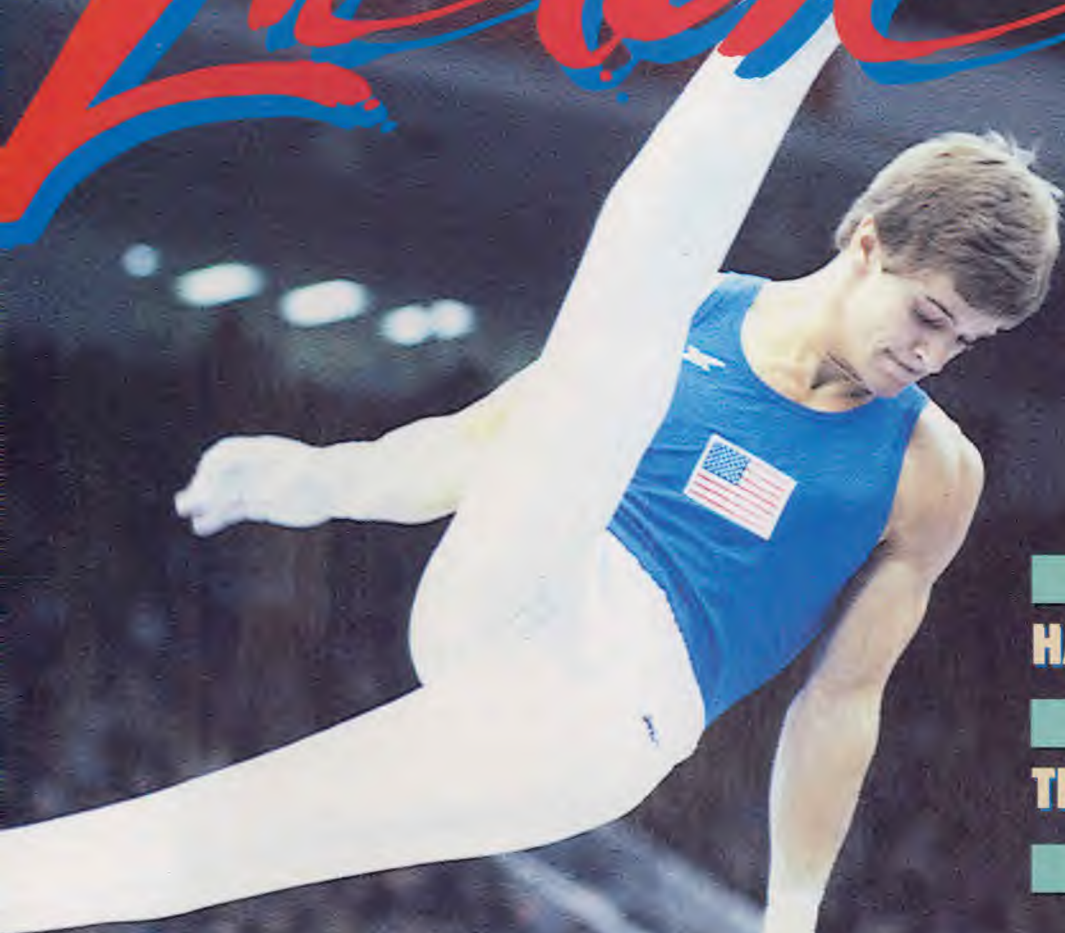


CELEBRATING POSITIVE CHOICES

Listen



■ "HUFFING"
HAZARDS, P. 10

■ COUNTING
THE COST, P. 18

■ HIKING, P. 24

PETER VIDMAR

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Underwear, NOT UGANDA

*A wave of delirium washed over Joel,
and he began to babble.*

Breezing through his history test, Joel could hear both the rain dripping in the gutters and Tooter's adenoids whistling eerily. That's how quiet it was around his seat in the middle of row 4.

So when Ms. Benson, in her tight, bright begonia skirt, bent over to pick up the eraser, the ripping sound seemed thunderous.

Joel never knew Ms. Benson could do so many things at once: clap her hands over her rear, gasp, whirl around, turn red, figure out the joke, and come to the wrong conclusion that he'd done it.

The kids caught on too—or thought they had. Joel Kincaid, the Tiny Terror of Eighth Hour, had struck again. The preppies rolled their eyes, and all the dopes in the back row snorted. But Joel cared only what beautiful, dark-haired, 10-foot-tall Lena did—which was to glance at him out of the corner of her eye.

With that casual glance, something like mercury in a thermometer

IF LENA EVER REALLY LOOKED AT HIM, HIS HAIR WOULD PROBABLY BURST INTO FLAMES . . .

on a sizzling summer day rose up in Joel, from his sandals to his frizzy aura of red hair. If Lena ever really *looked* at him, his hair would probably burst into flames. They'd probably have to beat it out with a blanket.

Joel slid down in his chair and stared into space as Ms. Benson loomed over him. She promised that somebody was going to learn a real lesson this time.

Of course, he'd seen his best bud Christopher rip the rag in half, making Ms. Benson think her underwear was showing. But Joel would take the rap. After all, what could Benson do to him that she hadn't already done several times before? And Lena's attention was

worth a hundred detentions, a thousand trips to Mr. Deegan's office, a million whatever-the-punishments.

So Joel was pretty surprised when Ms. Benson assigned him to make a speech on underwear.

The other kids got to draw their topics out of Ms. Benson's purple felt hat at the end of the hour. They got things like "The History of the Computer" or "The History of the Steam Engine."

But not Joel.

His topic was handed to him specially by Ms. Benson. "The History of Underwear," the paper said, in Ms. Benson's rigid red printing. "Use two sources, make 10 note cards, and give a four-minute presentation," she'd written. "By Friday."

Joel turned the paper over and dropped his face into his hands. If he made a speech on underwear, Lena would never look at him again. Not even out of the corner of her eye.

He hung around until everybody else had filed out. Then he

BY SHARELLE BYARS MORANVILLE

stumbled up to Ms. Benson's desk.

She was staring at him silently over the tops of her reading glasses.

"Please?" he choked in a strangled voice, waving the piece of paper.

She took a deep breath. "Joel," she began, "I put up with the stinky mouse corpse in my drawer. I put up with the *Playboy* poster taped to the pull-down map of Nova Scotia. I put up with the Wacky-Clacky teeth in my briefcase . . ." And Ms. Benson went on and on and on.

Joel stood on one foot and then the other, staring out at the threatening sky. He'd hoped Ms. Benson didn't take his jokes personally. It was just that he was the shortest ninth grader in North America. And he didn't know how else to make Lena notice him. History was the only class they had together. The jokes had nothing at all to do with Ms. Benson.

" . . . and today you finally went too far," she ended. "I want you to feel what it's like to be embarrassed in front of the class. Then maybe you'll stop pulling these stupid, unkind jokes." She stood up. Their talk was over.

Joel sighed.

So what was he going to do? Rat on Christopher? Trade his loyalty to his best friend for a normal oral presentation topic? Trade Christopher for Lena?

He sighed again.

If he was really, really lucky, he'd get run over by a Porsche before Friday.

Meantime, if he wasn't that lucky, where would he find two sources for the history of underwear? He stewed about this as he pedaled home in the rain, slicing through the puddles distractedly. At the apartment he wolfed down all the bagels, scribbled a note for his mom, and headed for the library.

LENA GAZED INTO HIS EYES. . . . JOEL FELT HIMSELF BEING BLOWN INTO A MILLION FRACTAL PIECES.

Taking a table by the reference books, he was just opening volume U of the *Britannica* when he heard Lena say, "Hi, Joel!"

His hair frizzed.

"Are you working on your oral presentation too?" Lena asked, turning the encyclopedia around so she could see the letter on its spine. "U?"

"Yes," Joel croaked. "Me."

She tapped the letter. "U," she said. "What's your topic?"

"Uganda," he said. It just popped up from the depths of the ocean of panic Joel was wallowing in.

Then he said it again, more loudly. "Uganda."

He would be fish food for piranhas before he would let Lena find out what his topic really was.

Before Friday.

"Guess who Megan and I were talking to after school?" Lena asked, pulling out a chair.

Joel could feel her breath on his ear. The library shelves tilted and spun. He gripped the edge of the table to avoid total wipeout.

"Christopher," Lena said. "And he told us that he was the one who pulled the joke on Ms. Benson today. He seemed kind of ashamed, letting her think you did it. He wonders if you're going to tell."

As Lena gazed questioningly into his eyes, Joel felt himself blowing into a million fractal pieces. "Never," he croaked. "I don't rat on friends. Even if they are rats," he added hoarsely.

There.

He had made up his mind.

A stupid choice.

But Lena was smiling at him. Joel looked around for something to beat out the flames if his hair flashed into fire.

"See?" she said. "I knew it! I told Megan that Joel Kincaid isn't the kind of guy who rats. I admire that in a person. Loyalty. Honor. A code. When you're through with Uganda, why don't we go somewhere and get a soda?"

For a timeless instant Joel rode the crest of getting asked out by the Head Goddess of Ninth Grade. Then a wave of delirium washed over him, and he began to babble.

"Underwear," he said.

Startled, Lena blinked and moved back.

"Underwear. That's my topic. Not Uganda. She's making me do a report on the history of underwear."

It took a minute, but finally the flecks of mica in Lena's eyes danced to the music of her laughter. "Underwear! Ms. Benson's revenge. And you're taking the punishment even though you didn't do it. That is *so cool!*"

Shaking her head and still smiling, Lena drifted off. "Don't forget about our date," she murmured over her shoulder. "In about an hour."

