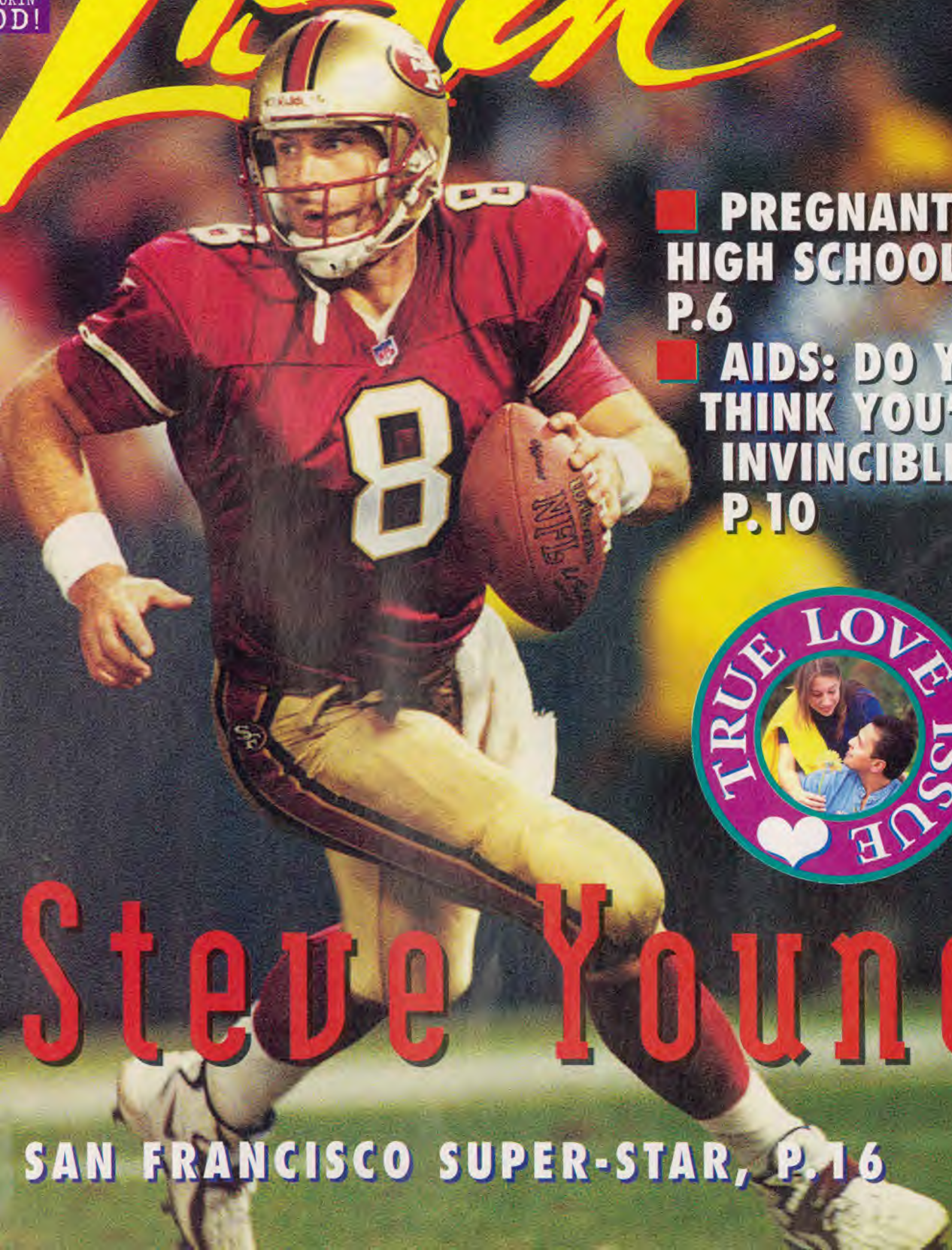


CELEBRATING POSITIVE CHOICES



# Listen



**PREGNANT IN  
HIGH SCHOOL,  
P.6**

**AIDS: DO YOU  
THINK YOU'RE  
INVINCIBLE?,  
P.10**



# Steve Young

**SAN FRANCISCO SUPER-STAR, P.16**



# FATHERS' DAY



BY JOHN EICHENBERGER

*"Don't be jealous of Doug," said Mom.*

Come on, Nate," I said. "Let's go get some ice cream."

You don't have to say that twice to Nate. Before I could tell him "Tie your shoes," he leaped down the front steps screaming, "Yahoo!" But he wouldn't go around the corner onto Electric Avenue without me, as a drunk had grabbed him once. He

danced at the corner like he had to visit the bathroom.

When I caught up, Nate dashed along to the door of Vin's. He rattled the door twice to make the bell jangle more. He stomped on the white tile floor while Vin called, "Hello, boys. Nate, you'll put a hole in the floor."

Nate guffawed. Vin says that every time we come in. We sat down at one of the little round tables.

A new girl working there took our order. Nate placed his order first. "I'll take the usual. Malted milk with chocolate syrup and vanilla ice cream and extra malt."

"Please," I said.



"Please."

"Right-o, little man," said the girl. She turned her brown eyes to me. They tilted up a little at the ends.

"Oh, uh. I don't know, uh . . ."

Nate heaved a huge sigh. "Just get what you always get."

The girl smiled. "Let me guess.

Banana split?"

"Glass of water," I said.

She ducked her head a little with a quizzical look.

"I always finish his," I explained. My face got hot.

"Really?" Her smile widened. One tooth was just a little crooked.

I said, "Lucky we like the same thing."

She laughed as she went to fill our order, her black hair swinging behind. I thought I'd melt in my shoes.

Nate's voice cut in like reality's cold shower. "What should we get Doug for Father's Day?"

"Why should we get him anything?"

Nate didn't answer; he just kept rolling and unrolling his napkin.

The girl came back with our order. Her tag said her name was Nina. "Black and white malted for the young gentleman and chateau H20 for his father."

"I'm not his father," I said.

Nina ducked in her quizzical look again. "I've seen you two together," she said. "And, well, you're so different in age, I thought . . . maybe . . ."

"We're brothers," I said. Now Nina looked embarrassed as she fled back behind the counter.

Actually, Nate's my half-brother, by Mom's third husband. I'm what's left of her first marriage. Number two I'd rather not remember. Doug's supposed to be number four someday.

"How come you don't like Doug?" Nate asked.

"Oh, he's OK," I said. "I like him, I guess."

Nate blew bubbles through his straw and glared at me.

"How do you know what I think?" I said.

"You get mad every time I talk about him," Nate shot back.

"Oh."

"Mom says I need a father."

*You already have one,* I thought.

"He's ah . . . ah . . ."

"Adopting us," I said. *Like I should be thrilled.*

The bell on the door jingled as it opened. My best friend, Phil, came in. He smirked as he came over to sit down.

"Checking out the new girl, huh?" he said as his eyes followed her around the shop. Who could blame him? Any angle you looked at her was fine. Black hair. Not too skinny. She looked sure of herself, like a

**N**ow what?  
Someone had  
to watch my  
little brother,  
Nate. What  
about my date  
with Nina?

dancer who knew her steps. I was sorry I had embarrassed her.

Phil caught me looking and said, "Dream on, Jacko."

"Are you saying I couldn't get a date with her?"

Phil glanced at Nate and said, "Not with the little shadow."

"Oh, we'll see about that," I said.

By the time we left I had a date for Saturday night.

Perfect, right?

Nope.

That night, a half hour before I was to go and pick up Nina, Mom and Doug appeared at the front door, going out.

"Where are you going?" I asked.

"Oh, Jackson," Mom said, "Doug's brother is in town, and we want so much to visit him before he leaves for Tucson."

"But I had plans for tonight!"

"Oh, come on, pal," said Doug. "It's not like you'd have a date or anything." Before I could answer, he made a gun motion pointing at me and winked. "Don't forget, next Tuesday we go to court and I become your dad."

With that they waltzed out the door. *Slam.*

Now what? Someone had to watch Nate. What about my date? I could lie: "Hello, Nina? I got eye strain, and the doctor said no movies." Nah, I don't think so.

"Hey, Nate, how about a movie?"

You don't have to say *that* twice to my little half-brother either.

Well, we picked Nina up. She ducked her head in that quizzical look. I tried to explain, ending with "I couldn't leave him home by himself, could I?"

"I don't know. Could you?" Nina said. "Are you sure you're not his father?"

But she came with me anyway. At the theater I saw Phil across the lobby. He stared as Nina strode ahead and I dragged Nate past the popcorn machine. Right at the opening credits Nate leaned over and said, "I have to go to the bathroom."

I looked at Nina, who shrugged. I took Nate to the men's room. On the way back I knelt in front of him and said, "Please, this is my date, and you're a guest." I gripped his shoulders. "Don't mess me around."

"What's a date?"

"It's, uh, when a boy and girl go out together."

"Like me and Brianna?" Nate said. "We hold hands sometimes."

"Well . . . yeah." We started back into the darkened theater.

"Why?"

"Why what, Nate?"

"Why are you on a date?"

"Because." I edged him down the aisle. But when we sat down, he turned and whispered like an air horn, "Why, Jacko? Because you want to marry her?"

Heads were turning around. "No, Nate. Now quiet."

"Why not?" Nate persisted. "Don't



you like her?"

Someone behind us said, "Be quiet!"

Nate whispered, almost softly, "I want popcorn."

"Not now."

"Why?" He jabbed my arm.

"Because I just sat down." I jabbed him back.

For the next minute I started to relax, figure out what was happening in the movie, and remember I was on a date with Nina.

"Please can I have some popcorn?"

