

# SpeechGeek



## Season Five: Nationals 2008



ISSN 1545-9209 Price \$25 US  
<http://www.speechgeek.com>

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**SpeechGeek**  
ISSN 1545-9209

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**SpeechGeek** is published three to four times per year: August, October, December, and (sometimes) April by Corey Alderdice, 959 Morgantown Rd., Apt. 3, Bowling Green, Kentucky 42101

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After hours upon end in coaching sessions, weekend after weekend on the road here and there for tournaments, Sunday afternoons spent reading ballots, and lots of "Why do I keep doing this season after season?", we find ourselves nearing the end of another competitive season of forensics.

If we didn't love this activity so much, we wouldn't continue to do it, would we?

This activity is more than the trophies, respect of peers, and the occasional pat on the back from a school administrator. It's about knowing that the skills young people develop in this activity will serve them for the rest of their lives. It's knowing the friendships they make will carry on for years. It's about having fun.

As always, **SpeechGeek** is honored to be a part of your school's program. We will continue to publish quality performance material in future seasons and appreciate your patronage.

**Corey Alderdice**  
**Publisher**

# Mixed Up

by Meredith Stein

My mother and father had a mixed marriage – a rarity for the small Midwestern town they grew up in. My dad was Jewish and my mom was Catholic. It wasn't a big deal to my immediate family. We weren't particularly religious growing up. They didn't try to convert each other or their children, so it was all – how would my grandma put it? – “kosher.” My Dad wasn't even practicing, although that would be headline news to his parents. We lived near a Catholic church, so my mom and I went there. I was baptized, confirmed and raised Catholic. I was a Catholic. And my Dad didn't love me any less.

The only problem was my Jewish grandmother. She had no idea that my mom and I weren't Jewish. You see my mother promised to convert when my parents were dating – a little white lie between her and my father. I only saw my father's mother once a year, if that often, so it wasn't hard to keep it a secret. But no matter what, I couldn't tell her that my mom and I were Catholic.

When grandman finally died, I was upset but also relieved in a way because I thought that maybe all of the hiding was over. I thought that maybe Dad and Mom would finally be free to love each other for who they were and be proud of it. No more secrets. Most importantly, I figured that I'd never have to deal with that kind of bigotry again--at least in my family. But, like curly hair and weird ears and heart disease, I guess some of that stuff is hereditary.

Let me tell you what's not hereditary – a mind that understands and appreciates the wonderful world of science. My mom is a nurse practitioner. She loves biology and anatomy and all of that junk that makes no sense to me whatsoever. And my Dad is some sort of researcher in some sort of science lab. I don't even know what he does. But they love science. And me - I'm not a science girl. In fact, my scientific expertise extends to about the fourth grade, when I got an honorable mention in the science fair because my mom did my project.

Now that I think about it, it really wasn't that complicated of a project. All I was doing was examining geraniums in sugar water and geraniums in regular water to see which would grow faster. Not that complicated in hindsight – but worthy of my mother walking me through it every step of the way. I maybe could have won the thing, but I had no idea what was going on when the judges tried to ask me about the photosynthesis cycles in plants and sugar waters effect. To this day, I still have no idea what photosynthesis is. Clearly, I was a fourth grade faker.

Still, my parents really wanted me to take high school chemistry because my guidance counselor said it would be important for college. They made me sign up for chemistry with Mrs. Wilcox, the only teacher in my school who even taught chemistry. Trust me, this child was left behind. It was pretty much the lamest class I'd ever had. The woman could hardly stay awake to teach it and I wasn't about to wake her. The only bright spot was my friend, Marcus. We were in band together, so I knew him before I took chemistry. But he played trumpet and I played the flute, so our contact was limited by the woodwind and brass divide.

However, both of us were geeks to the core. Once class started, though, I was kicking myself for not getting to know him sooner. We were more alike than different. We were both a little too sarcastic for our own good, especially in high

school. We were the same age and had grown up, unknowingly, just a few blocks apart.