Joel beat at his hair. Then he got up and strolled into the stacks. He pivoted his head left and right. Nobody around.

"Yes!" he screamed in a whisper, cutting the air with his fist. "Yes, yes, yes!"

He didn't want to get hit by a Porsche anymore. No, no, no!

Squeezing his head, he ran through all the underwear he knew of from the top down.

He stopped at socks.

Socks.

Were socks underwear?

Deciding they were, he pulled the S encyclopedia off the shelf. ▀

WORD POWER

"WHAT DID I DO THAT WAS SO WRONG?" SOBBED BRIAN.



RATS, I CAN'T BELIEVE IT . . . NOT ANTHONY, NOT NOW.

Just give up, Fatso. You can't do it. You can't climb the rope."

The words charged through Brian like thunderbolts. He and Anthony had clashed on several occasions. It always felt the same. But Anthony just didn't seem to know how to stop the verbal attacks.

"Why do you even try to climb up? Huh, Fatso?"

Brian hung his head of too curly hair and walked off thinking, What's the use? He faintly heard the bell ringing in the distance. At last. Taking a deep breath, he headed back to Mrs. Fakoury's class. Learning more facts about whales seemed a good way to end the day. And it was . . .

Before he knew it, Brian was home, busy throwing

together some stuff for the weekend with his dad. It was kind of weird having two bedrooms; sometimes he forgot what he'd left where, which could be a problem when it came to clothes. Good thing his dad had gotten an apartment nearby. Just as he zipped the bag closed, the doorbell rang as if on cue.

"I've got it, Mom!" Brian yelled as he moved toward the front door, bag in hand.

When he opened the door, his dad was there. "Hi, son. How's it going?" he asked with a smile.

Brian was surprised to see a

BY JUDI SIMMONS ESTES

long-lost grin on his dad's thinning face. He hadn't seen many grins from him in the past few months.

"Here," he said, shoving the bag to his dad, "I'll be right back. I wanna let Mom know I'm leaving."

Brian was used to the routine that he and his dad followed on most Friday afternoons. His dad picked him up late, straight on his way home from work. Dad needed some time to wind down, so each of them went to his own room for an hour or so. Then they would call out for pizza or go out to eat. So as he settled onto his twin-size bed, with his favorite CD in place, Brian was surprised to see his dad come in.

"Bri, I want to talk to you."

With a puzzled look on his

"I miss you, son. I miss not having you in my life every day. I don't like coming home to this empty apartment every night, so I stay at work a lot. I just wanted you to know."

Brian didn't know what to say. So he hung his head. He barely felt his dad sit on the bed, move closer, and slip one arm around his shoulder.

"It's going to be OK, Bri. We should have started talking about this a long time ago. I'm sorry. I didn't know how. I didn't want you to get upset. I can see now that I was wrong."

The tears slowly streamed down Brian's cheeks. He buried his head in his cupped hands, then he felt his dad's other arm enfold him. He fell limp. *What am I*

As his dad left the room, Brian looked up and noticed his bike sitting in the corner, its parking place for months. *What a perfect, quick getaway*, he thought.

At first the wind felt good against his face. Brian's mind kept wandering back to what his dad had said. All of a sudden he instinctively slammed on his brakes.

Rats, I can't believe it, he thought. There was Anthony mowing a long strip next to the sidewalk. *Not him. Not now.*

Over the drone of the lawn mower he heard the now familiar shrill voice. "Fatso, I didn't know you could still get on a bike."

That was it. As he screeched to a stop, he found himself within inches of a pair of Nike Air Jordans and a silenced mower.

"Anthony Hobbs, I might be fat, but you act like a jerk. I've had enough. It seems as though neither one of us has been feeling too great this year. I don't know how you're doing with your parents' divorce, but I'm not handling mine very well. So lay off."

All of a sudden Brian realized what he had just done. Before he could crawl out of his skin he heard Anthony clearing his throat and saw the smart-aleck grin leave his face.

"Uh, uh, I didn't know about your parents," Anthony said in a very shaky voice. "Not your parents too?"

For the first time in more than a year Brian saw Anthony as his former next-door neighbor instead of the class nuisance he'd become. For a moment the shaved head, wire earring, and baggy pants all but disappeared.

An hour later, when he opened the door to his dad's apartment, Brian got a whiff of the pizza warming in the oven. He loved mushroom-and-extra-cheese pizza! Funny thing, though—he didn't even feel hungry. He just wanted to be with his dad. ▀

"I don't know how you're doing with your parents' divorce, but I'm not handling mine very well. So lay off."

face, Brian slid the headset down around his neck.

"I want to tell you about why I couldn't spend last weekend with you. I want to tell you what I did instead."

What's going on? What in the world can this be about? Thoughts whirled in Brian's head. *Could they be getting back together? Does dad have a girlfriend?* This guessing game was interrupted by his dad's deep but gentle voice.

"Last weekend, Bri, I got together with a bunch of people for a retreat. We talked about problems in our lives. I learned that I really need to be talking to you more. I need to let you know what it's like not living with you every day."

Brian started feeling warm and uncomfortable. He really didn't want to hear this. It had hurt when his dad canceled their last weekend. But he would never have asked why.

doing? he thought. *I can't cry in front of him. What's he going to think of me?*

"I love you, son."

That was it. He couldn't hold back any longer.

"If you love me so much, why did you leave?" Brian was sobbing. "Why, Dad, why? Why did you have to leave? What did I do that was so wrong?"

Brian didn't know if his dad could even understand his muffled words.

"Your mom and I can't live together anymore, son. It's hard to explain. But it doesn't have anything to do with you. We both love you very much. I can see we have a lot to talk—"

The words were drowned out by the ringing of the phone. Brian was relieved by the distraction. He felt exhausted and wanted to get away. His dad didn't move.

"Dad, I want to go outside. Go ahead and answer it. Really, it's OK."



YO! JENNY

Listen up, teens. Say Hi to Jennifer Acklam, a Miss Texas Coed and America's Homecoming Queen. Jenny wants to hear from you. Send your letters to us at **LISTEN** magazine, P.O. Box 859, Hagerstown, MD 21741, and we'll pass them on to her for the column.

My best friend is having lots of home problems. She wants to stay at my house all the time because she says her dad is an alcoholic and abuses her when he gets drunk. I want to help her, but I don't think letting her move in with our family is the answer.

I think your friend desperately needs your help and understanding through this family crisis. Living with an alcoholic parent is dreadful.

Encourage your friend to talk to a trusted school counselor, clergy, or other responsible and respected adult. There are many professional agencies (listed in the yellow pages) that provide services to alleviate abusive home situations. Having your friend move in with your family will provide only a temporary solution at best. A problem this big definitely deserves the attention and guidance of trained and competent professionals. Don't be shy about seeking their help.

Several of my friends are big party animals on the weekends. They love to drink beer. They claim beer drinking will not make a person an alcoholic. They say only wine and hard liquor will cause alcohol addiction. Are they right?

NO! They are wrong. Beer drinking can be just as dangerous and deadly as other forms of alcohol consumption. It takes a smaller quantity of wine and hard liquor to get drunk than with beer, but that does not mean that beer drinking is safe. Many, many alcoholics started with beer. Please encourage your friends to stay away from beer, as well as from wine and other liquor. It all spells *trouble!*

I knew a guy who was nice a couple years ago. Now he waits at my bus stop, and I found out that he always has cigarettes on him. Out of curiosity I bought a couple of them, thinking it wouldn't hurt to try them. Well, now I'm hooked. Plus my mom found out. She's a psychiatrist, which makes matters worse. She confronted me, and I said I hadn't been smoking, but someone told that I had. I am really upset now because that harmless habit isn't so harmless anymore. And to top that off, my A and B average will be smudged by the F's I

have in history and math. I need some advice, since I can't tell my friends because they'll rat on me. Help!

You sound like a really good girl who has hit a couple speed bumps down the road of life! You've got a good family (the best gift anyone could have) and a great scholastic average until now. With these two things going for you, you can conquer your two problems—your cigarette smoking and your failing history and math.

First, the smoking has to stop—*now!* You just have to *quit!* Reward yourself for each day you don't smoke—by putting the money that you would have spent for cigarettes toward something else you really want. Keep yourself busy with activities during which you just can't smoke. Remind yourself constantly how unhealthy smoking is for you. You can and *must quit!*

Second, it sounds as if you're a capable student who just needs to concentrate more on history and math. Try to find out where your grades slipped—homework assignments, quizzes, papers, and/or tests. Then work harder in these areas. I'm sure your grades will improve. Just set your mind on these goals—to stop smoking and to improve your history and math grades—and then *go for it!*

