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# **SWEET**SPIRITS

Late last summer I took a quick run down to Baltimore-Washington International Airport to meet a family member who was returning from vacation. It was one of those sultry summer days here in Maryland that I really hate—so hot you didn't want to move and so sticky you really couldn't breathe.

While wandering down one of BWI's long terminal corridors, I noticed a sign off to one side promising "Lemonade!" Well, that sounded pretty good to me, but as I thought about veering off toward what I was sure was a lemonade stand, I noticed a few things that made me change my mind, and quick.

The "lemonade stand" was a bar. There were no kids enjoying this lemonade, just adults. And the stuff in their glasses didn't look like any lemonade I had ever seen. No, this wasn't your grandma's lemonade. It had a lot more kick than pucker. These travelers were knocking back "hard lemonade," one of the latest alcohol/fruit-based concoctions that brewing companies have developed for people who don't like the taste of alcohol.

It made me mad on two levels. First, it was really hot, and I wanted some lemonade. But not that swill. And second, my son likes lemonade. And when he becomes a teenager in a few years, I wonder if he will fall for the marketing hype that brewers are giving this stuff.

These products are just a sadly transparent marketing ploy aimed at attracting teenagers. Teens participating in focus groups tell interviewers they believe these sweet beverages have been developed as a way to lead kids to other forms of alcohol. Adults feel the same way too. One recent poll showed 72 percent of adults believe these alternative alcoholic beverages are popular with underage drinkers.

Still, you're too bright to fall for such foolishness, right? Sadly, not everyone is. Consider the results of another poll released last May. It seems that 41 percent of more than 600 14- to 18-year-olds said they had tried an alcohol pop drink. You may be on to the alcohol industry's tricks. But, at least according to this poll, about four out of 10 of your friends aren't quite as smart as you.

I never did get anything to drink at the airport that day. When I got home, I grabbed a nice glass of cold water. And boy, did it ever hit the spot! As for lemonade, let's agree that if it isn't homemade, it isn't for us!

Larry Becker

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## Michelle Discovers Happiness

by Brenda Segna

tarting junior high school is a rite of passage in becoming a teenager. However, it is not always an easy transition. For Michelle it was the beginning of her descent into alcoholism. Michelle's mother is a teacher, and her father owns a beauty college. In elementary school she had a tight group of friends. But when she started seventh grade, they were separated, and she suddenly felt all alone.

"I was so excited when I met a new group of people who accepted me," Michelle said. "One night in October we were at the home of my new friend Sarah, and people were drinking. I wanted to feel cool, and I was curious, so I drank some vodka and got really drunk. It made me relax. I wasn't thinking about my problems—and I liked that feeling."

Now that she's sober Michelle can see that each year her drinking got worse. In seventh grade she drank on the weekends. Some of her friends had older siblings who'd buy booze for them, so they always had it when they wanted it.

In eighth grade she started drinking every day because she really liked being drunk. In the morning she'd drink whatever was in her parents' cupboard after they left for work. At school Michelle and some of her friends would keep alcohol in pop bottles and drink in the bathrooms between classes.

By tenth grade everything in her life seemed wrong. She skipped school a lot, and fought with her parents all the time.

"If I came home and my parents smelled alcohol on me," Michelle began, "I'd lie and tell them someone spilled it on me. If they caught me drinking with a friend, I brought around new friends so they'd think I was staying away from the bad crowd. And whenever I started thinking that maybe I had a drinking problem I'd convince myself that I was still in school, so I was OK."

Michelle realizes now that she had trouble dealing with her emotions. She put up a front that nothing was wrong, but she hated herself. She felt ugly on the inside and the outside. Alcohol made her forget her problems—she wasn't shy when she drank.

When Michelle was in eleventh grade her best friend was killed after leaving a party they'd attended. Michelle was the one who'd brought the booze for everyone.

Now she really felt worthless. It seemed that if she didn't drink, she'd go insane. Her GPA dropped to 1.5. When her parents finally became fed up with her behavior and laid down the rules, she got mad and moved out and went to stay with friends. Finally, last June, her parents and a friend did an intervention. They told her she was an alcoholic and needed help. Deep down she thought they were right, but she was too scared and angry to admit it. But she promised she'd quit. She just wanted to get them off her back.

A week later Michelle got a DUI, and the police called her parents. They told her: "Michelle, go and get treatment or go to foster care." Michelle chose treatment and went to a rehab center in Canada for six weeks.