Marcus made chemistry not only bearable, but almost fun. We sat by each other in class and played games to pass the hour. We invented new names for each other and only called each other by those names. Let's see – his name for me was Ingrid Imogene Oprah Jones and my name for him was Lenny Quintaro Quimblidaryowitz. We passed notes with the funniest jokes we could think of, trying to make each other laugh out loud. I remember this one time he drew this hilarious picture of Mrs. Wilcox with her hair on fire from the Bunsen burner. He called it Death by Chemistry. Hilarious stuff. We even pretended to be brother and sister during twin day for the Student Council's spirit week – which didn't work too well, because Marcus was black and I was white. “I'm her brother from another mother, fool!” Marcus would say with a slight grin to anyone that would question the likelihood of our relation. “I'm his sister from another mister!” I would say. It sounded less cool coming from my mouth.

From time to time, when my mom asked about school, I would mention Marcus and our crazy times in Chemistry. He was just so fun! I could tell that she was annoyed that I goofed off so much in class, but she didn't say anything. She just pursed her lips and looked away. What do you expect, though? My mom was good at chemistry. And me...I just wasn't my mother.

One day I walked into chemistry and took my cursory seat in the back next to Marcus. He was sitting on the back of his chair talking to the senior at the table in front of us. “That's what I'm telling you,” I overheard him say. “There are dead bodies in the supply closet, that's why this place is so cold.” The senior boy rolled his eyes and turned away. Marcus shrugged. “His loss,” he said intentionally loudly. I played along. “Yeah, he's going to be sorry about that when he winds up in the back room,” I said.

The bell rang and Mrs. Wilcox walked in and stood behind the lab table at the front of the room. “For this next unit, you're going to need a partner,” she began in her droll, nasal voice. Marcus and I immediately turned to each other. We had to come up with a way to show the distance between the sun, Earth, and moon in proportion using a model. Marcus passed me a crumpled up note. “Now what does that have to do with chemistry?” he asked. “Is she making this stuff up? Shouldn't we be memorizing the periodic table or something?” I penciled my reply casually, trying to make it seem like I was taking notes. “Maybe she always secretly wanted to teach kindergarten, and that's why she wants to grade a bunch of finger-paint projects.”

He read it under the table and passed it back. “Maybe she's actually an alien, and she needs more information about space to transmit to her mothership,” it said.

“Maybe she's probably giving us busy work so she can focus on hiding the bodies in the supply closet.” I scribbled furiously.

“Mmm-hmm,” he loudly. Mrs. Wilcox looked up, but she couldn't seem to tell where the noise came from. The senior in front of us started laughing. I got cold chills, because as much as I like to pretend that I'm a rebel, I don't like to get in trouble.

After class, I told Marcus to come over to my house to work on the project. “You don't think your parents will care?” He asked. “No way,” I said. “My mom loves science. Trust me, its fine.” Marcus closed his Trapper Keeper. “Okay,” he said, “I'll get my mom to bring me over.”

After school I told my mom that I needed to go to Wal-Mart to get

# Could've Been Worse

by Trevor Anders

"Tell me about yourself," she said. I thought this was kind of odd considering how formal this interview had become. Because let's face it, I'm not great at job interviews. It's easy to think that you're qualified for say...a blind date until the woman across the table seriously wants you to pass a resume her way.

"Well, I'm a writer." I say.

I always like saying this phrase. I imagine the great authors of history meeting new people. When they announce themselves as wordmongers conversational jaws drop to the floor. Their audiences respond, "Of course we know who you are Lord Byron. Might I say I love...(please insert title here)."

"Have you been published?" she replies, a look a skepticism sketched across her brow.

"Not exactly. I mean, I've sent some stuff off, but nothing's quite in print...yet."

"I guess you're not very good at it then."

Let's mentally pause for a moment, shall we? Being a writer isn't about paychecks and Nobel Prizes, well, yet. Being a writer is about the craft and the love for the art. Because if my words could feed me, I would have died from gluttony years ago. I've known Shelly now for thirty minutes and I can already tell this date will end like most of them:

Me excusing myself to the restroom and then climbing out the window.

