) Kathy Reagan, Lab Technician, Tufts University. April 2006
- (19) http://friendsofalewiferesvation.org/2002_environmentaljusticepolicy.htm, April 2006

Appendix F

Save Myself

Willy Mason

When the culture's drowning in a bad dream
Save myself, save myself and
When the old religion is the new greed
Save myself, save myself and
They sabotaged the levee, killed *gris-gris*
Save myself, save myself and
When the vultures copyright the word free
Save myself, I got to save myself and

Baby won't you come (repeat)

When the elders all are playing make believe
Save myself, I got to save myself and
When they teach us lessons that they don't believe
Save myself, I got to save myself and
When they build up statues but neglect their seed
Save myself, I got to save myself and
When my love and my hammer's all I really need
Save myself, I got to save myself and

Baby won't you come (repeat)

Slow and steady (repeat)

When I live in a country without history
Save myself, I got to save myself and
One that buried its roots with its identity
Save myself, I got to save myself and
We still are searching for liberty
Save myself, I got to save myself and
We still are hiding from reality
Save myself, I got to save myself and

Baby won't you come (repeat)

Oxygen

Willy Mason

I wanna be better than oxygen
So you can breathe when you're drowning and weak in the knees
I wanna speak louder than Ritalin
For all the children who think that they've got a disease
I wanna be cooler than TV
For all the kids that are wondering what they are going to be
We can be stronger than bombs if you're singing along and you know that you really believe
We can be richer than industry
As long as we know that there's things that we don't really need
We can speak louder than ignorance
Cause we speak in silence every time our eyes meet
Chorus:

On and on and on it goes
The world it just keeps spinning
Until I'm dizzy, time to breathe
So close my eyes and start again anew

I wanna see through all the lies of society
To the reality, happiness is at stake
I wanna hold up my head with dignity
Proud of a life where to give means more than to take
I want to live beyond the modern mentality
Where paper is all that you're really taught to create
Do you remember the forgotten America?
Justice, equality, freedom to every race?
Just need to get past all the lies and hypocrisy
Make up and hair to the truth behind every face
That look around to all the people you see,
How many of them are happy and free?
I know it sounds like a dream
But it's the only thing that can get me to sleep at night
I know it's hard to believe
But it's easy to see that something here isn't right
I know the future looks dark
But it's there that the kids of today must carry the light

Chorus:

Bridge:
If I'm afraid to catch a dream
I weave your baskets and I'll float them down the river stream
Each one I weave with words I speak to carry love to your relief

I wanna be better than oxygen
So you can breathe when you're drowning and weak in the knees
I wanna speak louder than Ritalin
For all the children who think that they've got a disease
I wanna be cooler than TV
For all the kids that are wondering what they are going to be
We can be stronger than bombs
If you're singing along and you know that you really believe
We can be richer than industry
As long as we know that there's things that we don't really need
We can speak louder than ignorance
Cause we speak in silence every time our eyes meet

Chorus:

Appendix G

Keeping a Nature Journal

Based on “String Journals” assignment by Janet Burne (retired), Reading High School

The symbolic role of nature is writ large in American Literature. In *Walden*, as in other writings by Thoreau, nature is the central focus. Although nature is predominant in our literature, it is often ignored in our own lives. We are often too busy to take note of the natural world around us and observe our environment. To remedy this situation, you will become a close observer of nature during this unit.

The **goals** of this activity are:

- to develop your powers of observation,
- to identify with the natural forces that influenced so many writers,
- to develop your writing skills

Procedure:

- ✓ This is a piece of string ☺ Tie your string into a circle.
- ✓ Bring your string outside to a location that you can visit easily and often.
- ✓ Secure it to the ground as a circle. You can ring it around a tree, put it under a bush, loop it around a section of garden or lawn, etc.
- ✓ Make friends with your circle. Visit it a minimum of once a week, for a minimum of twenty minutes, alone.
- ✓ When you visit it: observe, think, respond.
- ✓ Record your thoughts in your journal in the form of an informal essay that follows wherever your mind wanders. Suggested length: 300 words or longer.

Rules for Submission:

- ✓ You will need to do a minimum of 4 “string journals” by the end of the unit. Your journals MUST have a heading: Name, String Journal #:; Date Submitted:; Title: Absence of correct heading = loss of 10 points.
- ✓ Submit **entire notebook** containing all entries, properly headed. Failure to follow these directions will result in an unacceptable document.