I knew if I got Nate the popcorn he'd be happy for a good long while. I knew it. But part of me hated having Nate there at all—and that part won.

"Puh-lease?"

"Will you shut up?"

"How about *you* shutting up?" said the voice from behind.

"Thanks a lot, Nate. No popcorn! Not now, not ever."

Nate slouched down in his seat and sulked. I tried to put an arm around Nina, but she pulled away.

I shivered. The air-conditioning must have been working overtime.

Suddenly Nate said, "I want to sit next to Nina."

"What don't you want?"

"I want Nina!" he cried.

That did it. I grabbed his arm, shoved him into the aisle, and hustled him to the back, Nate wailing all the way. In the lobby people gaped at us.

"I've had it with you. You've been nothing but trouble!" I tried not to scream, which made things worse. "I wish I never—"

"Never what?" Nate said, sticking out his chin. "Never had a brother?"

My hand shot up, drew back.

"Jackson!" I stopped and turned. It was Nina, standing behind me.

"Look at him," she said.

"What?"

"Look at him," she insisted.

I looked. Nate didn't look defiant anymore, just scared. I'd never hit him in my life. My hand was still hanging in the air. It felt big and

**"I had a date last night," I said. "You?" Doug hooted.**

stupid, like the rest of me.

Nina said, "Anyone can see he loves you so much. To him you're like God."

*Well, being God sure isn't easy.*

It wasn't Nate I was angry at.

I dropped my hand and pulled Nate to me. He held himself stiff, but he didn't fight.

I looked up at Nina and said, "I can't handle being God."

"Then do something about it."

I held Nate tighter and said, "Sorry, buddy."

He wiped his nose on my only decent shirt. I was forgiven.

The next night Mom and Doug actually stayed home for supper.

"I had a date last night," I said.

"You?" Doug hooted.

I ignored him, looked at Mom, and said, "Nate had to come with us."

"Oh, that's nice," Mom said.

"Boy, I'm lucky," said Doug, "getting into such a together family."

"Yeah, right," I said. Nate's head snapped up at that, his eyes round. I didn't want to fight in front of him.

Neither did Mom and Doug. They nailed me on the front porch after supper.

"Just what's your problem, pal?" Doug demanded.

"You," I said. "You're such a hero, I could puke."

"I'm becoming your father!"

"You're becoming nothing to me." I was holding a finger right under Doug's chin. Husband number 2 used to do that. "You're taking the title, that's all."

Doug's face went purple.

"Jackson," Mom started, "you and

Nate—"

Doug cut her off, "Listen, pal—" "I'm *not* your pal."

Now Mom cut in. "Both of you, stop it!"

Doug stared at her. So did I.

"Jackson, you've been wonderful with Nate. You're a good big brother. But now Doug's here and he can do more; he can be a real father. Don't be jealous."

Jealous? Of what? They were both looking at me. Did they expect me to say something?

Doug spoke first. "That's right, a real father. For both of you."

Maybe they were right. Nate needed someone older, wiser. And maybe I was jealous—not ready to let go of my godlike status.

Oh, sure.

I glanced across the street and saw Nina going by, probably on her way to Vin's. Would she give me another chance?

I turned to Doug and said, "You think signing a paper next Tuesday will make you a father? It won't. It's sitting up with him when he's sick, and teaching him to hit a ball. It's convincing him he's not a wimp when the school bully beats him up. I've done that." I turned to Mom and said, "I've *been* a real father."

I don't know what I expected, but after a few seconds I figured out they weren't going to say sorry or anything. Out of the corner of my eye I could just see Nina's form swing around the corner onto Electric Avenue. Time to go.

I started for the steps. Doug started to say something, but I kept walking. Nate was drawing with chalk on the sidewalk. He looked up.

"Where you going, Jacko? Can I come?"

"No, Nate. Not this time." His face pulled down, and I almost gave in. "Maybe Doug wants to teach you how to play checkers."

Nate lit up and charged up the steps, yelling for Doug.

Doug wants to be a father? He can start now. ■



# ASK GARY

BY GARY SOMDAHL

**Could you please settle an argument between my best friend and me? Can a person become infected with AIDS by using drugs that aren't injected with a needle? I say it's impossible. Who's right?"**  
Tracy

Unfortunately, the use of drugs, including alcohol, can lower a person's sexual inhibitions, causing them to go against their better judgment and engage in behavior they might normally avoid. According to a report by the White House Office of AIDS policy, an estimated 25 percent of new HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) infections in the United States occur among young people ages 13 to 21, who are contracting the AIDS virus at a rate of more than one per hour. Many cases are a direct result of the most deadly combination there is—drugs and sex. Do yourself a favor and abstain from both.

**I have a question you probably can't answer. Give me one valid reason marijuana shouldn't be legalized. Tyler**

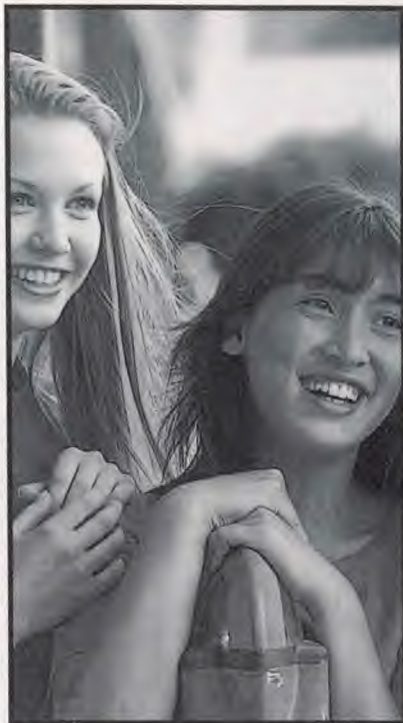
I'll do better than that, Tyler, by giving you five. First, the legalization of marijuana would create more dependencies, leading to harsher and deadlier drugs. Second, it would place more lives at risk for suicide, accidents, and homicide. Third, it would increase medical costs, with a direct impact on everyone's pocketbooks. Fourth, it would decrease learning abilities in the classroom as well as lower work productivity by imparting laziness and amotivational syndrome. And fifth, it would place at risk the lives of those who don't favor or use this dangerous substance.

**My problem is performing in front of an audience. I belong to an inner-city choir and love to sing, but I get scared to death when the curtain rises. A bit of whiskey has helped in the past, though I realize it's not the answer. What can I do? I'm 16. Samantha**

The first few times I stood in front of a roomful of people to give a talk, I nearly passed out. The secret I learned was that the more I fought the fear, the less frightened I became. Alcohol is a temporary Band-Aid that can never fully heal a wound. My advice is that you take pride in the gift of song you have and never ever let anything stand in your way. From this moment forward, try to not be afraid to go out on a limb. That's where the fruit is. That's where the rewards are the greatest.

**This is sort of embarrassing, but I'm not sure what to do. While scavenging through my dad's dresser drawers for some old photographs of myself, I found a vial of what looks like cocaine or something. I can't imagine Dad doing drugs, but now I'm not so sure. How would you handle this?**  
Danny

I'd go straight to the source for the answer. There's nothing wrong with sitting down with your dad and letting him in on what you've discovered. Don't point a finger by accusing him of what it may really not be, but let it be known that you're curious and concerned. Of course, chances are that if your hunch is correct, he'll more than likely deny it. If you still feel bothered by it, alert your mom or someone else close in your family who may be able to step in and get to the truth of the matter. ■



**G**o ahead, ask Gary his advice on some of those big, serious, touchy questions. This guy enjoys the rough-and-tumble of helping teens with some serious problems. Gary Somdahl is a dad who puts his skills as a licensed youth chemical dependency counselor to the real-world test all the time. His latest book is *Drugs and Kids*.

Send your questions to:

**ASK GARY**

*Listen* magazine

55 West Oak Ridge Drive  
Hagerstown, Maryland 21740.



# PASSION'S CHOICE

BY R. NEWMAN

*"That was the night I lost my virginity. We stayed together for only a while—until the following month. That month changed my life forever. I found out I was pregnant. When I immediately told my beloved boyfriend, he denied it was even his!" A teen looks back at sexual intimacy.*

**A**lmost every day I relive the choices I made in high school when I was only 15 years old. That was when I met the most gorgeous guy ever. I immediately fell head over heels for him, even though he was several years older than I was. I swore to myself that one day he would be my boyfriend. I gave him my phone number on a piece of torn scrap paper and invited him to my birthday party the following Saturday night. He smiled a million-dollar smile and said he would show up. He took the piece of ragged paper and tucked it deeply into his baggy blue jeans. My heart pounded as I watched him leave the room.

As soon as I reached home, I waited by the phone for his call. Finally the ring of the phone echoed throughout the house, and I jumped up to answer it before the second ring. It was him! I was so nervous I could barely speak.

We talked for a while and got to know each other a little better. He agreed to meet me at my party at 9:00 p.m. I absolutely could not wait to stare into his deep-green

eyes again. I hung up the phone with a sense of relief and went up to my room for my nightly study routine.

My parents had always been very strict on grades. They would say, "If you are ever going to make something of yourself, you are going to have to work hard so that you can get into a good college." I'd worked hard in all of my classes and had earned straight A's since starting school. If my grades were ever to drop, I just knew I'd be locked up in my room till the day I died, so I made sure I studied every night.

I could hardly wait for my party

the following night. I barely slept, as I was so excited about meeting the man of my dreams. He met me at the front door of my best friend's house, where we exchanged a hello kiss. The touch of his lips made my body tingle with passion and curiosity.

