I'd rather be walking through the small forest behind my house. I imagine right now it would be the middle of the day, and my friends and I would be lost, stomping through the bushes looking for the stream that ran back to my friends house. Unfortunately, that stream is gone now. The stream has been redirected and the land has been flattened to make way for a new house. Now I'd never be able to find my way home. When I was a child, there used to be an enormous oak tree in the forest behind my house, around which my friends and I had erected a fort made from fallen branches and berry vines. We used to go out there and be amazed by nature. One time I went into the forest with my parents to pick blackberries and the next day I learned the wonders of poison oak. It was worth it. The forest and blackberry bushes are all gone now, plowed away to make room for someone's backyard. I'd like to be able to walk through that forest again.

I still spend much of my time in nature, and I have seen how our environment is being destroyed. I have participated in yearly beach clean-up programs and have seen what our fast growing human population is doing to our environment. The pollution I see during these programs is abhorrent. I know that something needs to be done to help nature. For this reason, I want to become an Environmental Engineer and help find solutions for the ever increasing demand on our natural resources. I want to learn how the forces of nature can benefit mankind. Because of my natural affinity for math and science, I know that I will be able to succeed as an engineer.

Complex problem solvers and team players are the type of people that are looked for in today's world and this is the kind of person that I am. Recently, a friend and I decided to start a new school club that would organize role-playing game activities. We felt such a club was beneficial to many role-players as we are very fickle and difficult to organize. Leadership needed to be established in the

role-playing community at our school, and my friend and I took the time to make this club happen and to get recruits. Currently I am Vice-President of our club and help design and participate in weekly role-playing events.

Role-playing has been called the art of lying creatively and entertainingly. I am a good role-player, and the skills I have acquired from playing role-playing games, such as problem-solving, creative thinking, and communicating clearly have helped me overcome challenges presented to me. Last year, I participated in an AIDS education program to teach underclassmen. In this program, a group of about thirty juniors and seniors researched information about the virus and then arranged to have health care workers, and others with the disease, come speak to the group. From these people, our group learned not only about the virus, but also its impact on society and an understanding of how it affects our behavior. After learning all we could, we divided into groups of four, and within each group, a plan was created about how to teach our peers what we had learned. We taught all freshmen students not only about the biology of the virus, but hopefully imparted a new social awareness in them about the world we live.

In today's society, people are becoming increasingly cynical. When helping people and working to preserve the environment, I feel my cynicism give way to optimism. I dream that we will be able to prevent urbanization from destroying our surroundings while still advancing as a society. I know the diverse life I have led and the expertise I have learned will help me to succeed at being an engineer so I can work towards my dreams. I am looking forward to college, continuing my present interests and developing new ones.