VIDM

P R E P A R E D T O W I N

Peter Vidmar

O L Y M P I C H A L L O F F A M E G Y M N A S T

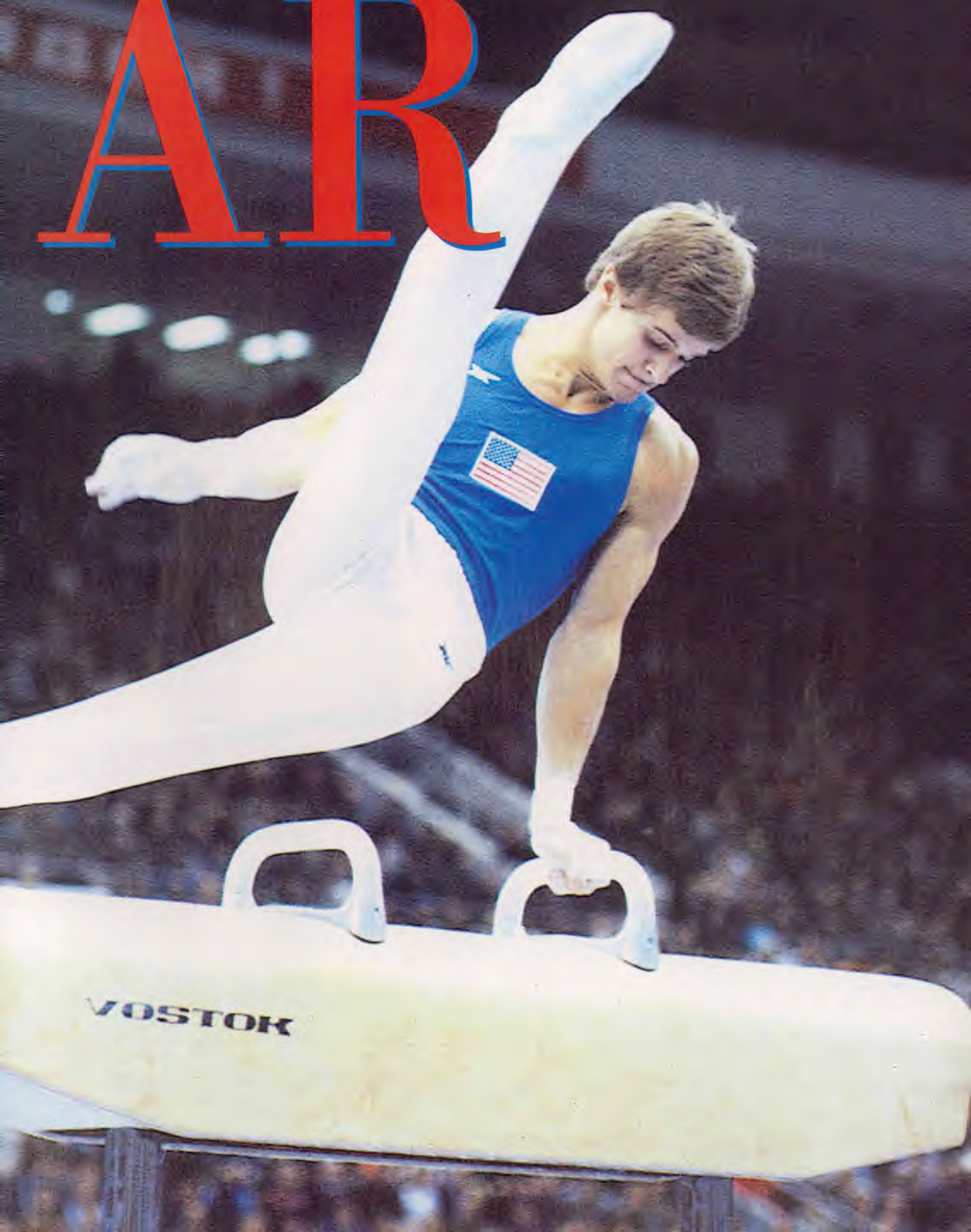
The man has been described as “one of the most dynamic performers in gymnastics.” The man who led the 1984 U.S. gymnastics team to its first Olympic victory in 50 years truly personifies the American spirit of excellence. Superathlete Peter Vidmar merited the highest overall score ever (9.89) for any U.S. gymnast, male or female, including a perfect 10 on the pommel horse. No wonder he was inducted into the U.S. Olympic Hall of Fame.

“I was prepared,” says Peter, explaining how he precisely executed what he had practiced for years (except for the crashes). “I didn’t wait until it was too late to figure out how to handle a situation like that. I did it every day in my workout.” *(continued on page 28)*

PHOTO: U.S.A. GYMNASTICS

B Y S H E L L I E M . F R E Y

AR





BY MICHAEL WARREN

There are dozens of products in your home that can give you a quick, powerful high. The problem is that they just might kill you.

"Alyssa," age 16, says she was never really a junkie—she just liked to inhale gasoline. The high is "better" than marijuana, speed, or Valium, she says. She used to huff 20 times a day.

Her older brother taught her to huff. One day last year he was sucking up gas fumes behind a convenience store when he blacked out. He was rushed to the emergency room.

"He was lucky," Alyssa says, because he didn't die. But that didn't stop Alyssa. "I was addicted to it," she admits.

A cheap high?

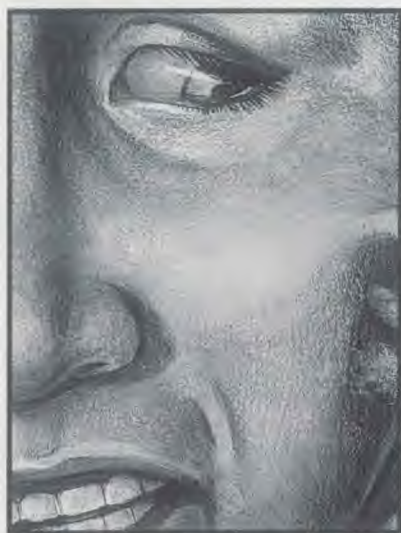
In your house right now there are dozens of products that some kids use for a quick and powerful high. They're a class of drugs called inhalants because they're sniffed (through the nose) or huffed (through the mouth).

Inhalants are cheap. They're also legal, since you're not going to get arrested for possession of a gas can. The problem is that they're deadly. *(continued on page 12)*

THIS STUFF CAN KILL YOU. THE FIRST TIME YOU USE IT . . . A U.K. STUDY FOUND THAT OUT OF 1,000 DEATHS CAUSED BY INHALANTS 200 WERE FIRST-TIME USERS.

**INHALANTS
AREN'T DRUGS,
ARE THEY?
NOT THE
SAME . . .**

**W
O
R
S
E**



THESE DRUGS CAN CRIPPLE A NERVOUS SYSTEM, CAUSE IRREVERSIBLE BLINDNESS AND BRAIN DAMAGE.

Inhalants provide a quick high, since the fumes go from the lungs immediately into the bloodstream. "It might not last as long as marijuana, but it gives you more of a high," Alyssa says. "It feels really weird. It makes your body go numb."

These drugs aren't physically addictive, but they can quickly create a psychological dependence. "I'd say I want to do it just one more time, but I couldn't get away from it," Alyssa says.

If they don't die first, people who use inhalants wreck their bodies. These drugs can cripple a nervous system and cause irreversible blindness and brain damage. They often contribute to heart and bone marrow damage, hepatitis, jaundice, dementia, and loss of hearing and memory.

"This stuff will kill you one way or another," says Dr. Neil Rosenberg, founder of the International Institute for Inhalant Abuse. "It will drop you in your tracks, or over time it will destroy

your brain."

The sad part is, some teens—even adults—don't think huffing counts as "doing drugs." After all, it's not the same as smoking marijuana or crack, right?

"Right," Dr. Rosenberg says, "it's not the same. It's a lot more deadly. This stuff will probably kill more readily than any abused drug that I can think of."

"These are industrial chemicals," he says. They have a lot more toxicity than other abused drugs. You can lump all the deaths from all other [illegal] drugs together and they probably don't equal the numbers that die from inhalants.

"This stuff can kill you the first time you use it," Dr. Rosenberg says. A study in the United Kingdom found that out of 1,000 deaths caused by inhalants, 200 were first-time users.

Sudden sniffing death (SSD) describes what can happen when the use of inhalants is followed by stress. "The going theory is that these chemicals sensitize the heart to the effects of adrenaline," Dr. Rosenberg says. "Any sudden exertion or fright where there's an adrenaline surge may kick them into a fatal arrhythmia."

Item: *A 16-year-old male in Pennsylvania hops in the car to go joyriding with his friends. He takes along a canister of butane. He takes a few snorts, then collapses. He's dead from a heart attack.*

Inhalants also cause injury and death because many of them are highly flammable. Just one spark is all it takes to torch your face and lungs.

Item: *A 16-year-old New Jersey teen dies when a propane furnace explodes in his home. In South Carolina a 16-year-old is critically injured when the propane tank from a gas grill explodes in his face.*

Some teens die from suffocation without even realizing it. The toxic fumes depress the central nervous system, making the lungs weaker.

They also displace oxygen in the lungs. It's called anoxia, or oxygen deprivation.

Item: *A 16-year-old male from Colorado inhales fabric protector with his friends. He passes out. His friends think he is asleep and just roll him over in his sleeping bag. They wait several hours to call for help. Meanwhile their friend dies.*

Alyssa was lucky. The gasoline she was huffing eventually made her so sick she couldn't continue. "I would taste this funny taste, and I would be very tired and always wanting to sleep. And it would give me bad headaches," she says.

Unfortunately, some users don't experience any recognizable side effects until it's too late. And for those who die their first time, there's no second chance.

"It's really harsh stuff," Alyssa says. "You can die from it. It was a very stupid thing to do. There's really nothing more to tell people."

FACTOIDS

- Inhalants are the most widely used drugs among teens, behind tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana. They're especially big with people aged 12 to 14; older teens usually avoid them. Only 2.3 percent of seniors currently use inhalants.
- Almost one in five high school students (17 percent) have used inhalants at least once. One in 20 sixth graders huffed in 1992. Almost one in 20 eighth graders (4.7 percent) currently use inhalants.
- Inhalants are often abused when other drugs aren't available. In Malaysia, which has very strict drug control laws, young children have been known to sniff cow dung to get a methane high.
- In the United States, 1,144 people died from using inhalants in 1989.
- For more information, you can contact the International Institute for Inhalant Abuse at 1-800-832-5090.