"During my first week we all had to tell our life stories," Michelle remembers. "As I heard myself speak I realized that everything bad that had easy. In fact, at times it was very painful. "I had to tell my parents the truth about everything—which wasn't easy," Michelle recalls. "But I had to because I didn't want to go back to my old life.

"I haven't had a drink in six months, and sobriety is the most awesome thing that's ever happened to me. I'm learning to deal with my feelings. My relationship with my parents is the best that it's ever been. We are really close. I've even managed to make some great new friends."

Michelle goes to Alcoholics Anonymous meetings twice a week. She lives at home now and is currently back in high school enjoying her senior year.



happened to me was related to alcohol. I'd never made that connection before, and I decided to try to stay sober."

Michelle worked really hard in rehab. Breaking down those emotional walls wasn't "The scariest thing,"
Michelle says, "is that most of
my old friends still drink. I
have to work at staying sober.
I have to work at it every day.
I still have hard times, but I'm
the happiest I've ever been."

#### Fear

What is fear?
The mere word sends chills down my spine.
Does fear really exist?
Or is it just a word to haunt us?
Is it a roller-coaster ride? or falling off a cliff?
Or is fear both?
Is fear a snarling dog? or a monster under the bed?
Might it be forgetting homework?
Or a bad report card instead?

Luke Kiper, 12 Camillus, New York

Does anyone know what fear is?

If you do, please tell me.

I will just ask you this,

What is fear?

#### I Wish I Had a Car

I wish I had a car With an interior made of gold, And a new engine That does whatever it is told. One with silver exterior That shines like no other. A powerful engine That even scares my mother. I wish I had a car With lights that shine so bright, And a windshield clear as forever. A vehicle of flight, It will have a loudspeaker With ultramodern design. But not an old model Like the one that sits in the garage . . . and will be mine (someday)!

> Malik Karimi, 14 Dunwoody, Georgia

#### The One Who Stands Alone

Looking around, seeing no one in sight. Eyes searching beyond the horizon. on a trip as far as they can take you: beyond the moon and the glittering stars. You are the cheese, standing alone. Familiar smiles and faces nowhere to be found are now only fragments of your past. Silence settles in, screaming as sensible thoughts of possible solutions are being muffled out. Inhale. Exhale. A glance around. No one wants to be the sock lost in the dryer. No one wants to be the cheese who stands alone.

> Amanda Freedman, 14 New City, New York

#### All I Did Was Pout

I was going to have a fit.
Down I went,
As if I were falling into a pit.
All I did was pout.
Now I can't see the top
Or even get out.
This has been so lonely
and low.
I think it might overflow.

Patrick Reilley, 12 Syracuse, New York

#### Advice From the Peanut Gallery

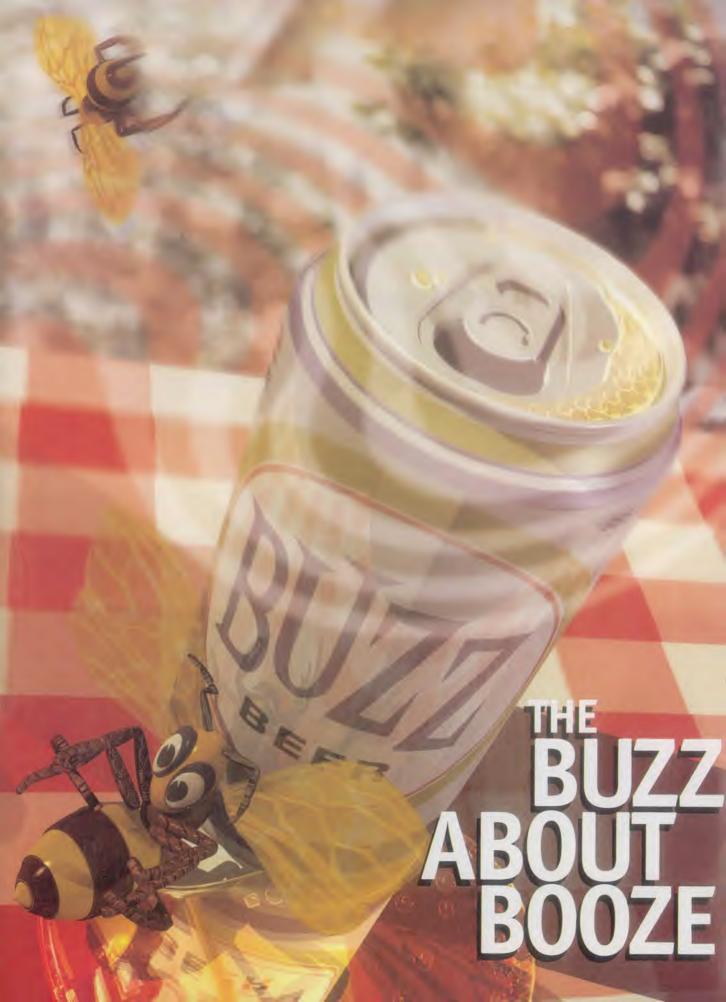
Advice from the peanut gallery is always unwanted. But we always ask and refuse to listen. We fish for compliments and catch white lies. We wait for the dreaded questions and give untruthful answers. Am I fat? Do I look OK? Am I ugly? The guilt hangs like a fierce storm cloud. but we try and try to stop it from raining. We want the comfort of hearing "You have the face of a goddess and an hourglass waist. A body of perfection, like the perfection of a raindrop." Advice from the peanut gallery: a run in my stocking; a broken mirror; a tear that can't be held back as it rolls down my face.