I introduced him to all of my friends, and I could tell by the looks on their faces that they were very impressed with my new boyfriend. As the party wound down, he offered to drive me to my house. It was within walking distance, but I didn't want the date to end, so I took him up on his offer. As we reached my driveway, he bent over and kissed me sweetly.

That night he called me, and we talked for hours. He started getting a little more personal. He asked me to sneak out and meet him so he could see me. At first I refused and said that I just couldn't, but he ended up talking me into it. I left the house around midnight. I could feel my heart pounding in my chest like drums beating furiously in the crisp midnight air. His car drove up to

**Almost every day I relive the choices I made in high school when I was only 15 years old.**



the curb a block away from my house. He could tell I was very tense, and reassured me that everything would be all right.

The car pulled up to a fairly nice house, which he informed me was his. He pulled me close to him and walked by my side to the front door.

"Just make yourself comfortable. I'll be back in a second." His voice soothed me as I relaxed on the black leather couch.

He entered the room once again with a look in his eyes that melted my heart. I felt like I was falling in love with him, even though I barely knew him. He touched me in ways that made feelings of emotion take over my body, mind, and soul. That was the night I lost my virginity.

We stayed together for only a while—until the following month. That month changed my life forever. I found out I was pregnant. When I immediately told my beloved boyfriend, he denied it was even his! I could not believe what I was hearing. His voice echoed monotonously as he told me that he was leaving me. I could not believe that he would leave when I needed him the very most. How was I ever going to take care of a baby on my own?

I had no idea how to tell my parents about the child that was growing inside of me. I feared their anger and disappointment. I decided I would wait for the perfect moment to tell them, even though I knew there would never be such a time.

My mind fluttered with worries and confusion during school, which made my concentration drift away. I tried hard to keep my grades up, but still they dropped lower and lower. My parents noticed my dropping grades and asked me for a reason. There was not much I could tell them except the truth.

I sat them both down and



**T**hroughout the nine months of my pregnancy I worked hard to earn enough money to try to support my child. It was very hard for me to face my peers at school, but my true friends stuck by my side and helped me in every way possible.

explained my situation. At first they were furious with me. It was awkward and uncomfortable to talk to my parents about sex, and it was even harder to talk to them about being pregnant. After a while they tried to be very supportive and helpful of my needs. I don't know what I would have done without their help.

Throughout the nine months of my pregnancy I worked hard to earn enough money to try to support my child. It was very hard for me to face my peers at school, but my true friends stuck by my side and helped me in every way possible. I kept my grades up with help from my friends and teachers. I tried to succeed at everything I set my mind to, no matter how hard or complicated it seemed. The time flew by quickly, and before I knew it, I was the mother

of a precious little girl.

I had always thought that being a mother would not be a very difficult job. Now I began to experience worries and troubles. Being a teenage mother, I never had the opportunity to live my own childhood. I love my daughter, but I do wish I'd waited a few years before having her.

It was very hard for me to provide her with all of the necessities, to work and finish my high school education. I wish I'd been able to give her more. I wish I'd been able to grow up and enjoy life without so many worries and responsibilities. To all of the teenagers in this world who are making choices similar to mine, I would like to tell you to think wisely about the choices you make, because some of them will exist in your life forever. ■



# AND SO FORTH

Michael  
Warren

## A LAW THAT SAVES LIVES

According to the National Safety Council, more than 1,700 lives could be saved each year if all states had strict safety belt laws.



**A** friendly reminder from **Listen** magazine to buckle-up and save lives.



### SMOKE- FILLED FLICKS

More and more people are learning that smoking is stupid and harmful. But as more of the American public catches on, it seems that Hollywood is going in the opposite direction. Even though fewer people are smoking in real life, more people in movies are picking up the habit! That's right. Back in the 1970s and 1980s a movie portrayed someone smoking on the average of every

10 or 15 minutes. Today in films someone lights up every five minutes!

### A DANGEROUS WAY TO DATE!

Would that all of us guys had the problems of 17-year-old Luke Buchheit, who had a hard time deciding who to invite to his high school prom. His solution was to ask seven different girls. Trouble was, every single one accepted! He paid a high price for his popularity: it cost him \$500 just for the eight prom tickets, not to mention dinners, corsages, and tuxedo rental. "I might have been half-joking at first," Luke said, "but then I thought, *this might be kind of cool.*"







## THESE CRIMINALS STRUCK A HARD BARGAIN

A group of kidnappers nabbed a factory owner in Brazil, planning to ask \$690,000 for his return. The factory owner escaped, but the villains thought they deserved a little bit of money for their time and effort. So they called up the factory owner and asked for \$11,500 to pay for their expenses. He said OK, but he'd give them only half of that. The kidnappers agreed. They were arrested when they came to pick up the money.

## NO THANKS, I'D RATHER HAVE THE INTERNET

About 4 million people are expected to be on the Internet in China by the year 2000. But not even half of them will have a toilet.

## NOT YOUR BASIC BIKE

Steve Robert's bicycle weighs 400 pounds and has 105 gears. Its optional features include a satellite station for sending and receiving e-mail, a refrigerator linked to a heat exchanger in his helmet, and a synthetic voice system to scare away vandals! He uses the bike to travel around the country, and so far he has pedaled more than 17,000 miles.

## HOPE THE BASEMENT DOESN'T LEAK!

You've heard of houseboats, but what about cityboats? Plans are in

the works for one to be called the World ResidenceSea and contain 250 apartments, a tropical garden, a helicopter port, and (of course) a marina. It may set sail in the year 2000. The cheapest apartments will sell for more than \$1 million. Another sea city also in the planning will house up to 65,000 people on a boat that's nearly a mile long.

## SAYING IT LIKE IT IS

After years of growth, a business group decided it was time to change their name. Their old name was kind of long and boring: International Business Forms Industries Incorporated. So they gave themselves a new, improved name: International Association Serving Forms, Information

Management, Systems Automation, and Printed Communications Requirements of Business.

## BUT HE ALREADY HAS A CAMOUFLAGE UNIFORM!

Uncle Sam recently sent a letter to Sam Garmize ordering him to register for the draft or else! Why they would want him is a mystery. Sharon Garmize says he has four toes, green hair, and no teeth. This rather unlikely character is actually a parrot! The Selective Service says the parrot was included on their mailing list by mistake. Seems like a few drill sergeants have been telling other recruits the same thing for a long time. ▀









NANCY JEAN HILL

# UNDERLYING CAUSES

*Too many teens think they are invincible.  
The truth is they're not.*

**D**o you ever think you are invincible—that nothing bad can happen to you? Only other people get into accidents when they drink and drive—right? Other people become addicted to alcohol and other drugs—right? Other people, especially gays and drug addicts, contract HIV, the virus that causes AIDS—right? At times you may even think that death cannot touch *you*; you are too young.

If you have ever felt this way, you are not alone. Invincibility is a universal feeling, especially for teenagers. When Steven Traunstein was a teenager, he felt invincible. Then he began to experiment with alcohol and other drugs. By the age of 16 he was a full-blow heroin addict. For more than 20 years he struggled with this addiction, with long periods of recovery and intermittent relapses. Then during a clean and sober period he decided he should get tested for HIV. The test was positive! After the initial disbelief, shock, anger, and grief, Steven turned what could have been a totally negative experience into a positive one.

He became a facilitator for the Challenge Course, a New Hampshire program designed to help teens look at and assess their behavior and choices. He wrote a curriculum that takes a new approach to teaching about HIV/AIDS. The AIDS epidemic is striking teenagers at an alarming rate, and Steven knew that placing

condom machines in high schools or just preaching abstinence was not enough to protect them from this dreaded virus. He decided to stop looking at AIDS as simply a disease of high-risk groups or immoral behavior and start looking for underlying causes.

Teens must ask themselves, "Why do we continue to engage in high-risk behaviors when we know the consequences?" Steven's HIV curriculum helps teens answer this question for themselves.

Steven knows that many teens (and adults, for that matter) have underlying problems that put

them as a way of relieving pain. If they abuse alcohol and/or other drugs, their judgment will be impaired, and they are more likely to make unhealthy choices.

Last year Alyssa (age 16) was referred to the Challenge Course after running away from home. She had not been getting along with her stepfather, who often drank to the point of drunkenness and sometimes physically abused her mother. Up until her sophomore year in high school Alyssa had been a straight-A student. Then she began using alcohol and marijuana, and her grades dropped drastically. Her self-esteem became so low that she even attempted suicide.

When I interviewed Alyssa, she said, "The Challenge Course turned me around." She no longer uses alcohol or other drugs and is once again a straight-A student planning to go to college. She volunteers at a clinic, where she talks to other teens about HIV/AIDS issues, and she is a peer leader in high school.

What was so special about Alyssa's experience? She opened up to the group about her unhappiness at home; she talked about her progression toward alcohol and marijuana abuse; she even shared her biggest secret—that she had attempted suicide. Before she shared her secrets, she felt shame; she was afraid that someone would say, "Only stupid people do things like that." After

**The AIDS epidemic is striking teens at an alarming rate.**

them at risk for contracting HIV. Many have family histories that include verbal, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse. Many come from homes in which one or both parents abuse alcohol and/or other drugs. These same teens may have low self-esteem and may not possess coping skills that allow them to recognize and deal with their feelings. Alcohol and other drugs may begin to look good to



she shared, she felt relief. No one criticized her; everyone was supportive.

Alyssa was also helped by a group activity that Steven calls CAREfrontation. CAREfronting means taking the risk to tell friends what you see about them that they might not see themselves. Alyssa has a friend who abuses alcohol. For a long time she did not dare say anything to him about it because she was afraid of offending him or sounding like a "goody-goody." After participating in the Challenge Course, she found the courage to CAREfront her friend. She knows that he may not change his behavior, but she feels good about voicing her concerns. At least now her friend knows how much she cares about him. Who



**... HIV infection really does**

**happen—it happened to someone I know. It made me more aware that the things I do have consequences.**

knows? He may even start thinking about his high-risk behavior.