No.

Me crawling under the table and digging a hole to China.

No.

Me signing my name across the bill for dinner and leaving the restaurant only to return home physically and mentally unfulfilled.

I take in a deep breath. "Well, Shelly, that's only by day. Actually, I'm a multibillionaire whose parents were tragically murdered when I was a toddler. In all honesty, I fight crime at night—roaming the streets to purge the city of scum. And while thirteen old ladies have either been murdered or robbed during our little conversation, I've weighed the consequences of my prioritizing and, guess what, you came out on top. How does that make you feel?"

By this time I'm breathing rapidly as sweat collects against the back of my starched collar. I glance around the room. The clanging sounds of silver and glass have momentarily stopped. Even the sound of the piano in the background is missing. That's when I realize that every set of eyes are looking at me. I've done it again. I am the fool and we're not evening talking the Shakespearean kind that offers insight to the protagonist at his or her most vital moment. No, that would be too generous. Instead, I am the idiotic rambler who cannot keep his words in check.

This is probably why Shelly does not consider me a writer or as a candidate for a second date.

"I don't need this," Shelly announces as she quickly rises from her seat not even showing enough care to place her napkin on the table. Instead, she throws it in my face. I slump backwards deeper into my chair in the four-year-old kind of way that would have me believe I've disappeared. Instead, I just become more conspicuous.

Thank goodness my best friend Jeff is part of the waiting staff at the restau

# Cutting Cords

by Trevor Anders

When you look at things from a purely technical perspective, the process is rather simple: a telephone conversation is simply the product of impulses. Physical impulses become electrical impulses beamed from one side of the world to the other. It sounds simple enough, though it stands to reason there are scientific actualities that leave the process purely uncomprehendable. It isn't a problem that the older brother is in his rural Kentucky home and the younger brother is at a truck stop somewhere in the middle of England. After all, distance doesn't matter, at least from a technical standpoint. However, science has little to do with the truth of the matter. From a less than technical standpoint, the younger brother would rather deny his impulse to speak with the older on this pivotal day.

The younger would rather strangle his sibling than say I love you, but impulses can be deceiving. So he follows against better judgment and begins the dialing the process—each digit one moment closer to facing reality. It's hard to get away from your twin because, well, you're a twin. Two souls connected since birth with a cord of flesh sharing the same space, living the same life. In the minds of other people you are always one in the same. Even family members have trouble associating the proper name with the correct twin. You dress the same, you sleep in the same room, eat the same meals, share the same friends, classmates, birthdays. You are, in fact, the only person who views yourself as a unique individual.

But eventually you have to start making your own decisions, becoming an individual. The older brother falls in love and decides to get married. The younger brother heads off to England to escape his closed-in little world. The older brother announces one-month earlier that he will be getting married when the younger is out of the country. The younger refuses to come home to cater to the older's plan. Each is a decision made of impulses that have brought the twins to this telephone conversation.

It goes without saying the twins had a stressed relationship. Twins are supposed to be the same person, right? Well, identical twins. Fraternal twin, as these were, only had a tendency to share confined spaces such as full sized beds and wombs. That was not the concern on this autumn afternoon/morning (depending on which side of the world you were on). The twins had all the space the wanted/needed from each other.

"I love you and I, uh, I'm really proud of you," the younger brother claims.

There is a pause from the older brother. Conversations like this one came rarely during the twins' formative years. Despite their genetic similarities, they had become completely different individuals. The older was the more pragmatic of the two, skilled in mechanics and nature. The younger was more bohemian, who played more with words than the metal replica tractors of his counterpart.

"Thanks. I'm sorry you couldn't be here," glosses the older brother. The younger brother is ironically left to question this statement. If the older were truly sorry, he would not have scheduled this affair for today. He would have waited, but you have to make your own decisions.

"Well, you know." The younger feels a non-committal remark here would be the best option.