Contemplating the big checkout? DEFINITELY THE **WRONG DOOR**

Here's what suicide really means: no more parties. Forget school socials and street corner chats after classes. Forget good times and not-so-good. All finished.

There won't be any phone calls, either. You know the ones. The kind you make late at night, those times your mom and dad are always bugging you to get off the phone and get to bed. "You've got school tomorrow."

What about those CDs you still wanted to get for your collection? Cancel them out. There's no CD player where you're going.

What about your subscription to your favorite magazine? Who's going to get to read it now? Not you. You're

BY MICHAEL C. McPHERSON

(continued from pg. 13)

contemplating suicide, remember? No need for magazines anymore.

Forget going to the restaurant with the guys or the gang. Your chair will be filled by somebody who isn't chickening out on life.

And that boyfriend? Awww, he'll feel bad for a while, but don't you worry, he'll be getting another girlfriend real soon. Somebody who's alive and willing to face life on its terms, stand up to its challenges, and shrug off the down times. After all, there's always a brighter tomorrow. But you'll never know. You want to end it all now.

Thinking about a pact with a few friends about committing suicide? Don't worry about discussing it with them later. You won't be around. It's total wipeout—oblivion—nada. Actually, you'd never know whether they followed through or not, would you?

Your parents? Yeah, well, you might say they deserve to be hurt. Look at the trouble they've caused you. Curfews and grounding you during that special weekend. They deserve to spend long, sleepless nights crying over you. Blaming themselves to the point where divorce seems their only option.

Don't worry about your little brother or sister. Their heads will

TALKING ABOUT IT HELPS—IT CAN EASE THE PAIN. EVEN THOUGH WE FEEL THE PAIN WILL NEVER GO AWAY, IT DOES.

be swimming with confusion for a long time. They'll get over it. It might take a few years. First, they have a lot of crying to do. Yeah, they did love you. Still do. You will not be as fondly remembered as you imagine. You will become a painful memory. You hurt them in a deep way. You went and killed yourself. Of course, you'll never know. You won't be around to witness the pain you're causing—the lives you have torn apart because of a senseless, selfish act of destruction. I wish you could see their faces. It's enough to make anybody cry. And they're all hurting so bad.

Actually, you could talk it out before copping out. That's what friends are for. Include your mom and dad, too. As a parent and a former teenager I know what I'm talking about. I know what it's like to be hurt by a girlfriend. To want to die. Wanting to make them all sorry, especially *her*! I know what it's like to get over it, too. I did find that other special someone I never believed would enter my life. Oh, I avoided dating for a long time—I was a true martyr to lost love. But *love* has many fingers on its hand. Falling in love again was like being struck by lightning. I didn't believe it would ever happen to me again, but it did.

I have a teenage daughter. My message to her is simple: I don't want you to get hurt like I did. I don't want you to have a close friend use you and then cast you aside for someone else. I hate to see you hurt, and it tears me apart to see you cry. I would love nothing more than to protect you from the pain that is out there, but I can't. All I can do is guide you through it. Like it or not—and I don't—you have to walk your own path. I know about drugs, alcohol, and about getting your name written on a bathroom wall. Life can be the pits sometimes.

But talking about it helps. It can ease the pain to where sometimes you forget about ideas of suicide and get on with your life.

Talk to your parents. Ask them to drop all their rules for a minute, all plans of punishment, and hear you out. They might not realize how much you've grown in the past few months, that you're more of an adult than they realize. Give them a chance. Give them the opportunity to understand you better: all your needs, wants, aspirations, the confusion in your life.

The last thing in the world anybody wants is to lose you, believe me. Suicide has no answers. Death is not only final; it's the end of everything.

There are many doors in life. Most of them are positive. We all get hurt, but it doesn't have to be the end. We do get over it, even though we argue it out, feel that the pain will never go away. It does. Like everything else, it takes time. And we do fall in love again. We make new friends. Find new paths. You will discover wonderful and interesting things about yourself. ▀

SUICIDE HAS NO ANSWERS. THE LAST THING IN THE WORLD ANYBODY WANTS IS TO LOSE YOU.

LISTENING

FEEDBACK FROM OUR READERS

BASEBALL DREAMS

On a lush field of green grass
Is where I'd love to spend my day.
Swinging, then sliding, and easily tossing
All my angers and fears away.
Never, never giving up;
Like a great warrior denying to be beat.
Running down white paths 90 feet long,
Feeling the grip of each shoe cleat.
As I dive headfirst into home plate,
I have a desire like a burning flame.
Though it doesn't matter if we win or lose,
But only if we have fun playing the game.
A game without any "I's" or "me's,"
But rather a unified chorus of "we's."
Yes, I can heartily say,
That's my baseball dream for the game of today.

Nick Wegener, 16
Hebron, Nebraska

LONELINESS

No voices to be heard, caged, alone in a place
of dark nothings.
Afraid to be heard, to stand out, so you stay
all alone.
An act of shyness, tears of loneliness,
needing comfort.
A family to share a life with. Shadows, strangers
needing someone, loneliness . . .

Jenn Keuchler, 13
Camillus, New York



WAR IS . . .

War is the malevolent nature of humanity
that must be repressed.
War is the rages of humanity exploded.
War is the evil found deep within us
that we suppressed,
but when least expected, springs to action.
War is the song of the devil and all his demons.
War is death, blood, and all that is evil.
War is the executioner of the young.
War is the scar that a person must wear forever.
War is the woodcutter cutting down the young
before their time.
War is the grim reaper's scout recruiting new
victims.
War is the egos of the old fought by the bodies
of the young.
War is the inability of humanity to solve its
problems.
War is the robber of parents from their families,
siblings from each other,
And children from their parents.
War entangles itself in a country and never lets
go its grip.
War is the killing of the innocent and
unsuspecting people caught in the cross fire.
War is an attempt to engulf all human beings.
War has no winners, only losers.
War is . . .

Jeremy Kurzweil, 16
Short Hills, New Jersey

CHOICES

by Kay D. Rizzo

ONE OUT OF
FOUR GIRLS
AND ONE IN
SEVEN BOYS
ARE VICTIMS
OF SEXUAL
ABUSE
BEFORE THE
AGE OF 18.

THE DO'S & DON'TS OF PEOPLE SAFETY



Stranger danger—your folks have warned you about talking to strangers. But the topic of personal safety goes far beyond stranger danger. The director of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, Peter Banks, warns, “It’s more common for kids to be harmed by friends and relatives than by strangers.”

ILLUSTRATION: LARS JUSTINEN

So, what would you do if . . . ? Take the following quiz to see if you are straight on the do's and don'ts the experts have laid out for us.

1. You are walking down the street. A van pulls up and the driver calls to you, asking directions to the mall. What do you do?

- ☐ a. Give directions.
- ☐ b. Keep walking.
- ☐ c. Run in the opposite direction the van is going.
- ☐ d. Scream and bang on the door of the nearest house.

2. Your uncle Bill is coming for a visit. You've never felt comfortable around this particular uncle, but you don't know why. You know you'll be forced to greet him with a kiss and a hug. What do you do?

- ☐ a. Talk with your parents about your feelings.
- ☐ b. Scream and run.
- ☐ c. Avoid him while he's visiting.
- ☐ d. Threaten to pepper-spray him if he comes near you.

3. If one in four girls and one in seven boys are victims of sexual abuse before the age of 18, why do you think only one in ten cases are ever reported?

- ☐ a. The molesters are often family members.
- ☐ b. The molesters threaten the family with violence.
- ☐ c. The molesters scare the child into silence.
- ☐ d. The child fears being blamed.

4. Which of the following key phrases should a child always remember when threatened?

- ☐ a. Check first.
- ☐ b. The buddy system.
- ☐ c. Say no.
- ☐ d. Go tell.

5. If you become separated from your parents in a large crowd,

- ☐ a. plan ahead where you'll meet.
- ☐ b. seek help from a "low-risk" adult.
- ☐ c. stay in the area you last saw them.
- ☐ d. call 9-1-1.

6. If someone tries to grab you,

- ☐ a. cry for help.
- ☐ b. kick, scream, run.
- ☐ c. bite, scratch, go for the eyes.
- ☐ d. attract someone else's attention.

ANSWERS

■ 1. If you picked a, you could be dead wrong. No adult needs to ask directions of a kid. If the driver is really looking for help, some adult can give the information needed. The choice to "keep walking" could be right if you're in a crowded area where the van driver would be reluctant to force the issue. Choose c if you are in an unpopulated area. It would give you time to escape while the driver turned the van around. And d is the ultimate action if nothing else is available.

■ 2. Answers a, telling your parents how you feel, and c, avoiding him, are the best. You should scream and run (b) only if dear Uncle Bill becomes too "friendly." And answer d probably isn't such a good idea, especially if Uncle Bill is larger and stronger than you and can wrest the spray away from you.

■ 3. While a, b, and c are valid reasons, answer d is the most common. Never let any adult convince you that you are the guilty party when they force sexual advances on you.

■ 4. All four. Tell your parents where you're going. (a) If they know where you are, they know where to start looking for you should something happen.

Whenever possible, don't go alone (b). Go with a friend, or better yet, several friends. There is safety in numbers. Say no (c) in capital letters—NO! If you feel uncomfortable about some situations, listen to your heart and say NO! And if an adult or another child tries to "come on" to you in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable, tell someone (d). Your parents, a school counselor, a minister, a teacher. Don't let the offending person make you feel guilty for something they have tried to do to you.