Fourteen-year-old Meghan was concerned about a girlfriend who was becoming promiscuous, so she decided to talk to her about it. Like Alyssa, Meghan does not know whether her friend will change her behavior, but she is still glad that she said something. And

**Why do we continue to engage in high-risk behaviors when we know the consequences? AIDS is a very real danger.**

the fear they both had before confronting—that they might lose their friend—did not eventuate.

Becoming honest with ourselves and others is an important component to Steven's HIV section in particular. He sees it as a way to get to the underlying issues that drive us to behave the way we do. Often underneath all of our self-destructive behavior is low self-esteem. Asked why teens engage in high-risk behavior when they are aware of the grave consequences, both Alyssa and Meghan said, "Because they just don't care about themselves."

Meghan's lack of concern about her tobacco addiction reflects this lack of caring. When I asked her if she was worried about the harmful physical effects of smoking, she said, "No. I know I'm going to die anyway." Like Alyssa, Meghan's self-esteem has been affected by family problems: her mother was at one time a cocaine addict and used to beat her. At the age of 11 Meghan attempted suicide. Although Meghan no longer has this desire to take her own life, her self-esteem is still not where she would like it to be.

Alyssa's self-esteem, however, has soared since she participated in the Challenge Course. She defines good self-esteem as knowing that the choices you make will be healthy for you—being able to deal with things and taking one step at a time. Alyssa's life at home is still not perfect, and she experiences the same problems and worries that many teens do, but she has learned that she is worth taking good care of. She has learned to make healthy choices for herself.

When I asked Alyssa why her experience with the Challenge Course and specifically the HIV/AIDS curriculum had such a profound effect on her, she said, "It would have to be that HIV infection really does happen—it happened to someone I know. It made me more aware that the things I do have consequences. AIDS is not something you can just get rid of or give away or pawn off on your parents. It's something you have for keeps."

Steven Traunstein has AIDS for keeps. He never has a day when he awakens in the morning and feels great physically, but he has found a way to turn his often painful experience into one that can benefit others. It is important to him that teens remember that HIV/AIDS is not just a moral issue, nor is it just a disease of high-risk groups. If you are a human being, you are eligible.

Steven truly believes that human beings can avoid contracting HIV by looking at the underlying issues that might cause us to engage in high-risk behaviors. Remember that every community has people who are willing to help you. A good place to start may be with your school counselor. Remember that asking for help is not a sign of weakness, but an act of courage. It is not easy to look at painful life issues, but the reward is great. It could save your life. ■



# DO I KNOW YOU?

*"Instant intimacy is very often followed by desperate disillusionment."*

**D**uring a very serious conversation with a young man who had become very close to me during my time at the university, he suggested that we "take our relationship to another level," suggesting that this upward promotion to another level could be accomplished by the sex act.



I must admit that I was a little taken aback by his proposal. True, we had

become close friends, supporting each other, laughing, talking, and sharing ourselves with each other. However, when it came to being intimate, he barely knew me, and I him. Rather

than a shocked reaction to his carefully crafted argument, which amounted to "It's been long enough, so let's do this," I decided to try to understand his thinking. Clearly his views are shared

PHOTO: ED GUTHERO

B Y M A Y S A R T O N



by many young adults.

What exactly is this hotly sought-after thing called sex? Sex is a physical act that binds two persons together emotionally and mentally. I believe it was originally established by our Creator to be performed by two persons who care for and deeply love each other. When sex is done in this context, it becomes more than an isolated physical act; it becomes an act of love and commitment to each other. Love and commitment are not two things that are created overnight. They can be developed only over time; if not, the emotions being exhibited are likely to be impostors.

**Love and commitment are not two things that are created overnight. They can be developed only over time; if not, the emotions being exhibited are likely to be impostors.**

Premarital sex among the young adult community has reached an all-time high. Sex is no longer the special act that knits two people together. Sex has shed, layer by layer, its sacredness, sanctity, decency, value, and importance, until it stands naked and debased, void of that which makes it anything other than an ordinary casual act. We young adults participate in premature sex outside of marriage without knowing the real significance of the act, the person with whom we are embarking on this morally destructive journey, or the results that are born from our actions.

I submit that wanting to become intimate too quickly stems from a selfish attitude. It is an attitude that says "I care only about my own personal gratification, not how this will affect the person I am involved with or the results that stem from my actions." We often become so

emotionally and physically wrapped up in another person that we rush to become intimate, even before we wholly know the person. We haven't realized that in giving our bodies we sacrifice a portion of our beings, our very souls, and often make the mistake of giving to the undeserving.

There are many reasons, in my estimation, that instant intimacy shapes our mentalities concerning sex. Above all other reasons is that of a poor self-concept. The first step in building any relationship is valuing who we are. More often than not we feel poorly about ourselves. We have a great desire to be loved—at any cost. We have

to learn that loving ourselves will allow us to do things in the proper way and at the right time.

Also shaping our mentalities are television, radio, and all other media avenues. Vulgar, explicit lyrics in songs, shows, and movies promote promiscuous sexual behavior. Talk shows devote countless hours of airtime to teenagers who have had more sex partners than the Emancipation oak tree has rings, and play a major role in our concept of sex and its importance.

Our peer groups are also determining factors in our early engagement in and mentality concerning sex. Listening to a friend's overrated and usually distorted tale of some sexual encounter as some fantasy come true makes us feel as though we too must be a part of premature sex so that we can fit in.

Sadly, our parents, many respected adults, and the

organizations that help form our views and shape our mind-sets have not always taught us the value or stressed the importance of sex in its proper time and place. We need them to tell us that sex is not born out of infatuation, but is something for someone who loves you and has your best interests at heart (these conditions should be found in the confines of marriage).

One of the results of premature sex is untimely and unwanted pregnancy. Such children have to deal with the lack of one or both parents as they grow up. Often they bear the brunt of the parents' frustration and anger because of their unplanned birth, and they often suffer from lack of love and affection.

The flip side of the pregnancy issue is the well-known, well-exhausted measure of abortion. Countless young adult mothers grapple with the thought of having an abortion or suffer after having one or many abortions as a means of solving their "dilemma," resulting from instant intimacy.

Because of instant intimacy, several emotions surface. Young adults are forced to deal with feelings of shame, lack of respect for themselves and their partner, loss of reputation, and a diminished ability to love and trust another totally.

Disease and rape are also key players in what we reap as a result of our participation in instant intimacy. When engaging in premature sex, we instantly make ourselves susceptible to all variants of sexually transmitted diseases. And sexually transmitted diseases can result in death.

Rape is also a common factor, because sex has become so common an act. The rapist feels that sex is what they deserve, under any circumstances. By degrading humans into objects, they feel that sex can be taken freely and at will. The same is true





of date rape.

In dealing with the issue of instant intimacy, we must first guard our minds against things in the media that glamorize instant intimacy or suggests that it should be done. I am often reminded of the statement "Garbage in, garbage out." The more we pollute our minds, either blatantly or subliminally with the idea of instant intimacy, the more our mentalities will be shaped to think that it is better than love and sex in the proper context.

We should monitor the friends and settings that tempt us to behave wrongly. We must grasp the fact that sex is not the only way, nor the best way, to get someone to like us. Sharing

**"When we let our hair down too early in the game, we are bound to end up with a messed-up head."**

ourselves mentally and emotionally, supporting each other, helping each other reach dreams and goals, giving our undivided time and energy to others, searching earnestly to know the other person, understanding what they want and where they are headed, and figuring out if we want to be there too should be our priority.

Last but not most important, we should shift our minds from the "now" to the future, understanding that today's thrills may very well lead to tomorrow's sorrows and ruin. Taking sex from this approach leaves us very little room for instant intimacy. This should be our attitude, mentality, and goal concerning sex, remembering always the vital words of Iyanla Vanzant: "When we let our hair down too early in the game, we are bound to end up with a messed-up head." ■

*(The author of this thought-provoking article is a 19-year-old honor student at a major college. She was encouraged by a professor to share it with our Listen readers.—Editor.)*



## A personal look at a 49ers megastar . . .

One of the greatest quarterbacks in NFL history, and rated the most accurate passer in the 78-year life of the league, Steve Young of the San Francisco 49ers has literally thrown himself into pro football super-stardom. With two trips to the Super Bowl—including a Most Valuable Player performance and victory at Super Bowl XXIX, seven Pro Bowl appearances, and two NFL MVP titles, Steve Young is certainly worth his weight in gold—no easy task for one who earns \$45 million (over six years), one of the priciest salaries in NFL history.

Has all this success gone to his helmet? To the contrary. Virtually unaffected, he's the most considerate, down-to-earth, fun-loving guy who seems to care more about helping people than he does his bank balance. "It's like monopoly money to him," says his mother, Sherry Young. "It really hasn't made any difference to him at all, except it's allowed him to do some really good things for other people. He's still himself."

"I think people presume that when good things happen to you, you become a jerk or something," explains Steve. "Nothing has to change. I don't really think it's hard to treat people with respect. I think success comes in





lots of ways, like through humility. I feel that if I changed the way I am, my success would stop. That's part of the formula for me."

While some might think that Steve's road to the 49ers was paved with gold, it actually was rather rocky. Though highly talented, he was not an overnight success. He recalls vividly his struggles. "Everything came with a cost, a difficulty, or overcoming something. It *never* came overnight. It *never* just happened to me. I can still remember all the struggles along the way: disappointment, discouragement, futility—everything."