> Katie Weiss, 14 New City, New York

#### THIS IS YOUR PAGE

Would you like to see your name in the "Listening" column? Then send us your poems, prose, short stories. In return, we will send you a Listen T-shirt and a copy of Listen to share with your proud family.

-Editor



id you know that in the next 24 hours 1,439 teens will attempt suicide, 2,795 teenage girls will become pregnant, and 15,006 teens will use drugs for the first time? It's true. The culprit behind most of these cases is teenage drinking. Take the following true-or-false quiz to discover what else you don't know about the products promoted in those clever TV ads aired during your favorite sports events.

- **1. T** F Twelve ounces of beer, four ounces of wine, and one ounce of whiskey contain the same amount of alcohol.
- **2. T F** Females become addicted to alcohol sooner than males.
- **3. T** F There is less alcohol in "lite" beer than in regular beer.
- **4. T F** The law allows teens to drink alcohol in the company of their parents.
- **5. T** F If your biological parent is an alcoholic, chances are you won't become an alcoholic, as the gene is likely to skip your generation.
- **6. T F** Chugging alcohol with your friends can kill you.
- **7. T F** In an accident, the drunker you are, the less likely you will be seriously hurt.
- **8. T F** Seventy-five percent of all date-rape cases involve alcohol.
  - 9. T F Drinking alcohol won't affect your GPA.
- **10. T F** Teens can't become alcoholics because they haven't been drinking long enough.
- **11. T** F Drinking alcohol can affect one's future career success.
- **12. T F** Alcohol doesn't hurt anyone but the drinker.

#### Answers:

- 1. **True.** You can get just as drunk by drinking beer as you can by drinking "hard" liquor.
- True. Females are more sensitive to alcohol because of body weight. They become alcoholics sooner and die younger.

- 3. **False.** Lite beer has fewer calories, but both contain approximately the same amount of alcohol.
- 4. **False.** In most states the legal drinking age is 21, regardless of who's present.
- 5. **False.** People with a family history of alcoholism, if they drink, are two to five times more likely to become alcoholics than others.
- 6. **True.** "Alcohol poisoning" occurs when vital bodily functions slow down because of an overdose of alcohol.
- 7. **False.** Studies prove that alcohol-induced "relaxation" is a depression of your system that interferes with natural responses to injury and can kill you.
- 8. **True.** Seventy-five percent of males involved in date rape are reported to have been drinking.
- 9. **False.** Studies show that as the average number of drinks per week increases, a student's GPA decreases.
- 10. False. Anyone of any age can become an alcoholic.
- 11. **True.** Low grades reduce your options for college, employment, and future earning power.
- 12. **False.** Even if one never drinks and drives, alcohol consumption affects one's future family through birth defects and fetal alcohol syndrome.

#### **Did You Know?**

#### Alcohol consumption increases the odds of contracting:

- 1. AIDS
- 2. cancer
- 3. heart disease
- 4. liver disease
- 5. sexually transmitted diseases (STD)

#### and developing:

- 1. alcohol addiction
- 2. alcohol poisoning
- 3. depression
- 4. suicidal tendencies

[Note: If you suspect a teen of having a drinking problem, call: 1-800-840-5704.]