■ 5. If you get separated from your parents, a is the best answer. Plan to meet in a well-populated spot. Staying where you last saw your parents (c) until they find

IF SOMEONE TRIES TO FORCE YOU TO GO WITH THEM . . . GO HOLLYWOOD AND MAKE A BIG SCENE.

you is the best alternative to answer a. You can also seek help from a "low-risk" adult—a uniformed guard, a clerk, or a person wearing a name tag of some kind. And don't hesitate to call 9-1-1 if you feel threatened in the least.

■ 6. If someone tries to grab you or force you to go with them, use all of the answers listed. Go Hollywood. Make as big a scene as you can. Inflict as much pain as you can on your attacker.

Just as we have fire drills at school and home, just as kids in California know what to do in an earthquake, just as kids in the Midwest practice tornado safety, and kids in the Southeast learn hurricane safety, and kids all over the world learn how to cross the street safely, so kids need to know that there are ways they can protect themselves from dangerous people. It never hurts to be danger-smart, to know a few do's and don'ts of people safety. ■



HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

BY MARGARET HILL

The six teenagers sank onto their beanbags in the group counseling room. Today there was none of the usual raucous punching and good-natured exchange of insults. I knew they didn't want to be at school this week any more than I, their counselor, did.

For three days they had received counseling, comfort, sympathy, and lectures from ministers and psychologists who had come to the school at a time when part of their world seemed to have ended. It had indeed ended for four of their schoolmates who had died in a car accident on the way home from a "kegger" in celebration of graduation.

What was there left for me to say? Only that these six would go on living. That is, barring another tragedy like this one, a tragedy that didn't have to happen.

My mind searched for words to put into the silence. Finally I said, "I remember a day when I was about your age, seeing a fancy Levi jacket and jodhpurs in a store window. Since I was to be riding in the girls' rodeo competition the following month, I figured I simply couldn't live without that outfit. I went into the store, found the garments in my size, and bought

them without asking how much they cost. I practically had a heart attack when the clerk told me the price. It would take all the spending money I had saved practically forever. In fact, I had to go home and rob my piggy bank and then go back to the store for my purchase."

At that point in my story I paused long enough to note that the group members were staring at me with question marks in their eyes. After all, what did a stupid rodeo costume have to do with their grief?

Having started the account of the Levi episode, I somehow had to tie it to the present tragedy. So I went on: "Was the outfit worth that much? No way, I concluded during the following months, when I had to do without several things I

needed or wanted, including a class ring."

My counselees continued to look at me with "so what?" expressions on their faces.

"I did learn from that experience," I said finally. "I've learned to ask 'What does it cost?' before buying. During the years I've learned that looking at price tags is also a good idea when it comes to actions."

By now the group members appeared slightly more interested, so I hurried on without inviting their comments. I told them about a time I went on a hike with friends without telling our parents where we would be. The price was heavy. My fellow hikers and I got lost. After many terrifying hours we straggled back to town to face our frantic parents and the drastic punishments they decided we deserved.

Now it was the kids' turn to talk, and they did, relating some of the times their bad judgment had not been worth the cost of the consequences.

I gently reminded the students at this point that their friends' graduation celebration had cost too much. I mentioned the frequency of teen tragedies—many involving alcohol and other drugs. Then I read them parts of a newspaper editorial about an accident that had

**ALCOHOL, DRUGS,
AND GANGS HAVE
A STRANGE
ALLURE, BUT
CONSIDER THE
PRICE YOU PAY . . .**

occurred a few months earlier. It was written by the town's chief of police:

"Close to 1,000 people were there that day, all sitting in front of a smooth casket topped with flowers and a high school letter jacket. Jason was president of the senior class, a star athlete, a popular friend to hundreds, the only son of successful parents, but he drove into the side of a fast-moving freight train at the city square on a beautiful Sunday afternoon and was killed instantly. He was 18 years old. And he was drunk. And he was dead. . . .

"You never get accustomed to or forget the horror on the faces of parents when you break the news to them that their child is forever gone from this earth. . . .

"We know there will be both youth and parents who don't like our enforcement posture. . . . There will be verbal and maybe physical abuse against the officers. Some parents will complain about our enforcement of underage drinking. . . . But we can live with that a lot easier than telling parents that their son or daughter has been killed."

Four of the six students were crying by the time I finished reading the editorial. They were crying for Jason. They were crying for their dead schoolmates and their families. Crying because of their own loss.

"It's all right to cry," I told them. "What isn't all right is the reason for some of our weeping."

Please, God, I prayed silently, let these sorrows help our children always to look at those hidden price tags that go with risky behavior.

Alcohol and other drugs are, of course, not the only major risk temptations in the lives of young people. Some major tragedies grow out of our need to belong. From the moment of birth it is important that the infant begins the process of belonging to at least one

SOME MAJOR TRAGEDIES GROW OUT OF OUR NEED TO BELONG . . .

parent—in other words, "bonding." As life continues, additional bonding takes place—among relatives and friends, at school, on the playground, and at work, for instance.

A person who has trouble forming satisfying human relationships may resort to harmful choices in the search for a sense of belonging. For some teens the gang is the answer. The gang doesn't reject you; its members speak the same private language, wear the same colors and symbols, provide activity and adventure, and most significant of all, the gang becomes your family in case you feel you don't already have an adequate one.

Unfortunately, you don't have to be one of society's "losers" to be lured into a gang.

So how much does it cost?

Eighteen-year-old "Hollywood" is facing a mandatory 40-year prison sentence for shooting a nongang member—a college student—who happened to be wearing a red University of Oklahoma hat, the prime color of a rival gang.

Who is this "Hollywood"?

He is described by police officers as "not our idea of someone who gets 'hooked.'" He certainly wasn't his parents' and teachers' image of someone who could get sucked into gang activity. Surely not this popular track and football star, solid student, church attender, a boy who played drums and organ. In addition to possessing these skills, Hollywood is described by school faculty members as "mild, soft-spoken and generous, caring and sensitive."

What, then, happened to that worthwhile role model?

Hollywood's own explanation is, "It's just the influence that high rollers have on people. They show them a big fat wad of money and the teenagers will say, 'I want to be just like that.'"

Hollywood, son of loving, caring parents, made a wrong choice late in the growing-up process. And prison isn't the only price he is paying. His current, persisting anxiety is that his younger brother might be lured into the gang.

The six students and I talked about Hollywood, as well as about the four friends we had just lost.

"Can any good come out of our tragedy?" I asked. "Or do we just let it end like a sad movie?"

Mindy, the shyest member of the group, suggested in a wispy voice, "Maybe we could make a pledge or something."

Ordinarily the three guys in the group would probably have ridiculed the idea, but this day was different.

"Hey!" Jonathan said. "Not a bad idea."

"Something like pretending there's a price tag on things grown-ups think we shouldn't do, then maybe deciding if we're ready to take the chance anyway," Laurel added.

Paul said, "The problem with that is we can't know for sure what that price would be. Maybe nothing bad will happen even if we take the risk."

"That's a point," I admitted. "Suppose instead of 'How much will it cost?' we ask ourselves 'How much *might* it cost?' Then we'd at least look at the possible outcome."

"I'll buy that," Kent said.

A week ago these kids would have shrugged off such suggestions, but today . . . ?

Well, today they weren't quite the same people they had been last week. ▀

MOST TIMES PEOPLE JUST SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER . . .

AN ACCIDENT OF MEMORY

No one ever told me you could die from drinking too much at one time. As a teen I never knew that the official cause of death could be "acute alcohol ingestion." Fortunately I never succumbed from my one game of pass-out. After two shots of peppermint schnapps, my wiser stomach rebelled.

But I've run across others who, like me, never heard of or heeded the warning. And they didn't fare as well.

In my first "real" job after college, I worked in a laboratory as a toxicologist, analyzing body fluids of patients in the emergency room as well as the coroner's office. I remember being literally blown away the very first week when I analyzed a death from accidental alcohol overdose. I measured a blood alcohol level greater than 0.40 percent. *No way a person could drink enough to die*, I had naively thought to that point. And I had tested emergency room patients with levels that high before. Although not very lively at the time, they were more or less alive.

Cirrhosis? Sure, I'd studied that. But an alcohol overdose? Apparently this was just that. The victim, only 13, had an older friend, a neighbor woman, who had supplied the booze and was subsequently prosecuted for her role in the drama. Guess she didn't know about alcohol overdoses either!

**BINGE ALERT:
NO ONE EVER
TOLD ME YOU
COULD DIE
♦ FROM ♦
DRINKING TOO
MUCH ALCOHOL**

And how could I ever forget the bachelor party guy? His friends culminated their night of revelry by putting the passed-out groom-to-be in the car trunk. A half hour later, when his "friends" stopped and opened the trunk, they couldn't awaken him. He was dead—but not from overdose or suffocation. It was worse this time. He had vomited, and since he couldn't move, he had choked to death on his own vomit, suffocating on this supposedly joyous occasion.

I've seen many repeats of incidents like these during the years since. Have I become jaded? No, I've become indignant that so many people don't know any better. Most of the deaths I see are accidents resulting from one naive lapse of judgment. Even the murders I run across are usually not premeditated, but domestic disputes: two inebriated parties screaming and yelling about nothing and acting on their rage. Afterward they're filled with

remorse. But an emergency room staff cannot bring back the dead, and all the remorse in the world can't change the sad reality. And since we haven't mastered going back in time yet either, the lessons are often learned too late.

If I could, I'd bring back the pretty 15-year-old girl who came in as a DOA one Saturday night back in 1975. She'd coated her lungs with Pam searching for a high. Searching for a high while her clogged alveoli begged for mercy.

And just this year, in a small Idaho town, two 13-year-olds spent an exciting Saturday night sniffing an aerosol air freshener. It got real exciting when one of them died.