Steve recalls his freshman year at Brigham Young University, where he was determined to play quarterback. "I thought I was so important. I tried out and was the *eighth* quarterback! Most teams don't even *have* eight quarterbacks! It was awful. *That* was humility at its best. That was *humiliating!*" He continues explaining why that was such a significant point in his life: "My career could have ended right there. I didn't want to be a part of that. I was telling myself, 'This is not fun! The coaches don't even know my name. I want to quit.' I remember calling my dad and saying, 'I'm coming home,' and he said, 'You can quit, but don't come live with me. I don't live with quitters.' So I really didn't have a choice."

But he did make a choice—to hang in there. "I guess I felt that if I quit once, I'd quit again," he adds. "And I never wanted to start that ball rolling."

That decision gave Steve strength as he fought through other challenges and pressures: at BYU reaping an

undefeated WAC season and a holiday bowl victory in 1983; doubting his desire to play pro football at all while on his way to the Los Angeles Express; during his slow-moving Tampa Bay days; and paying his dues in San Francisco in the shadow of Joe Montana, waiting for his day in the Golden Gate sun. No matter what kind of opposition crossed Steve's path, he plowed through it like a tough defensive line until he attained his long-awaited brass ring—the Super Bowl XXIX victory.

"It was like a dream come true," says Steve, who passed a record six

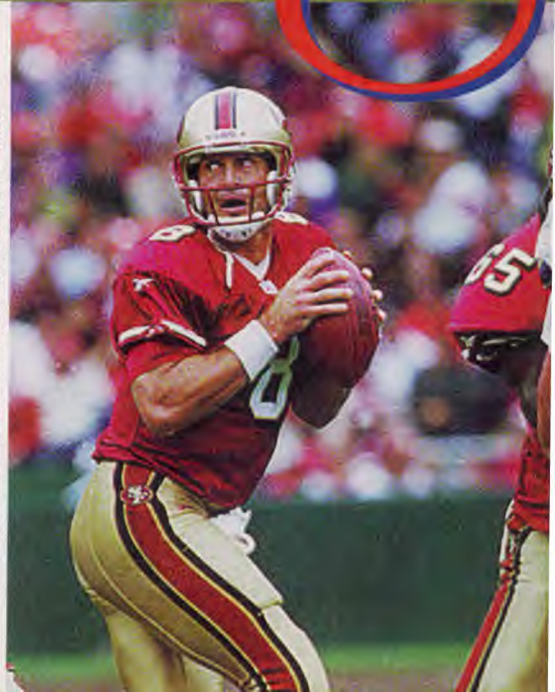
touchdowns during the game, leading the 49ers to their fifth Super Bowl victory and earning the game's MVP award. "It was the only time when the reality was actually better than the dream."

"He's going to give you 100 percent," says Young's counterpart in NFL warfare, Jerry Rice, who helped him capture the title. "It's just exciting to be out there with him, because I know he's going to give everything on that field. He's a great individual. I have a lot of respect for him, not only on the football field, but off the field as well." (continued on page 29)

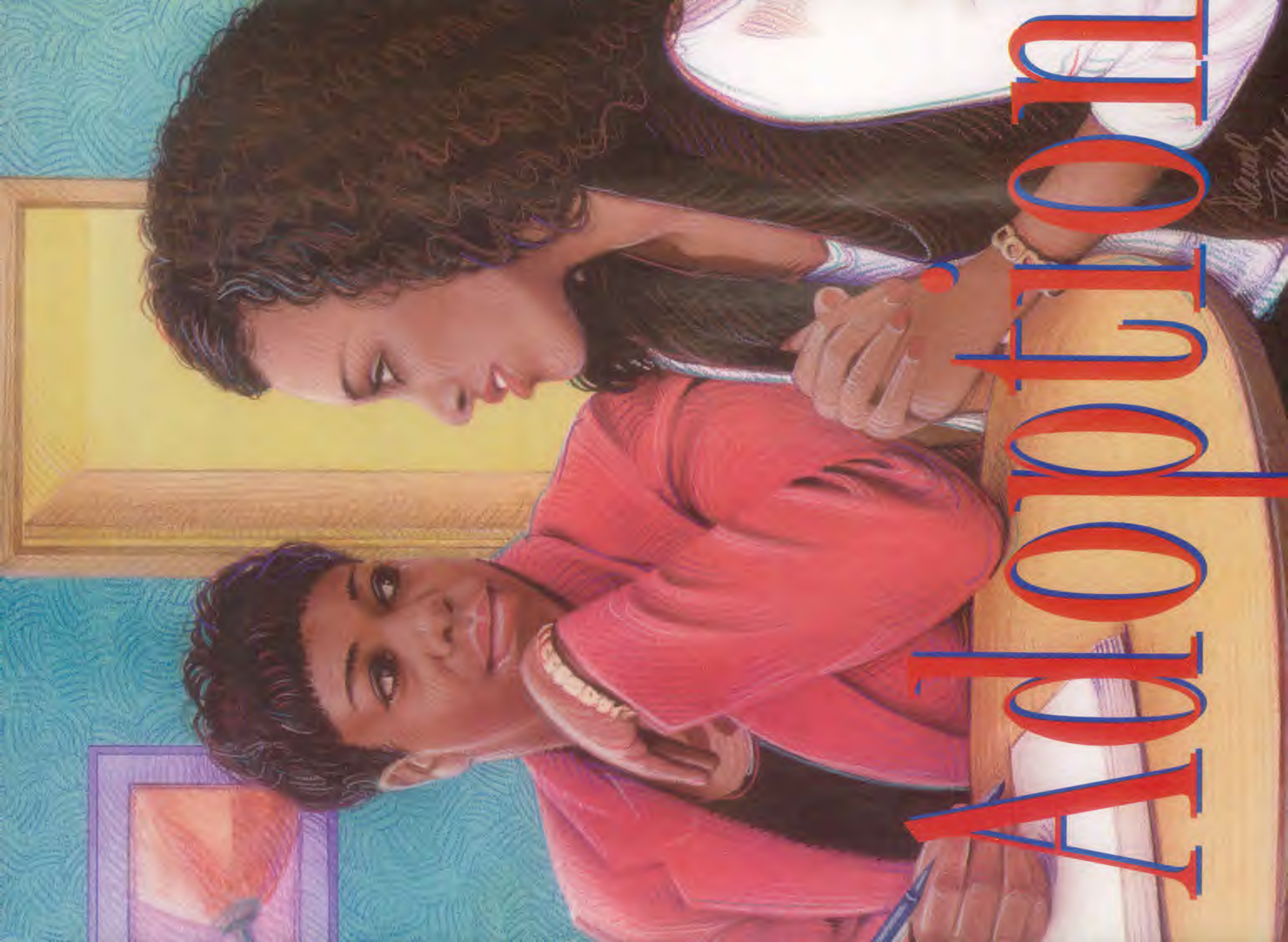
# Steve Young

by Shellie M. Frey

PHOTOS: © MICHAEL ZAGARIS C/O THE SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS









*Each year 1.1 million unmarried teens become pregnant.  
Of these, 50 percent opt for abortion,  
while less than 4 percent place their babies for adoption.*

**A** *bortion or adoption! Murder or abandonment! I'm so confused,*  
thought Jill as she stepped off the downtown bus. *My friends  
say keep the baby, but this is serious . . . the future of an innocent,  
unborn baby is in my hands.*

Jill froze in front of the adoption agency door. *I can't do this*, she  
thought as she spun around, shoved her hands in her pockets, and  
scuttled back to the bus stop just in time to choke on the exhaust  
fumes hurling from the departing bus.

*I'd give anything to take back that one night with Michael*, Jill  
wished as she fanned the fumes from her face. *But here I am, 16,  
single, and six months pregnant. Responsibility. Well, I sure blew it that  
night. But I can't blow it again.* Tears welled up in Jill's eyes as she

ILLUSTRATION: DARREL TANK

# Is an Option





Medical fees,  
legal fees, and  
living expenses  
are paid by the  
adoptive  
parents.

**"I'd give  
anything  
to take  
back that  
one night  
with  
Michael,"  
Jill  
wished.**

turned around. *I can do this*, she told herself as she swallowed hard, blinked, took a deep breath, and walked through the door marked "Abortion Alternatives—Specializing in Open Adoption."

"Hi, how can I help you?" asked the adoption agency receptionist.

"I need information on adoption," Jill said, snorting back a snuffle and glancing around the softly lit room. "No one knows I'm here, so can I please talk to someone *right now*?"

"Sure, have a seat," said the receptionist as she handed a box of tissues to Jill. "An intake counselor will be with you shortly."

"Hello, my name is Barb," said the intake counselor as she shook Jill's hand. "Please have a seat and make yourself comfortable."

*Comfortable?* Jill thought. *Lady, my jaw joints are about to shatter from grinding my teeth.* But aloud she just said "Thanks" and plopped into the low easy chair.

"What can I do to help you, Jill?" asked the counselor.

"Well, I got your name from my

church pastor," Jill said. Then she cleared her throat. "But I don't know . . . I've always felt sorry for kids who were adopted. It's as if their parents just threw them away when they were born. They never saw them and never knew who they looked like. But if my pastor's right about adoption being different now, I think it might be the best choice for my baby." Jill's voice cracked. "I don't want my baby growing up in a single-parent home like I did," she said and took a big gulp of air.

"OK, Jill," said the counselor as she scooted her chair forward and leaned toward her. "I'll give you an overview of what open adoption involves and what support and assistance this agency can offer as you make plans for your baby's future."