## Just Like My Friends

by Kathi Sprayberry

ndrew slumped in a chair, a sneer crossing his face every time he looked at the two-way mirror. Cops should be more creative about where they talked to you. Any idiot could figure out someone was watching you. Stretching his legs in front of him, he yawned, then belched loudly and grumbled about the lack of a Coke machine. Turning his head at a noise from the door, he grinned to see his old nemesis walking in.

"Lt. Franklin, how's tricks?" he asked. "Did I get you out of bed? Maybe disappoint the old lady?" He felt fear growing inside him; the lieutenant didn't even rise to the bait. What was bothering him, anyway? Could it be concern that his favorite person might have died tonight? Stretching, Andrew stood and headed for the door. "Well, if you don't need me for anything

else, I'm out of here. You can't hold me; I'm a juvenile." As Andrew's hand touched the door-knob, he was stopped by the coldness in Lt. Franklin's voice.

"Mr. Wilhoite, it is my duty to inform you that you are under arrest for vehicular manslaughter. You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law. You have the right to an attorney. If you cannot afford an attorney, one will be provided to you at no cost. Do you understand each of these rights I've read to you?" Watching him, Andrew could only nod dumbly. "Do you wish to give up the right to remain silent? Do you wish to give up the right to an attorney?"

Andrew couldn't believe his ears. Then he remembered, Hey, I'm a juvenile. I won't be 18 for 11 more months. They can't do anything to me. Laughing, he took the seat again.

"Hey, Lieutenant, better get out that copy of my birth certificate and look at it again. I'm not 18 yet. You can't arrest me. You can detain me only until you convene a family court hearing. Then you can hold me only if the judge says you can. Boy, the old brain cells sure are dying off, aren't they?" Andrew watched the anger on Lt. Franklin's face grow. Maybe he'd gone too far with that brain cell comment. Where are Mom and Dad? he wondered. They usually got him out of here in plenty of time. Then he couldn't believe the next words he heard.

"Mr. Wilhoite, I've been in contact with the family court judge. He doesn't want to deal with you. Family court has pretty much had it with your antics. The judge said that if you could make the decision to drink and drive, you could pay the consequences of your decision. Your case has been remanded to the superior court. What you've done is horrendous. You killed a man tonight. A man who had a young family to take care of. Do you have anything you want to add?"

Throwing his feet up on the table, Andrew sneered. "Yeah, I want to know if that man had

any money. He walked in front of me and wrecked my beloved car. I want my car replaced. Maybe a Bronco; that sounds real good, don't you think? I think I have whiplash." Andrew gingerly moved his head while rubbing his neck. "His family will pay for the rest of their lives for what he did to me." Andrew was stunned when Lt. Franklin knocked his feet off the table. But the lieutenant's next words stunned him even more.

"There were witnesses. You sped up when that man stepped into a legal crossing zone. You were running a red light. You didn't even have the courage to stop. You kept on driving until your broken-down car quit, and then you ran away. All these facts will be presented to the court when you have your bail hearing. Right now, stand up. I'm personally taking you to booking. Then I'll escort you to your bail hearing."

Andrew stood up. After the booking procedure was finished, he used his one phone call to find Uncle Joe. Good old Uncle Joe had helped out so many times before. But this time Uncle Joe was adamant. No way was he getting involved. He had his own reputation to think about. Andrew was on his own. Turning back to Lt. Franklin, he jokingly held out his hands and was surprised when he was handcuffed to a drunk. Shambling along the corridor, he tried to joke his way out of the terror that was threatening to consume him.

"Hey, you can't shackle me to him. I don't care what you say; I'm still a juvenile, and I know my rights." He was silenced when the drunk belched in his face. The smell was horrible, like something evil. How could anyone do something that nasty? Yet how many times had he done it to others, then laughed in their faces when they were offended? Was this where his life was heading, a conviction at 17 for manslaughter?

Standing in front of the judge, Andrew tried to appear innocent, but knew he was failing. It had to be the clothes. Maybe he should have found something clean this morning. What he

was wearing looked like something a wino would reject. He was astounded at the amount of bail the judge set. Who had \$50,000 lying around for bail? Where was he going to find that kind of money? Walking back to the jail, Andrew began shaking in fear. Where were his parents, his brother and sisters? Where was Uncle Joe? What about his friends? They were all alike. Why wouldn't they try to bail him out? Family always came first with his parents. He'd never even been booked before; Dad or Uncle Joe always came and bailed him out.

