

Arrive Alive Creative Contest

Gage Sjostedt, 17

Gorham High School

I will always remember that day... the anguish, the scars, the constant and ever growing fear. I can still feel my skin splitting as my body was separating in my nightmares. The ever changing fire from my car slowly scorching my entire body. The hours of being stuck in my car that was jammed in a telephone pole.

Let's rewind to where it all started. It was a typical Tuesday spring afternoon with its warm yet humid breeze that was always so comforting. I was a normal teen at a normal highschool. Obviously drama is ever present in my life and continued after. But I was feeling pretty tired that afternoon and decided to go to Dunkin Donuts and get a coffee. My friend had just gotten some urgent highschool news. Once I found this out I had to know all the details immediately. As she was telling me I headed into my car to go get that coffee. Little did I know what horror I relive everyday was to come.

I was in the car listening to music when my friend texted me with more details about the drama. I had text and drove before so I didn't think anything of it. I had been taught not to text and drive and was aware of the dangers but thought I was too good of a driver for that to happen to me. We were texting back and forth and she asked if I wanted to know more. I then attempted to text back "yes", but that's when it happened.

According to the police report I was stuck in my car for four and a half hours as paramedics tried to retrieve my body in one piece. I still remember everything from that day and will for the rest of my life. I remember when I made my first impact. I can still

feel my body being thrown like a ragdoll for just a moment right before I hit the telephone pole. I passed out for a few minutes and woke up in complete agony. I couldn't move and had a telephone pole pushing up against my chest cracking it open like a peanut shell. The grainy and rough wood slowly stripped off layers of my skin, getting closer and closer to my sternum until it eventually met its goal. I was very fortunate to have someone drive by and call 911 because I was unable.

I just had to sit there and wait to see if I was going to live to see the next hour. I remember going in and out of consciousness for those four and a half hours while stuck in my car. Constantly waking up in fear and anguish. I remember the jaws up life pulling my half dead body out of my car once they miraculously got me somewhat stabilized. I was rushed to the hospital and put into emergency surgery. I woke up with a cast on my arm and a cast on my leg as well as a 22 inch forever scar on my chest. I would do physical therapy to regain mobility in my arm and leg for the next year and a half. So what did I learn from this experience? That the text can wait. I was very lucky but I shouldn't have ever text and drove and almost didn't arrive alive.