And then too there were the 19- and 22-year-old crank addicts who hung themselves in their jail cell rather than live without the drugs that ruled their lives.

I had to get away from the killing, the dying. So I escaped the big city and went west to where the drug-use situation is a few years behind what I was seeing. But it's like a circle, a noose, following me. People making the same mistakes, breaking the same rules.

I think of all these kids often. Their gray, slack-jawed faces haunt my dreams. Even the smell of death lingers. I wonder what their last thoughts were. Did they think, *Wait, no one ever told me?* Or perhaps they had heard the messages, but just never listened. ▀

Prime Times Special

TEN FOR TIGS

TIGS NEWS RELEASE

Both TIGS & TREND recognize that if society really wants its youth to say no to drugs, then it needs to teach them what to say yes to.

Ten years ago a rather unorthodox program called TIGS (Teen Institute of the Garden State) began in New Jersey. Schools and community groups sent hundreds of high school students away to a summer camp in western New Jersey specifically for the purpose of getting high for a week! And it was done with the consent of the teens' parents, while local and state governments helped fund the efforts.

High school administrators and community leaders continue happily to send their students off to TIGS, expecting to reap positive benefits from this program. Teachers and counselors even come as volunteers to assist. *So what's the catch?* you may be wondering. Why would anyone send a bunch of teenagers to camp to get high? Actually the answer to this often-posed question is quite simple: The students get high without using any alcohol, tobacco, or any other drugs.

TIGS is a program of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, North Jersey Area, Inc., and a member of the National Association of Teen Institutes (NATI). In fact, more than 30 states throughout the United States offer Teen Institutes to teens from many racial, cultural, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds who are interested in learning how to be positive, proactive leaders. The Teen Institutes are wellness programs that focus on drug

and alcohol prevention and leadership training. Although each program is autonomous, many Teen Institutes, including TIGS, offer discussions on racism and cultural diversity, AIDS and sexuality, community awareness and involvement, as well as drug and alcohol abuse.

TIGS isn't "Just Say No," and it isn't just about preaching the evils of drugs and alcohol. Instead it provides healthy alternatives to the misuse and abuse of substances that cause so many problems for numerous individuals. Through cheering, playing, and watching comedians, jugglers, and motivational speakers, the students who attend TIGS learn to enjoy life to the fullest. The environment created at TIGS is a community in the truest sense of the word. Students are treated with respect and understanding. They learn to feel proud of their uniqueness as individuals. For many of these teenagers this is the first time they have been treated with love and respect by both their peers and adults, and the results are obvious and immediate.

Students are also given the opportunity to develop a project specific to their own community to implement throughout the year with their school group. Action groups decide the biggest needs or problems in their school and community. Then they decide what kinds of programs will make the biggest impact. Projects range from awareness programs and cross-age teaching to peer mediation and TREND.

TREND is a national youth organization operated out of St. Louis, Missouri, that promotes a drug-free lifestyle. TREND chapters around the country host fun activities attended by substance-free students. TREND demonstrates to teenagers that they can have an exciting social life and still choose not to use alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.

Both TREND and TIGS recognize that if society really wants its youth to say no to drugs, then it needs to teach them what to say yes to. Instead of focusing on the negatives so often associated with substance abuse, these programs help teens look at the positives and potential to be found in all aspects of life.

It's with this philosophy that communities and schools proudly send their students to get high—the TIGS way!

For more information about TIGS:

- *Cathy Phillips, TIGS Director*
60 South Fullerton Avenue
Montclair, NJ 07042
201-783-2309

For more information about TREND:

- *Ginny Shaller*
TREND Coordinator
8790 Manchester Road
St. Louis, MO 63144
1-800-666-5124

To determine if there is a Teen Institute in your state, contact:

- *John King*
Director, NATI
100 Billingsley Road
Charlotte, NC 28211
704-376-7447

A WINNING ATTITUDE

BY DOUG BRATTON

Student Matt Bellace founded a TREND chapter that creates social and residential alternatives to campus drinking.

Success breeds success" is a statement that 22-year-old Matt Bellace knows only too well. This Bucknell University senior believes that any current success he may have today is because of the winning attitude developed in high school while participating in athletics and following his parents' hardworking example.

And what successes has Matt seen during the past few years? Well, he founded a nationally recognized student group called C.a.l.v.i.n. & H.o.b.b.e.s. (Creating a Lively, Valuable, Ingenious, New Habit of Being (at) Bucknell (and) Enjoying Sobriety), which promotes having fun in college without alcohol and other drugs. Thanks to the group's success, Matt has also begun speaking professionally to high schools and colleges

Prime Times

REAL PEOPLE SPEAKING OUT AGAINST DRUGS

on the East Coast about his life and how he started the group. Overall, his life story resonates a continual theme of hard work and a positive attitude.

As Matt entered high school, athletics became a big part of his life. "By the time I entered Montclair High School, I had already seen my mother coach two state champion field hockey teams," Matt says, "and I knew that I wanted a chance to play for one too." Bellace went on to play three sports (football, baseball, and wrestling) and got a chance to play for a state championship in football in 1990 during his junior year, when he played as backup quarterback for New Jersey's number one ranked team. Before making it to a state championship, the team was ranked as high as sixth in the *USA Today's* national ranking. Matt makes a point of saying how proud he was to have been a part of the team, as the backup behind the senior captain. "I never had tons of talent, but simply remaining the backup throughout that year was one of the best things I ever accomplished," he remembers. During his senior year he did get his chance to start.

In addition to athletics Matt attended a summer Teen Institute, called TIGS. At the leadership camp he got his first experience dealing with the notion of wellness among teenagers and the dangers of mindlessly following the peer pressure to take alcohol and other drugs. Through TIGS Matt was introduced to TREND, a national student-led program in 15 states that offers teenagers and college students opportunities for drug-free fun, leadership development, and community service. TIGS and TREND, regional affiliates of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD), encouraged the students to form TREND chapters in their schools and

communities as a strategy for organizing positive peer pressure.

While at Bucknell Matt noticed that alcohol use and abuse was one of the only social outlets available to the students. "After a long week of classes and/or sports practice, all a student could really do with most of his/her friends was go to fraternity parties that centered around drinking," he remembers. He admits to reaching a point in his Bucknell career where he either had to switch schools or attempt to improve his situation at

know that he credits much of the positive work and success he has had at Bucknell to the experiences he had while being an active member of his high school community. He continues to be a counselor for high school students at the TIGS summer Teen Institute, and is a staff member for the national TREND conference held in St. Louis, Missouri, annually. Through these activities, his personal convictions, and winning attitude, Matt serves as a role model to thousands of young people each year. ▀

MATT'S ORGANIZATION TURNED INTO ONE OF THE FASTEST-GROWING ON CAMPUS.

Matt Bellace (shown at right as a high school quarterback) realized students needed positive alternatives to counter the peer pressure of alcohol and drugs.

school. He chose the latter.

Then during his sophomore year Matt started C.a.l.v.i.n. & H.o.b.b.e.s., an official TREND chapter, formed to create social and residential alternatives to drinking. Within only a few years the small group turned into one of the fastest-growing organizations on campus. Activities are varied and appeal to many different interests, such as sports (hiking, bowling, etc.) and comedy or film nights. In September 1995, 23 of the 50 members moved into a former fraternity house, renamed the C.a.l.v.i.n. & H.o.b.b.e.s. House. So far the house has been a great place to hold parties and meetings. "At our first party we did have kegs," Matt admits. "Root beer kegs."

Overall, Matt wants people to



WANT MORE INFO:

C.a.l.v.i.n. & H.o.b.b.e.s.? Then contact Matt Bellace, c/o TIGS, 60 South Fullerton Avenue, Montclair, NJ 07042, 201-783-9313, or TREND, 8790 Manchester Road, St. Louis, MO 63144, 1-800-666-5124.

Take a HIKE!

A group of about ten hikers are scattered across a rocky, moss-covered mountain trail. Some are standing on large boulders, while others are walking or resting. The background shows more rugged mountain peaks under a hazy sky.

WHEREIN YOURS TRULY LOSES INDIANA JONES AND ENCOUNTERS "BAR."

by Celeste perrino Walker

It was 4,393 feet high and the tallest mountain in Vermont. I'd hiked it before, but never all the way to the top. This weekend, I determined, would be my personal odyssey to conquer the peak. I'd do it alone. Well, alone except for one rather slobbery black lab named, appro-

priately enough, Indiana Jones.

I couldn't have asked for better weather if I'd put in a special order. Sunshine. Leaves in peak fall colors. Just cool enough not to be hot, but not cold either. All-around perfect.

Within the first three seconds on the trail, I'd lost my dog. This wouldn't have overly concerned me, except that he was carrying all the extra water and the camp stove. After I screamed "Indy" until I was on the verge of hyperventilation, he came barreling back down the trail, acting surprised, as if he'd

changed his name in my absence.

Maybe that incident should have warned me about what was to come. My dog distinguished himself by making me carry his pack to the peak because he couldn't heave himself up the rock-strewn surface of the mountain, slobbered over everyone we met (some protection), and further disgraced himself by sleeping while a black bear attempted to reach the backpacks that I had cleverly hung from a tree. (My duties as lookout involved trying to prevent him



Galton went on a backpacking expedition with the Student Conversation Association's (SCA) high school volunteer program, in which participants spend five or six weeks in the wilderness working with the U.S. Forest Service to build and restore trails and campsites. Ayala's trip was to the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska.