"An open adoption gives you the opportunity to choose your baby's adoptive family. We show you résumés from families we feel could provide happy, loving, and stable home environments. Of course, these potential adoptive parents have been screened for criminal backgrounds and child abuse," the counselor explained.

"Can I meet the people?" Jill asked.

"Yes, you can decide if you want to meet them face-to-face. You will have the choice of how much contact and involvement you wish to maintain with the adoptive parents as your baby grows up and as you go on with your schooling, work, and personal life plans. Our agency can act as intermediary for you to send and receive pictures and letters, or you may have direct contact with the adoptive parents, if that is what you choose."

"Once your child is an adult, he or she will have the option of reaching you through our agency. So your bond with your child is never completely broken if you chose a loving and caring adoption option."



"OK, that's what I can decide," said Jill. "But what about the baby's father?"

"That's a good question, Jill," said the counselor, reaching for pamphlets behind her desk. "We do encourage the involvement of the birth father and birth grandparents in the adoption process. You will all have counselors and support groups available throughout your pregnancy and after the baby is placed. And you may all want to meet with others who have experienced open adoption. Here is some information for the birth father and birth grandparents."

"What if I change my mind and want to keep my baby?" asked Jill.

"We are here to help you with whatever decision you make, Jill. You can change your plans anytime during your pregnancy," said the counselor. "We provide you with information on pregnancy, adoption, and parenting. We can give you referrals to doctors and arrange for housing and financial assistance."

"Do I have to pay for anything myself?" asked Jill as she tucked the tissue in her pocket.

"Medical fees, legal fees, and living expenses are paid by the adoptive parents. We are not lawyers, but we can advise if your needs are being addressed. There is no financial cost to you for our services at this agency."

"What if I find a family on my own?" said Jill.

"Our agency can help you in that situation also, and there is still no cost to you for our services. Our goal is to help you plan for your future and for the future of your baby, whether you make a decision for single parenting or for open adoption," said the counselor as she reached into her righthand desk drawer. "Here's a booklet for you, Jill, that outlines what we've been talking about."

*I still don't know what to do, Jill*

**An open adoption gives you the opportunity to choose your baby's adoptive family. The goal is to help you plan for your future and your baby's future.**

thought. *But the last bus comes in 10 minutes.* "Well, I guess I need to think about all of this. It's a big decision, and pretty scary." Jill hoisted herself out of the chair.

"Thanks for the information and the pamphlets."

"You're welcome, Jill," said the counselor, patting the girl's shoulder. "You've already chosen the loving decision to give your baby life, Jill, and I feel that your children will be well loved whether you parent yourself or make an adoption plan."

"Call or stop by anytime. We're here to help you," said the counselor as she opened the door for Jill. ▀

## GETTING HELP IF YOU'RE SINGLE AND PREGNANT

**P**renatal care and counseling are important to you and your baby. So get help early. Objective professionals and trained counselors can offer support during this stressful time.

### Where to start:

- ☐ 1. Begin with an adult you trust: a parent, an older sibling, your minister, a school counselor, your doctor, a social worker, or a psychologist. Ask for referrals to reputable agencies on adoption.
- ☐ 2. Ask the reference librarian at the local library for help in finding books on pregnancy and adoption and for local social service agencies' names and numbers.
- ☐ 3. Look in the yellow pages under "adoption" or "abortion alternatives."

### What to look for in an agency:

- ☐ 1. Do they offer information and counseling on parenting and open adoption, and abortion?
- ☐ 2. Is individual and group counseling available to you

throughout your pregnancy and the adoption planning? Will they provide support during delivery and during the grieving period following the separation from your child?

- ☐ 3. Are counselors and groups available to support the birth father and birth grandparents?
- ☐ 4. Will the agency provide the same resources if you change your plans from adoption to parenting, or if you find an adoptive family on your own?
- ☐ 5. Do they offer medical care, housing, transportation, and other maternity-related expenses?
- ☐ 6. Will they act as liaison for future contact between you and the adoptive parents, and ultimately between you and your adult child?

The key factor in your choice of an agency is your level of comfort and assurance that you will have the support of a caring, nonjudgmental, professional staff and the necessary resources available no matter what your final plans are for your baby.



# I Want to Make a Difference

My name is Theona Harwood, and I'm 15 years old. I'm a competitive figure skater representing the Haverhill, Massachusetts, Figure Skating Club. I'm also a member of the United States Figure Skating Association (USFSA). I just finished the tenth grade at the Pentucket Regional Senior High School. I have to admit that balancing school and skating can be difficult, but with a lot of help and support, I've made it. My family and coaches always encourage me to do my best and always have fun. With the help of my coaches, I've passed my intermediate freestyle and novice moves tests.

My greatest accomplishment is my third-place finish at the 1998 New England Regional Championships in the Open Juvenile.

In 1996 my partner and I won first place in the middle school division. This year I hope to qualify at the New England Regional Championships being held in Boston, Massachusetts. I was also assistant editor for my school newspaper that year.

Besides my accomplishments in skating, I also strive for my best in school. Last year I participated in my school's annual science fair. My goal this year was to make the honor roll.

Whether it's skating, school, or whatever I do, I always set goals for myself and strive to do my best. I want to make a difference in someone's life by saying that I didn't need drugs to accomplish my goals.

Theona Harwood, 15  
Haverhill, Massachusetts



## The Clay Falcon

The falcon burst  
out of the clay,  
like a bull exploding  
out of a wall.

I stared—  
wondering  
what kind of falcon  
it was.

It looked at me,  
and its eyes  
shone sky blue.

My heart went fast  
as  
its wings reached out  
to the sky,  
and it took off.

Light shone through  
her wings.

She climbed the sky,  
as if the wind  
were a ladder.

I ran just in time  
to see her swoop up  
and down into  
the heavens.

Then I stopped  
and watched her  
disappear.

I fell—  
I wanted to cry  
because it felt so good  
to let such beauty  
free.

My eyes dropped  
one tear  
from each eye.

Sonny Williams, 11  
Great Neck, New York

## As a Child Crawls

Down on your knees  
you are free.  
Go anywhere.  
Do anything.  
Down on your knees  
everything can be yours,  
when you crawl.

Rose DiGennaro, 12  
Camillus, New York

## NOBODY KNEW

Drop some acid;  
Smoke some weed.  
Do a line;  
Sure, I'll be fine.  
Hey, ya weed is what I  
need.  
But one last toke;  
Last words he spoke.  
The weed was laced—  
Now he lives forever  
blank-faced.

Randi Stoltz  
Missoula, Montana





# LISTENING

## FEEDBACK FROM READERS

### CLOUDS

It's a warm summer morning;  
there are shapes in the sky.  
White, plump marshmallows  
float slowly by.  
I feel the dampness of the grass;  
puffs of white seem so big.  
The sun is shining on my face;  
Oh, I think I see a pig.  
I see a kitten and a mouse;  
They look like they may try to run.  
The kitten's getting closer;  
This is starting to be fun.  
I don't believe my eyes  
at who's driving a Mercedes-Benz.  
It looks like a teddy bear—  
Oh, I hope this reverie never ends.  
Oh, no, Mother's voice is calling,  
but I'll be out again.  
I can hardly wait till tomorrow—  
I just hope it doesn't rain.  
Cheri Greco  
Syracuse, New York

### I Have Found You

Poppy, you are with me—  
telling me to take my beauty pills  
every morning after breakfast;  
blowing out the candles  
on our birthday cake;  
singing the song "Tomorrow"  
from the movie *Annie*;  
yelling at me to eat, eat, eat  
every night at dinner.  
Then how come when I turn around  
you are not next to me,  
or when I want to talk to you on the phone  
you are not on the line?  
Now I search further for you.  
I see you now.  
It is clear to me.  
I have found you.  
You are right here in my heart.  
Nicole Roth, 15  
New City, New York



### MEMORIES

Memories—  
Sneaking up on me  
I can't help but see  
them all so visually.  
A little something from me to you  
Is something that you'll always keep too.  
Every little thing is a part of me,  
So don't try to take any part away,  
For in my heart it will always stay.  
What would I be  
without all my memories?  
What would I feel?  
It would be like stealing  
to take my feelings from me,  
Because without them I couldn't be.  
Breanne Chiappone, 13  
Syracuse, New York

### SUNFLOWER

I am a sunflower;  
tall and proud I stand.  
When the bumblebees buzz  
by my open yellow petals,  
the whole event is grand.  
Many insects stop to admire  
my beautiful petals  
as they prosper.  
I shade the unknowns,  
for I am a friend.  
The wonderful sunflower;  
I'm here till the end!  
Beth Taranto, 14  
Atlanta, Georgia





# Cynthia R. Knowles Peanut Butter IN THEIR POCKETS

## A teen gets an upfront look at life for the homeless.

**S**he needed a little bit more cardboard to make it through this night. Hypothermia might kill her if she were not insulated from the ground.

In the gathering darkness she hung around the back door of a restaurant where the cook always gave her a sandwich. It was a violation of the state health code for him to do that, but he knew that eating from dumpsters might give her salmonella, and that could kill her. Tonight he gave her peanut butter. That was good. Peanut butter didn't go bad, so she could save half for tomorrow. She offered some of the bread to a stray cat. If she could get the cat to stay with her tonight, she wouldn't have to worry about the rats while she slept.

The men and women on the streets each have their own story. As the intake counselor at a 135-bed Salvation Army shelter, I have the opportunity to ask each new resident what had happened. How did they end up on the streets? While each story is unique, there are some common threads.