Grading:

- ✓ A thoughtful entry that meets all criteria receives a “B”;
- ✓ An entry that surpasses expectations receives an “A”: “Surpasses expectations” may mean that you have shown great insights, you were exceptionally creative, you demonstrated a sophisticated style, etc. Please note that writing mediocre material at great length will NOT result in a higher grade. Focus on the quality of your work.

An entry that does not meet expectations will fail. Possible reasons for a failing grade could include: an entry that is too short, contains banal thinking, lack of observations, or a *lack of connections to the experience of being outside*, observing Nature. This is important! It is a central component of the entire assignment.

One Final Note: This assignment is an outside experience. You may write inside from notes taken while outdoors, but **you may not accomplish this assignment by looking through a window**, sipping cocoa while the wind blows!! DRESS FOR THE WEATHER. (Need I remind you that “Honors” implies academic honesty about such matters?)

Appendix H

Journal Assignments

Journal #1

“We must learn to reawaken and keep ourselves awake, not by mechanical aids, but by an infinite expectation of the dawn, which does not forsake us in our soundest sleep. I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by a conscious endeavor. It is something to be able to paint a particular picture, or to carve a statue, and so to make a few objects beautiful; but is far more glorious to carve and paint the very atmosphere and medium through which we look, which morally we can do. To affect the quality of the day, that is the highest of arts. Every man is tasked to make his life, even in its details, worthy of the contemplation of his most elevated and critical hour.”

Walden, “Where I Lived, And What I Lived For”

1. **Preparing to write:** Look closely at Thoreau’s use of language in this passage, focusing particularly on words surrounding sleep and wakefulness. Underline these words and ponder their metaphorical import. What does Thoreau mean when he says we keep ourselves awake by “an infinite expectation of the dawn”? Determine what sleep represents in this passage and what Thoreau is suggesting one would be waking up *to*?
2. **Journal:** Write a journal entry that connects Thoreau’s message to your own life. What “conscious endeavor” must take place for you to “elevate [your] life”? What do you personally need to learn to practice what Thoreau calls “the highest of arts”?

Journal #2

“And I am sure that I never read any memorable news in a newspaper. If we read of one man robbed, or murdered, or killed by accident, or one house burned, or one vessel wrecked, or one steamboat blown up, or one cow run over on the Western Railroad, or one mad dog killed, or one lot of grasshoppers in the winter, -- we never need read of another. One is enough. If you are acquainted with the principle, what do you care for a myriad instances and applications? To a philosopher all news, as it is called, is gossip, and they who edit and read it are old women over their tea. Yet not a few are greedy after this gossip.”

Walden, “Where I Lived, And What I Lived For”

1. **Preparing to Write:** Spend the next few days watching the evening news on the three major networks (or cable news channels if you have cable). If possible, watch each of them in turn. Ask yourself the following questions when you do this: What *actionable* information do these news programs present? How is the information presented? For example, are segments accompanied by dramatic music, fancy graphics, or commentary not associated with the actual happening? Finally, ask yourself the *purpose* of the information presented. Saying that the news is to inform is too simplistic, rather ask to what end are we being informed and why?
2. **Journal:** Do you consider yourself to be better informed by having to watch so much televised news? Has the information received made you a better citizen by giving you essential information for making civic decisions?

Journal #3

“Life consists with wildness. The most alive is the wildest. Not yet subdued to man, its presence refreshes him. One who pressed forward incessantly and never rested from his labors, who grew fast and made infinite demands on life, would always find himself in a new country or wilderness, and surrounded by the raw material of life. He would be climbing over the prostrate stems of primitive forest-trees.” (62)

“Walking”

1. **Preparing to Write:** Take note of times during your day when you do things instinctually or intuitively. What are you involved in at that moment? How do you feel? Take note also of what has become *routine* or *habitual*. Try to distinguish between what has become *habit*—like reaching to turn off the alarm clock in the morning—and intuition/instinct.
2. **Journal:** How in touch are you with your intuitive and instinctual “wild” side? How does routine affect your ability to connect to this *wildness*? How does society affect your ability to connect to this *wildness*?

Journal #4 (inspired by Janet Burne (retired), Reading High School)

“I have lived some thirty years on this planet, and I have yet to hear the first syllable of valuable or even earnest advice from my seniors. They have told me nothing, and probably cannot tell me any thing, to the purpose. Here is life, an experiment to a great extent untried by me; but it does not avail me that they have tried it. If I have any experience which I think valuable, I am sure to reflect that this my Mentors said nothing about.”