"We did trail work on the Fuller Lake Trail," Ayala says, "and then we went hiking for a week in Denali National Park. It was absolutely incredible. We hiked as far as we could each day, basically, and camped, and then we came back. We saw signs of bears, but we didn't actually see any. We did see a moose."

Ayala's "crew" was made up of eight members and two leaders. They were people from different parts of the country, so everyone came from totally different backgrounds.

Kieran McLaughlin, also 17,

MORE THAN 20 MILLION PEOPLE IN THE U.S.A. GO HIKING FOR EXERCISE AND RECREATION.

from snoring and betraying our position to the bear.)

At the end of the weekend we emerged from the woods victorious. A little worse for the wear maybe, but victorious. We had bagged a peak.

This was not my first hiking experience and will not be my last. I'm not alone in this crazy liking for the outdoors. Despite, or maybe because of, the challenge hiking provides, more than 20 million people in the United States go hiking for exercise and recreation.

Seventeen-year-old Ayala

went on an SCA trip to Idaho's Clearwater National Forest, as well as to the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness on the Idaho-Montana border. "The first two and a half weeks we built hiking trails and obliterated old trails that had eroded," Kieran recalls. "Then we moved on to the Big Sand Lake area and cleared the trail of trees that had fallen across the path after a big forest fire.

"After that we went on a backpacking trip for a week. It was 54 miles in seven days. We all carried our own food and equipment, and

we visited some lakes and a place called Graves Peak, home of Norman MacLean, author of *A River Runs Through It*. In his book he mentions a lot of places that we hiked through and stayed at."

One of the things Kieran learned from the trip is that nothing is impossible. "One of the days was just unimaginable. It was a really, really hard day. We got lost, and it rained for two days straight. It was a hard experience, but I'm glad that I was able to have it, because I think it kind of made me realize that nothing is impossible.

"I think the trip gave me a better respect for nature and just how much we need to conserve nature, because at the rate everything is going now, there won't be much true wilderness left. I think it's real important to be able to get away from society for a while."

There are a few basic things you want to remember, whether you are hiking for the day or



• Photos: (Left): *The Great Outdoors*—line of hikers across a ridgetop. (Above): Two teen hikers ready with packs and mittens.

overnight. Always take the basics: extra food, water, maps or guidebook, a compass, first-aid kit, pocket knife, matches, toilet paper, flashlight, sunglasses, sunscreen, and appropriate clothes for any likely weather conditions.

Choose your trail carefully. Start with something easier and work your way up to the more challenging ones. If you try something above your ability, you could get discouraged, or worse, seri-



"THE TRIP MADE ME REALIZE THAT NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE."

● Teens Ayala Galton and Kieran McLaughlin (both 17) went on Student Conservation Association (SCA) high school volunteer five- to six-week programs. They worked with the U.S. Forest Service to build and restore trails and campsites in Alaska and Idaho, respectively. Here are some photos (numbers 1, 3, 4) from their experiences.


In photo 2 teens do trailwork (building log bridges).
AMC photo by Claes Thelemarck.



ously hurt. Always hike with someone else and let people know where you're going and when you'll be back. Obviously, if something happens and no one knows where to look for you, then help will be a *long* time in coming.

Take only pictures and good memories. Leave only your footprints and your thanks. The next hiker doesn't deserve to see your litter. Put it in a plastic storage bag and carry it back out with you.

Carry high-energy snacks. Take breaks often to keep your energy level up. Drink plenty of fluids, and pay attention to your body. If you start to feel like you are getting a blister, stop and put on some moleskin.

The resources listed under "Get the Scoop" have brochures about hiking safety and general information about hiking. Get on the phone and give them a buzz. Then the next time someone tells you to "take a hike!"—do it. 

QUALIFICATION CLIMBING CLUBS

There are several clubs you can qualify for by hiking all the designated highest peaks for a particular area. The Appalachian Mountain Club has a 4,000-footer Club. Then there are the White Mountain 4,000-footers, the New England 4,000-footers, the New England 100 Highest Club, the Adirondack 46ers, the Catskill 3,500-footers, the South Beyond 6,000-footers, and the Colorado 14,000-footers, to name a few. Check with each club for a list of the peaks and to see what's required besides hiking them. Then go get 'em!

FIRST-AID KIT

Whenever you go hiking, whether for a short day hike or an overnighter, be sure to carry a first-aid kit with you. Pack it in a

waterproof bag. A gallon-sized sealed plastic bag works fine. The following items for two people hiking for three days were suggested by William W. Forgey, M.D., of the Wilderness Medical Society.

- Ibuprofen for pain, inflammation
- Decongestant tablets
- Antidiarrheal medicine
- Water purification method (iodine tablets or filter)
- Ear drops for swimmer's ear
- Artificial tears for dry or irritated eyes
- Moleskin or Spenco Second Skin for burns, blisters, abrasions
- 18 one-inch sheer bandages for cuts
- A roll of one-inch adhesive tape
- Two 2" x 2" sterile gauze pads
- Two 4" x 4" sterile gauze pads
- Three or more butterfly bandages
- Stretch bandages: 30-inch for ankles; 6-inch for knees
- One ounce of antiseptic (iodine or alcohol)
- Sunscreen lotion (SPF 15)
- A small tube of antibiotic ointment
- A small tube of 1 percent hydrocortisone cream
- An extractor for snake or insect bites
- A razor blade

• Tweezers

Before you leave, be sure that you know how to use each item in your first-aid kit. An emergency is not the time to figure out what everything is for.

GET THE SCOOP

Check out these resources for more information on hiking.

❑ The SCA (Student Conservation Association) has programs for high school students from across the country. For a brochure or more information write SCA, P.O. Box 550, Charlestown, NH 03603, or call 603-543-1700.

❑ The Appalachian Mountain Club has several programs for teens. For information on the Teen Adventures program, contact Vicki Hill at 603-466-2721. For information on Youth Opportunities Program (YOP), contact Shawn Delaney at 617-523-0636. For information on Urban Trails, Mountain Mentors, Kids in Huts, and Youth Volunteer Scholarships, call Tahnit Sakakeeny at 617-523-0636. You can also write the AMC at Five Joy Street, Boston, MA 02108.

❑ American Hiking Society, P.O. Box 20160, Washington, D.C. 20041, or call 703-255-9305 for more information.



ALWAYS HIKE WITH SOMEONE ELSE AND LET PEOPLE KNOW WHERE YOU ARE GOING AND WHEN YOU'LL BE BACK.

PETER VIDMAR

(continued from page 9)

After each grueling five- or six-hour practice, Peter and teammate Tim Daggett would ask themselves, "Why are we here? What are we doing this for? What's our goal? Is it still worth it?" They always responded, "Yeah, yeah, it still is," recalls Peter.

"So here I am; I'm tired, my ankles are swollen, my shoulder hurts, I'm feeling sorry for myself, it's dark out, and I want to go home," Peter says. "At this point, many times Tim and I would convince ourselves that we could have the greatest gymnastics experience possible. Whether it was realistic or not, it didn't matter. So Tim and I would look at each other and say, 'OK, let's put the pressure on. Let's just imagine that it's the Olympics. We're neck and neck against the Peoples' Republic of China. The last two guys who are up are you and me.' (This is where we'd start to laugh.) 'Those guys are first in the world! It's not going to happen, but *what if?*'

"Would we be nervous? We'd visualize 13,000 people in the University of California at Los

"WHAT MATTERS IS THAT WE PREPARE OURSELVES TO DO WHAT'S RIGHT . . . WHETHER IT'S CONVENIENT OR NOT."

.....
Angeles's Pauley Pavilion and 219 countries all watching us, and we'd have one chance. We'd walk around, put chalk on our hands, and act as if we were in that situation. Tim's over in the corner saying something like 'Next up from the United States—Peter

Vidmar.' And I'd wait for the imaginary green light (the longer you wait, the more nervous you get). Finally, after waiting a long time, Tim would shout out, 'Green light!' So I'd imagine the green light going on, and I'd look at my coach. And I'd turn and face the bar, grab the bar, and begin."

Coincidentally, or not so coincidentally, at the '84 Olympics Peter and Tim found themselves in that very situation they had visualized so many times before. "So all of a sudden," recalls Peter, "I'm standing in the Olympic arena with 13,000 people there, and in my mind, I feel myself back at the gym at UCLA asking 'Why are we here?'"

Peter's reply to that query is recorded in Olympic history. But long after the torches burned low, long after the crowds dispersed and the national anthems had been played, Peter continues to evaluate his answers to that question with every choice life presents him. "What matters is that we prepare ourselves to do what's right—whatever it is, whether it's convenient or not," he advises *Listen* readers.

Peter's preparation, influence, and example have impacted thousands of people worldwide ever since he hit the gymnastics scene at age 11. Once after winning a worldwide gymnastics meet in Germany, as he stood on the victory stand in front of thousands of onlookers, Peter was passed the customary large silver cup of wine. "I looked in the cup and said, 'uh-oh!'" he recalls. Peter turned to his teammate and said, "I don't drink."

"I know," responded the teammate, "so just take a sip and pass it on to the next person."

"I don't drink at all," rebutted Peter. "I can't even take a sip." They attempted to explain this situation to the officials, who weren't taking no for an answer. "They took the cup, and one of them looked at me and said some-

thing very firm and stuck it right in my face," remembers Peter. "So I took it, held it up, waved to the crowd, then handed it to the next person."