Current estimates place the number of homeless people in the U.S. at more than 1 million. Amazingly, 36 percent of this number are families. A report by

the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty estimates that 450,000 of the homeless are school-aged children. An additional 2 million kids are "precariously housed." Most studies reveal lack of affordable housing as the leading cause of homelessness and hunger. But 75 percent of cities say that they are unable to meet the demands for food and shelter.

I've often heard people dismiss the homeless as nothing but "lazy drunks." It's true that 80 percent of the people at the shelter had used or were addicted to alcohol or drugs. Their drug use usually started as experimentation while they were teenagers. But addiction is a sneaky disease. Some people can use for years without ever having problems. Others become addicted quickly, after using for only a few weeks or months. No one chooses to be addicted, and no one chooses

to be homeless. I have seen that either can happen to anyone.

Most of our addicted residents first used in junior high. Their drinking or drug use led them to drop out of school or be kicked out of their homes. Most wanted to stop using, but discovered that even if they wanted help, there was no place for them to go. A treatment center can cost thousands of dollars, and the unemployed usually don't have health insurance.

Addiction is just one reason so many had dropped out of school. Others had gotten pregnant, arrested, or sick. It didn't seem to matter why they didn't finish high school; they all discovered that it's hard to get a job without a diploma.

Personal tragedy interrupted the lives of some. Fires had destroyed homes; a spouse or a child had died. One man watched helplessly as his girlfriend was hit and killed by a train. These emotional shocks left them unable to work while they adjusted to their loss. They lost their jobs and eventually their homes.

Many of our residents are veterans of the Vietnam War. Drafted after high school, their educational plans were put on hold. They returned to a country that didn't welcome them home, wasn't prepared to provide job training or reentry counseling, and even discriminated against them. Some with combat experience felt they no longer fitted into society. They isolated themselves and were unable to keep jobs or homes.

Many of our young residents in their early 20s had just gotten out of jail. The crimes they had committed were generally a result of their drug use. They'd either gotten caught selling drugs or breaking into homes for money to buy drugs. We called it "stealing or dealing." When they

**H**ypothermia might kill her if she were not insulated from the ground.



were released, they found that their families no longer trusted them and their friends had moved on. With no job and no place to stay, they ended up at the shelter.

The Salvation Army program is run largely by the residents themselves. They maintain the building, do the cooking and cleaning, and collect and repair all the donations that will be sold in the thrift stores. Their salary is paid in room and board, clean clothes (from donations), and health care, plus they get into the routine of working 40 hours a week. Most important, because they work for what's given to them, they are able to maintain their dignity.

GED classes are offered for those who want to finish their high school diploma. AA meetings and alcohol/drug education are required for all residents. It's believed that if they can learn about their addiction and get connected to AA, they will have a better opportunity of remaining sober when they leave. We also provide religious services twice a week. Residents stay a minimum of 30 days. Some stay six months or longer.

Occasionally a resident finds the structure of the program too restrictive and chooses to leave before they find a job or a place to live. They always leave right after dinner so they can stuff their pockets with peanut-butter sandwiches from the cafeteria for their next few days on the street. A peanut-butter sandwich is like gold because it won't go bad too fast, is filling, and tastes good even a few days old.

I was soon on a first-name basis with the morgue and the night shift employees at the local emergency room. If anyone was missing when I got to work in the morning, I would call there first, because that's generally where I would find our missing residents.



A study of 644 homeless who died in San Francisco shows that only 39 percent of the deaths could be attributed to natural causes. Thirty-four percent died

percent committed suicide. These numbers fit my experience. The saddest deaths I witnessed were two men who died of exposure. They simply froze to death on the sidewalk.

When I ask each man and woman when their troubles began, many say predictable things about starting to use alcohol or drugs, committing their first crime, or dropping out of school. One very thoughtful woman told me, "If I could do it over, I would have taken better care of my relationships. If I still had friends, if I hadn't taken them all for granted, I would have had a place to go. I wouldn't be alone now."

If a homeless person asks you for money, offer instead to buy them a meal. Most shelters can use volunteers; check your local phone book under "Missions" if you want to help out. ■

**The saddest deaths I witnessed were two men who died of exposure. They simply froze to death on the sidewalk.**

from unintentional injuries (falling, exposure, infections), 13 percent were deliberately killed (often just for their shoes), and 6





*Despite all the  
talk you might  
hear, lots of  
teenagers, male  
and female, are  
not having sex.*





STAFFORD GRAEME

# SEX APPEALED

*It bothered Roland that he was a virgin.*

Roland turned 16 the year he became a junior at high school. Besides being a stellar tight end on the football team, he was a great student, even looking for a scholarship to a prestigious school based on his wizardry at mathematics (his nickname was Pentium II). He wasn't too bad-looking, not too many zits. He was great at imitating people: he could do a Bill Clinton or a Jim Carrey that could turn whole rooms into a tumult of belly-heavy laughter.

There was, however, one thing that really bothered Roland, and the older he got, the more it did. And that was: Roland was a virgin. He had gone out a few times with a number of girls, but the relationships had never gone beyond a few light kisses.

In fact, despite all the physical pressure and peer pressure, there was a part of him that really *didn't want* to have sex. He just didn't

feel ready. Sure, at 16 Roland felt his hormones sizzle, but a voice inside him kept on telling him to wait.

Meanwhile, what made it harder was listening to many of his friends talk about all their sexual conquests. Roland just smiled, stuttered something, and kind of steered the conversation in another direction. As bad as he felt about being a virgin, he certainly didn't want anyone to know.

Of course, Roland was grappling with something that has confused teenagers ever since there were teenagers, and that is the question of sexuality. Especially in American culture, where sex is everywhere, many young people do feel pressure to be sexually active, even if they aren't sure they want to be. Considering some of the risks involved with sex in general, they have good reasons to be reticent. One doesn't have to be some sort of religious fanatic to realize that teenage sex isn't always

the best choice. Though moral issues are involved, considering the prevalence of herpes, AIDS, and teen pregnancy, abstinence from sexual activity can be as much a health choice as a moral one.

Though sex is a very private part of a person's life, those who, for whatever reason, want to wait until they are older or even married before becoming sexually active will face a fair amount of pressure. So here are some tips that could help you stand firm.

1. Don't be bullied by the notion that you are somehow not a real man if you are a virgin. This is a myth often hyped by TV and the movies. The true essential qualities of manhood and masculinity aren't determined by how many sexual "conquests" you have. Honesty, courage, compassion, willingness to admit mistakes, responsibility—these are what make a man, not how many pants he can get into.

2. Despite all the talk you might

*In spite of all the physical pressure and the peer pressure, there was a part of him that didn't want to have sex.*



hear, lots of teenagers, male and female, are not having sex. You can be sure, too, that some of the stories you are hearing have been greatly exaggerated. More than 40 percent of teenagers have *not* had sex by their seventeenth birthday. That's just a bit under half. By being in that group, you're hardly off with some marginal freaks. Don't believe all the stories, either, about how great their sexual encounters were. Oftentimes, teenagers who haven't had much experience find it wasn't as wonderful and exciting as they've read about or thought it would be. Numerous stories do, indeed, show how early sexual encounters are not all that they're cracked up to be; in fact, they are often very traumatic.

**Many young people, men included, have suffered intensely because of getting involved in sexual activity before they were ready.**

3. Remember, too, the health risks involved in sexual activity. There is an explosion of STDs (sexually transmitted diseases) in America today. Every year more than 12 million (that's million!) Americans become infected with some sort of STD, and many varieties—like herpes—are incurable. The incidence among teens has risen dramatically over the past few years. Among these are herpes, genital warts (yuck!), chlamydia, gonorrhea, and hepatitis B. None of these are any fun, and they can be very damaging to you physically and emotionally.

The granddaddy of all these is HIV infection, the precursor to AIDS. If there was only one reason

**Though moral issues are involved, considering the prevalence of herpes, AIDS, and teen pregnancy, abstinence from sexual activity can be as much a health choice as a moral one.**

teenagers should think long and hard before getting involved in sexual activity, AIDS would be enough. Already thousands of teenagers have the HIV virus, which can easily kill them.

4. Another reason young men like Roland might want to abstain from sexual activity is the reality of getting a woman pregnant. Every year in America more than 1 million teenage women become pregnant, with more than half of them giving birth. In many cases the fathers are young men who are hardly ready for the responsibilities of adulthood itself, much less that of being a father. Though contraceptives are available, the only birth-control practice known to be 100 percent effective is abstinence. Though Roland does hope to one day have a family, he doesn't want to start at 16.

5. Before engaging in sex, kids ought to consider the emotional consequences. Sexual activity is a wonderful gift; in the right circumstances it can be a powerful force—along with other factors—to cement a committed and loving relationship. On the other hand, something as intense and emotional (besides physical) can turn around and bite you in ways that leave scars and damage for life. Sex is like a gun: in the right

circumstances it can be fun, even valuable; in the wrong circumstances, it can destroy you. Generally, for teenagers, the older you are, the more mature you become and the greater your ability to handle the emotions involved. Many young people, men included, have suffered intensely because of getting involved in sexual activity before they were ready.

6. Though sex is a difficult topic to talk about at any age, it can be even harder for teenagers. Yet if you are feeling pressure to have sex and aren't sure you're ready, it would be great if you could talk to an adult whom you trust. A parent, of course, would be ideal; but if that won't work, seek out an adult you can confide in. Talk frankly. Oftentimes just a few minutes of affirmation can give a teenager a lot of courage to stand by the decision not to have sex.

7. Realize, too, that studies show that teenagers who engage in sex at young ages are more likely to be involved in drugs, drinking, and other reckless behavior. In fact, the earlier young people start having sex, the more likely they are to have trouble in forming strong relationships with the opposite sex later in life. Many marriages have ended in divorce because of the damage done to one or both partners emotionally by their early sexual activity.