Walden, “Economy”

1. **Preparing to Write:** Identify something you have taught yourself. This could be a language, a skill, a hobby, an instrument, etc. Account for how you were able to learn this particular thing. How well do you know it as opposed to something you learned from another person? What value does it have over received knowledge?
2. **Journal:** Write an essay that compares and contrasts two different ways of learning something—that is, through being taught (by books or others) and doing (by yourself). Of course, one does not learn in a vacuum. At some point, one needs to consult an outside source to continue to progress in one’s learning process. In your essay, account for *when* and *if* this was necessary for you.

Links to Massachusetts Standards

Massachusetts English Language Arts Frameworks:

- LS 1 Discussion: Students will use agreed-upon rules for informal and formal discussions in small and large groups.
- LS 2 Questioning, Listening, and Contributing: Students will pose questions, listen to the ideas of others, and contribute their own information or ideas in group discussions or interviews in order to acquire new knowledge.
- LS 3 Oral Presentation: Students will make oral presentations that demonstrate consideration of audience, purpose, and the information to be conveyed.
- LS 6 Formal and Informal English: Students will describe, analyze, and use appropriately formal and informal English.
- LS 7 Beginning Reading: Students will understand the nature of written English and the relationships of letters and spelling patterns to the sounds of speech.
- LS 8 Understanding a Text: Students will identify the basic facts and main idea in a text and use them as the basis for interpretation.
- LS 9 Making Connections: Students will deepen their understanding of a literary or non-literary work by relating it to its context.
- LS 10 Genre: Students will identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the characteristics of different genres.
- LS 11 Theme: Students will identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of theme in literature and provide evidence from the text to support their reasoning.
- LS 13 Nonfiction: Students will identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the purpose, structure, and elements of nonfiction or informational materials and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding.
- LS 15 Style and Language: Students will identify and analyze how an author's words appeal to the senses, create imagery, suggest mood, and set tone, and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding.
- LS 19 Writing: Students will write with a clear focus, coherent organization, and sufficient detail.
- LS 20 Consideration of Audience and Purpose: Students will write for different audiences and purposes.
- LS 21 Revising: Students will demonstrate improvement in organization, content, paragraph development, level of detail, style, tone, and word choice (diction) in their compositions after revising them.
- LS 22 Standard English Conventions: Students will use knowledge of standard English conventions in their writing, revising, and editing.
- LS 23 Organizing Ideas in Writing: Students will organize ideas in writing in a way that makes sense for their purpose.
- LS 24 Research: Students will gather information from a variety of sources, analyze and evaluate the quality of the information they obtain, and use it to answer their own questions.
- LS 25 Evaluating Writing and Presentations: Students will develop and use appropriate, logical, and stylistic criteria for assessing final versions of their compositions or research projects before presenting them to varied audiences.

Bibliography

- Burne, Janet. "Living Thoreau As A Means of Teaching Walden." *Walden.org*. 2001. 16 Aug 2008.
<http://www.walden.org/Education/TWS/AW/Alum/2001_Units/Burne_Janet.htm>
- Fuller, Virginia. "Listen to silver maple forest." *Belmont Citizen-Herald*. 08 Feb 2006. Wicked Local.
13 Aug 2008. <<http://www.wickedlocal.com/belmont/archive/x21530926>>
- Into The Wild*. Dir. Sean Penn. Perf. Emile Hirsch, Marcia Gay Harden, William Hurt. DVD. Paramount,
2008.
- Krakauer, Jon. *Into The Wild*. New York: Anchor Books, 1996.
- Mason, Willy. "Oxygen." *Where the Humans Eat*. Team Love Records, 2004.
- _____. "Save Myself." *If The Ocean Gets Rough*. Virgin Records, 2007.
- Smith, Jesse, Chloe Starr, Nora Katz, and Melanie Hall. "Effects of Construction in the Silver Maple
Forest Bordering Alewife Brook Reservation." *Friends of Alewife Reservation*. 01 May 2006. 12
Aug 2008. <http://www.friendsofalewifereservation.org/2006_05_01_constructioneffects.htm>
- Thoreau, Henry D. *Journal of Henry David Thoreau: 1837-1861*. Utah: Gibbs Smith Publisher, 1984.
_____. Civil Disobedience and Other Essays. New York: Dover Publications, 1993.
_____. *Walden; or, Life in the Wood*. New York: Dover Publications, 1995.
- Uphaus, Willard. "Conscience and Disobedience." Personal website of Stephen F. Ells. 01 Aug. 2001.
<http://homepage.mac.com/sfe/henry/uphaus/uphaus_Conscience-Disob.htm>