While it was an awkward moment for Peter, he explains that "it was really easy for me to say no because I didn't decide standing on the victory stand that I wasn't going to take a sip of wine. I decided when I was 5, 6, 7, 8 years old. It was embarrassing. People laughed. And I think that's usually how it is in life. Because it's very, very easy if we all know the rationales for various things in our lives. And at that moment, had I not made the decision, different thought processes would have been going through my mind, such as 'Peter, you represent the United States of America. You know what it will look like? You are a guest here, and you'd better not offend anyone. Just take a sip and pass it on. No one will ever know. It's not going to make any difference physically; it's just a sip. And you never have to drink anything again for the rest of your life. Big deal.'" Peter explains that giving in would have solved his dilemma for the short term, but there would have been long-term ramifications.

"The problem is that after that brief, momentary, 'solve-the-problem-and-get-out-of-the-situation' dilemma comes the regret and remorse within ourselves," he says. "It should be the other way around. The brief moment was uncomfortable. It wasn't fun. It didn't feel good, and I didn't enjoy it. But for the long term I've always been able to look back and say 'I did what was right.'"

Peter has stood alone in many facets of his life. Since the '84 Olympics he has been appointed to serve with Arnold Schwarzenegger on the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sport. He has testified before

GYMNASTICS



ON HIS STAND AGAINST ALCOHOL SPONSORSHIP . . .

"That's how alcohol companies get kids into drinking alcohol. They see beer commercials every time they watch a sporting event, and they think that sports and alcohol go hand in hand. It's absolutely the antithesis of that."

Congress on behalf of the council and also for the U.S. Olympic Committee. He was also the first athlete ever to perform a pommel horse exhibition on the floor of Congress. Peter, a member of the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sport for California, has served on the board of directors of the U.S. Olympic Committee and the executive committee of the U.S. Gymnastics Federation, and is a member of the board of trustees of the Salt Lake Olympic Bid Committee.

A dynamic speaker, Peter was listed by *Successful Meetings* magazine as one of the top 10 corporate speakers in America. He regularly presents powerful motivational speeches to Fortune 500 companies such as IBM, Mobil, Xerox, Federal Express, Merrill Lynch, 3M, New York Life,

Nabisco, Squibb, General Motors, Control Data, GTE, Magnavox, Motorola, and others. He makes about 100 presentations a year, but does not speak to any tobacco or alcohol companies. In fact, he is open about his views that alcohol should not be linked with sporting events, and has defended his stance on many occasions.

In 1988 a wine cooler manufacturer offered to send all the Olympic athletes' parents to Seoul, Korea. In return it wanted to claim official sponsorship for each participating sport. While Peter recognized the good in the gesture, he felt even more strongly that this sponsorship would not be good for gymnastics. "The vast majority of participants in our sport are under the legal drinking age—7, 8, 9, 10, up to 15," explains Peter. "So that sends a bad message: 'Have

your child do gymnastics, then an alcohol manufacturer will pay for you to go to the games!'"

In spite of the heat he received from parents and committee members, Peter persuaded a 36-member board not to accept the sponsorship. The U.S. Gymnastics Federation ended up footing the bill for the parents. The only other sport that opted not to participate was basketball. "They didn't need the money," explains Peter. The two sports were criticized nationally for their decision. While Peter was shocked at the number of people and sports that supported the idea, he stood his ground. "That's how [alcohol companies] get kids into drinking alcohol. They see beer commercials every time they watch a sporting event, and they think that sports and alcohol go hand in hand. It's absolutely the antithesis of that," he says. "It's completely contrary to athletic performance."

While Peter won't endorse products or services he deems inappropriate, he and his golden retriever Thunder are the official spokesperson and "spokesdog" for Kal Kan. He has traveled all over the country hosting "petathelons," raising funds for the U.S. Olympic Team at the '96 Atlanta Games. "I have a great love for the sport," says Peter, "and want to make sure it stays healthy."

Peter Vidmar has consistently conquered test after test throughout his life, in and out of the spotlight. Even though more than a decade has passed since he captained the United States team to Olympic victory, Peter still enjoys going back to the UCLA gym in his mind and asking that question he posed to himself countless times: "Why are we here?" Through his example, his commitment to values, and his dedication to excellence, Peter still responds with a superior character performance worthy of a perfect 10. ▀

EDITORIAL

JUST BETWEEN US TIME FOR EVERYONE TO GET SMART

Talking about time—this editorial is written in the time warp of production schedules. That means I am writing this in the final days of the presidential election season. And I'm writing this in the context of a flurry of headlines proclaiming that teen drug use is *way* up. One headline in *USA Today* screams that teen drug use is up 78 percent since 1992.

Of course, like all statistics, it is not quite as simple as that. We know that patterns of drug use among teenagers and adults in general shift regularly. While last year inhalants were the area of major concern, this year it looks to be marijuana. And the bottom line truly should be Why drugs at all?

And the Republicans, good patriots that they are, say a lot about the inefficiency of the Democratic administration in getting serious about our growing drug problem. They cite the fact that in 1993 the staff for the Office of National Drug Control Policy was cut by 80 percent. Yes, I remember that cut, and it was done in the whole context of getting our entire nation out of debt. And the Democrats proudly point to a 1997 budget proposal that has a 9 percent increase of funding up to \$15.1 billion for federal drug control spending.

I truly feel for presidential candidate Bob Dole when I see him waffling on the true dangers of tobacco use. He's obviously torn between his knowledge of the facts and a concern for votes in tobacco-producing areas. And while President Clinton seems haunted by his "I didn't inhale" excuse for an obviously regretted brush with drug use, he's been very consistent in condemning tobacco use by teens and enacting legislation to protect young people. Bottom line again: It's obvious that both leaders and both parties have a vested interest in protecting young people everywhere from the dangers of drug use. What we need is a clear admission by both parties that regardless of any shifts in power, government policy will strongly support drug education for teens and the general population.

So far I have two bottom lines in this editorial. For good measure I would like to add a third. It's the heading of one of those political season articles on drug use. "Today's youth just don't see the dangers," screams the headline. Now, *that's* a statistic that's meaningful to me. Rather than numbers, it's signaling a very dangerous trend. We will *never* make any headway against the obvious danger of drug use while young people and others are oblivious to the danger. Young people need to see clearly that this is not a political issue, but a matter of individual integrity and survival.

L I N C O L N S T E E D

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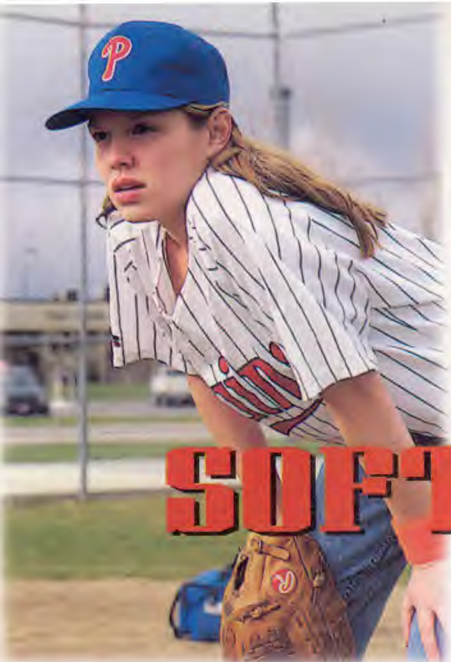
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FOR A DRUG-FREE
AMERICA





WORD PUZZLE

BY KATHY PAULSON

SOFTBALL ANYWAY

Look forward, backward, up, down, and diagonally to find the words listed below.

• SOFTBALL TERMS

AIRWAY
ARC
ASSIST
AWAY
BACKUP
BAG
BALK
BALL

BASE
BAT
BATTER
BENCH
BITE
BLUE
BUNT
CATCH

CHOKE
CLAW
COACH
CORE
COUNT
COVER
CUT
DEEP

DEFO
DIAMOND
DIE
DOME
DOWN
D.P.
DRIVE
DROP
E.P.
E.R.A.

ERROR
FIELDER
FLY
GAME
GRIP
GROOVE
HELMET
HIGH
HIT
HOLE

HOMER
INFIELD
INNING
INSIDE
MISS
OUT
PITCHER
POP-UP
PUT OUT
RELAY

RISE
ROSTER
ROVER
RULES
RUN
RUNNER
R.B.I.
SHAG
SHORT
SHUTOUT

SINGLE
TAG
TALLY
TIMING
TRAP
TRIPLE
UMPIRE
ZONE

EYAWABEHCAOCTGBKPF
CSFECXIMTHPDIVAOCI
GRIPSGPTOAIIQMPRHJE
BZARHAEWEDGTIDCUSL
COVERFBHPNRDNOMAID
ARETSOREIDOWGYRRNE
TGLTRYENOZOHA EUJGR
CQPAEDNPEDVLBLDTLH
HUIBMINSIDETEARKCEC
MLRVODUBGRRSYOGLMN
PITCHEROVERIHAMP AE
TNUBCBTINOOSUEWIGB
UFCYAOBUVFRSTQTRSF
OIALRLRAOEBACKUPI S
TEKFWTLETDL O EKHCA
ULSZNAUBXLULDPTERW
HDNUOLLRYNOTUZUCXY
STBSBYWCTHVPUMPIRE

ANSWERS

EYAWABEHCAOCTGBKPF
CSFECXIMTHPDIVAOCI
GRIPSGPTOAIIQMPRHJE
BZARHAEWEDGTIDCUSL
COVERFBHPNRDNOMAID
ARETSOREIDOWGYRRNE
TGLTRYENOZOHA EUJGR
CQPAEDNPEDVLBLDTLH
HUIBMINSIDETEARKCEC
MLRVODUBGRRSYOGLMN
PITCHEROVERIHAMP AE
TNUBCBTINOOSUEWIGB
UFCYAOBUVFRSTQTRSF
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