# Growing Up Girl

by Julia Nava

## Program Theme

*It isn't easy growing up as a girl in America. Between trying to make the grade, win the game, and get the friends, girls are faced with an oppressive pressure to achieve perfection. By examining the struggle to be herself, we are able to empathize with what modern girls face on the path to adulthood.*

## I Write Lullabies for Working Women

Once upon a time,  
there was a girl named Goodwyn,  
but her parents called her Goodie,  
who was  
    let's face it  
just like every other girl  
searching for her own piece of the world  
to twist twirl and curl around  
her little finger of ambition.  
But for the meantime  
Goodie was getting by just fine  
with her B.A. in English  
one bedroom apartment  
and job as an editor for a  
moderately progressive publication.  
Her job was nice.  
Her coworkers were nice.  
Her apartment was nice.  
Her life was nice  
    which was all she  
thought she wanted at the end of the day.

So when she met a nice guy,  
by the name of Mr. Nuff he said –  
    *Call me Justin Nuff*  
and so she did.  
They went on several dates  
and always had a nice time.  
They fell in love,  
had a nice wedding  
and became husband and wife.  
Mister and Missus  
Justin and Goodie Nuff.  
They moved into a nice three bedroom house,  
decorated it in whites and lived  
a nice little life.  
Goodie slept on piles of pillows

ate pastel pink marshmallows  
played in her padded, pallid palace  
and stayed away from things  
that weren't very nice,  
from the sharp jagged edges of  
everything she didn't know  
and never tried - denied the fact  
that scars aren't a history of injury  
but the footnotes of ambition  
that teach the body to stretch beyond  
it's own borders.

But since she was always safe,  
Goodie never grew,  
days tumbled into years and soon  
she began to shrink  
till she woke one morning and cried  
*I think I'm beginning to  
Disappear!*

*"My dear honey dumpling"*  
Justin replied  
    *"Why should my Goodie Nuff wife  
be so filled with strife?  
Haven't I given you a  
Goodie Nuff life?"*

With that  
she began to shrink before his eyes  
and all the pressure that had  
been pressing down on her  
pushed the words from  
her lungs to her lips:  
*I can no longer breathe  
with all of this ordinary  
suffocating me!  
I don't want to settle for  
a Goodie Nuff life.  
I don't want to be a honey bee  
Who never left the hive!  
I don't want to die a sparrow  
Who never swam the sky!  
I want things I never knew I needed  
I want to see the trees  
Throw me their leaves because  
It's the closest they have to confetti  
I want to feel the tingly  
Breeze on my cheeks  
Because the clouds are blowing me kisses  
I don't want to settle for being amused  
I need to be the muse  
That makes artists kiss the ground I walk on*

# Memory Drive

by Michael Hix and Will Schuster

## Program Theme

*Human beings are driven by memory--either the need to rely on it for day to day activities or to shape their personal history and identity. So what happens when our memory fails us ("Malfunction") or is incomplete ("Ghosts").*

## I Don't Mean to Malfunction by Michael Hix

I'm sorry.

You'll have to forgive me.

I would be more insightful

Were I not so short-sighted.

Or is it near-sighted?

You see...

(no pun intended)

My mind is filled with these blind spots

And forgotten thoughts

Places where my brain presses stop

Rewind

Delete

Fast-forward

Repeat

Wait...where-were-we...?

Forget about that...what I mean is –

It's always an accident

There's spilled milk on my amygdala

From ideas accumulated

Throughout the day

I'm an absent minded professor

So enamored in the sterility of my lab

I can fumble and mumble around

Till I stumble on sound discoveries like flubber

While forgetting my lover at the altar

And some sunny afternoons I leave from work

And miss the same turn I've taken

Everyday for the past ten years

I'll go for weeks without checking my mail

Until it dog piles on itself, leaving

Bills and catalogues to squirm beneath

My frenzied hands scribbling past-due checks

Yet no matter how many times

I pick up the phone to call you

I pause

And stare at the numbers

As if I were looking for a contact lens

At the bottom of a swimming pool

I always have that same thought:

If I don't jump in

I won't drown

My mind makes me forget your number

My brain eats my thoughts

My memory makes me pick and choose

Lining up daily routines