8. If possible, find some friends who share your philosophy. You can be a great encouragement to each other.

Teen sex, like anything, involves choices, and like all choices it involves weighing the various factors for and against. Whatever might be the factors in favor of teen sex, it seems that there are many more good ones for waiting.

Despite the pressure, Roland made that choice, and unlike millions who didn't, he found it a choice he will never be sorry for. ■



## Steve Young (Continued from page 17)

Through all the NFL success and stardom, perhaps the only thing that could upstage Steve's superior athleticism is his strong sense of character. Though he's lived the high life of professional football for 16 years, Steve still manages to remain grounded and maintains a strong sense of who he is: a man with a strong sense of family values and high ideals.

"I think it's a challenge for life to keep defining yourself; keep defining your values; keep defining the things that are important to you. Say them early, and then decide it. It started at a very young age with me, but I'm still living that. You still have to redefine that every day with your actions."

Steve doesn't smoke, drink, or gamble, and he's never done drugs. He says, "Obviously that wasn't the way that I wanted to go. A lot of my friends played sports and weren't really into drinking or drugs or anything, so I really have never had to face the trials that a lot of people do. But I respect greatly the kids that can stand up to that in the face of real intense pressure and say, 'Hey, you know, that's not my style.'"

Steve seems to find plenty of ways to have fun without drugs. During the off-season he's an avid skier, water-skier, mountain biker, and golfer. In high school he was an all-around athlete who was captain of the football, baseball, and basketball teams. He was an A student who enjoyed school, but who enjoyed even more dating the homecoming queen Christy Fitchner, who later became Miss USA. "I got to know all kinds of kids in high school," says Steve. "I loved school, and did very well. I had friends who were total bookworms, and I had friends who were total athletes."

Steve has no problem letting loose and just being himself. Longtime friend and teammate Ed Sheehan from Greenwich, Connecticut, says of his buddy, "Steve likes fun. He's an amusement-park kind of guy. He likes toys. He has tons of golf clubs, and the stereo speakers in his room are like giants. He likes to have clean fun and keeps you thinking like a kid." But Steve would rather focus his energy on people and progress than on superficial

Young doesn't smoke, drink, or gamble and he's never done drugs. "Keep defining your values . . . things that are important to you," Steve says.

status symbols.

Another longtime friend, Dave Van Blerkon, describes Steve as "loyal, trustworthy, dedicated, hardworking, competitive, and fun." The perfect Boy Scout! In fact, Steve *was* a Boy Scout. "Steve's always someone you can count on," adds Sheehan. "He cares about other people's opinions and cares about how people feel."

With so much athletic talent and charisma, Steve could have easily relied solely on sports to support him through college and through life. Yet he chose to continue his education. During his off-seasons Steve earned his law degree from BYU and may consider a post-football career in law or politics.

"The only sure thing, to me, is an education," he says. "It's the only way that you can really provide for your family. There are other ways, but the odds are that you'll never support your family or yourself from playing athletics, so to gamble on that is crazy. I'm *playing* in it and I wouldn't gamble on it. I'd gamble on education. And I don't know why it is that we always have to *beg* everybody to stay in school! What are your alternatives? Here's a *free* education. The school systems give you an education to provide a way *out*. How can you quit? How can you drop out? Are you kidding? It's not an option to drop out. You've got to stay in school! The only thing you've got going for you is to educate yourself. Even though I'm one of the rare people who has had that opportunity [to make a living from athletics], I certainly don't think it's taken the place of my education. I *have* to be educated."

Steve's intellect, coupled with his natural athletic ability, makes for a solid combination and is most likely one of the key elements that catapulted him into being a world sports leader. Yet with all he's accomplished, he still manages to remain grounded and doesn't take himself too seriously. "What I do [play football] is not socially that vital," he says. "You can't take it too seriously. It's fun, it's exciting, it's entertainment, but it's not changing the world by any means."

While he may not single-handedly create world peace by throwing a football, Steve does single-handedly influence and positively affect thousands of lives in many ways. Considered one of the best role models for youth today, Steve speaks to youth groups, Scout groups, church groups, corporations, and countless other organizations about achievement, success, and living a productive and happy life. Through his Forever Young foundation (established in 1993), Steve provides thousands of dollars and hours each year to organizations that help abused children, battered women, kids with disabilities, children with cancer, and other underprivileged individuals. Among these are Children Now, United Way, Make-a-Wish Foundations, Ronald McDonald House, and other inner-city programs. Steve has also donated money for each 49ers' victory to a local organization developed to save high school sports in San Francisco.

Amidst all the fanfare, however, Steve says that wise choices and support from positive people helps keep his life manageable. "My lifestyle's very simple," he says. "And with some support, it's not that hard to live. It's very casual. It's about just respecting other people and enjoying yourself and staying within smart limits. It's just like: go to school, stay off drugs; things that are common sense."

While Steve has plenty of sense, there's nothing at all common about him. Though he's considered the NFL's top passer, Steve will *always* be a runner—and a winner—out there in front, leading an exemplary life of excellence, helping others, and remaining forever *young at heart*. ■



# JUST BETWEEN US

*Listen*

## SHOW YOU CARE

**T**ouring Germany a few years ago, I came across a rather curious scene in a public park. Something like a lunch wagon—or “roach coach,” as we used to call it when I was a college student working on construction sites—was parked in an open space. At the vendor window several government employees were busily handing little packets to a very long line of ragged-looking customers.

I found out that this was a government-sponsored program to supply needles and drug substitutes such as methadone to the addicts in the city.

A little later in that same park I came across the aftermath of the handout. Groups of the down-and-out were busily occupied shooting up or crashing on the grassy slopes. They didn't look too happy, and the passersby looked anything but pleased at this “debris” that had been encouraged in their fine city park.

I'd seen the same thing some years earlier in Switzerland. But the government there came to realize that rather than controlling the drug situation, they were actually encouraging it. Park handout centers had become gathering points for ever larger numbers of down-and-out drug addicts.

Free needles, while better than the dirty reused ones of the hardcore addict, clearly encourage and enable the addiction process. And giving heroin addicts regular doses of methadone—a supposedly nonaddictive substance with similar properties to heroin—amounts to a little more than government-subsidized drug dealing.

My reason for dredging up memories of past vacations is simple. Word is that the federal drug czar, General Barry McCaffrey, obviously acting on very bad and flawed advice, is now promoting those same methadone replacement measurements for this country.

Bad thinking, General. Bad military thinking. It's the most futile of military campaigns that aims to win the war by killing civilians.

He's been gulled in by arguments that methadone programs cut down on crime, violence, and the various hazards surrounding desperate people trying to get illegal substances. But keeping them in a holding pattern of desperation is surely no answer to the drug problem.

We need to let those in charge of our nation's drug education and enforcement policies know that we do not agree with such an approach. Let's work to create a drug-free culture.

The world over, drug education has been shown to be of far greater effectiveness than drug-enabling policies. What we want, General, is strong leadership for a drug-free America. Help us celebrate positive choices.



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# QUIZ

BY  
JULIANA LEWIS

Our expressions, titles, and names often include a "colorful" word. Fill each blank below with the color that fits the description.

1. Clean or pure: lily \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Character from *Treasure Island*: Long John \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Young girl scouts: \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Genuine or faith: true \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The wish of Midas: the \_\_\_\_\_ touch.
6. Of royal birth: born to the \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Moscow's official parade site: \_\_\_\_\_ square.
8. Good at growing plants: have a \_\_\_\_\_ thumb.
9. Nation of West Africa: the \_\_\_\_\_ Coast.
10. Invisible light: \_\_\_\_\_ rays.
11. The hand's smallest finger: little \_\_\_\_\_.
12. A dress-up occasion: a \_\_\_\_\_-tie affair.

**ANSWERS:**  
1. White. 2. Silver. 3. Brownies.  
4. Blue. 5. Golden. 6. Purple. 7. Red.  
8. Green. 9. Ivory. 10. Ultraviolet.  
11. Pinkie or pinky. 12. Black.



"The only sure thing, to me, is an education . . . You've got to stay in school. The school systems give you an education to provide a way out . . . I'd gamble on education."

— Steve Young, a football star who also earned a law degree.

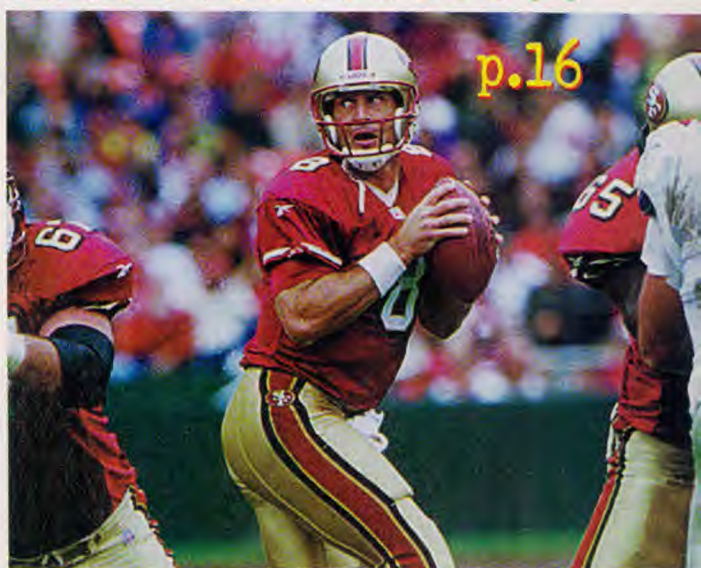


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