Then there were his friends. It had been only a joke that had gone wrong. The guy wasn't supposed to freeze in the crosswalk. He was playing points with his friends. The closer you got to a pedestrian, the more points you got. Hearing the hollow clanking of the cell door closing made a shiver crawl up his spine. Thinking about the splat the man had made when the car had hit him caused him to begin shivering and sweating at the same time.

As he lay on the hard, cold metal bunk

Andrew began realizing how his actions had led to this moment. There was no one who would be willing to risk anything for him. Hadn't he said many times that he'd run before he'd let the police lock him up? A \$50,000 bail meant that someone would have to hock his or her house to get him out. How many people would be willing to lose that much money for him? He was a bum, and he hadn't even graduated from high school.

Andrew lay lost in his thoughts for a long time. He didn't even know what time it was, as his watch was with his personal belongings in a file somewhere.

Then he heard someone call his name. Standing up and walking to the bars separating him and freedom, he saw the jailer walking toward him. "You've been bailed out. But there are conditions. Read this, and if you agree, sign it. Then I'll let you out."

Andrew read the paper in front of him. Halfway through it, he smiled and waved to the jailer for his pen. It was only Mom and Dad. They'd let him do anything he wanted to; they were such pushovers. Good old Mom and Dad; they hadn't failed him. When the jailer didn't immediately hand over the pen, Andrew looked up. The man was standing there with a dumb look on his face. "Your parents said that if you didn't read and believe the entire document, you were staying here. Read it."

Andrew read on. Wait a minute, a curfew. Then there was the bit about not hanging around his friends. And *church*. No way. When was he going to catch up on his sleep? Then he thought about it. Mom and Dad knew him, and they did care. If they hadn't cared, they wouldn't have come down. More important, they would never have put up their house as bail for him. Reluctantly reading the entire document, Andrew nodded. They were serious. But

maybe it was time he quit taking them for granted. Nodding to the jailer, Andrew took the pen and signed his name at the bottom.

As he was led to the booking area, he began to realize that this would be his life unless he changed right here and now. Taking his belongings from the envelope, he waited for the electronic door to open and then walked toward his parents. Handing them the document, he looked at his dad for the first

time in a long time. When did Dad's hair turn gray? he wondered. The look on his dad's face was devastation. What had he done to his parents? They were two old people, bent and walking with difficulty. Andrew walked over to them and hugged his mother. Turning to his father, he asked quietly, "Where do we go from here?" ?



# SECONDHAND "SAUGE"

by David Walker

t wasn't supposed to be that way. It's not how she wanted it. In fact, it couldn't have been worse . . .

If only they hadn't been drinking. She saw what alcohol did to him. How even his smile changed. Took on a little twist and slant that made it lose the pleasant, happy-golucky grin and became something more sinister.

But the problem wasn't his drinking. She was always able to deal with him, even when he drank way too much and only she could control him. She didn't like it when that happened, when she'd have to baby him ("I'm your girlfriend, John," she said to him one morning, "not your mother"). However, she was used to it and had decided that his other good qualities outweighed the negatives.

No, the problem wasn't his drinking . . . it was hers. She almost never drank. She didn't like the taste. She didn't like the smell. And she didn't like being drunk. But that night everyone was celebrating their high school graduation, and so she celebrated by drinking too. One beer, then another, then another. Things got rowdy, loud. Wanting to go to a quiet place to talk, they went upstairs. She had set strong boundaries a long time before, and John had always respected them. Until that night. She had let him go further than before, but that was only because she had been drinking. Otherwise things would never have gotten as far as they did.

It wasn't until a few weeks later that she knew. Pregnant, and only 17.

Of course, you'd have to

be living in a cave somewhere off the coast of Madagascar not to know the basic health dangers of drinking alcohol. Everyone knows that alcohol works like a poison in the body. We know that it can lead to cirrhosis of the liver and to hepatitis. We know that it contributes to a majority of cases of pancreatitis. We know that binge drinking, in which a vast amount of alcohol is consumed, can lead to alcohol poisoning. We know that alcoholics can ruin their lives with the sauce.

And yet, perhaps the biggest problem with drinking isn't always what it does directly to the body. Instead, some of alcohol's worst consequences are those that are indirect. Kind of like second-hand cigarette smoke. Only now it's second-hand sauce.

Though hard and fast numbers are hard to come by, there's no question that people under the influence of alcohol engage in sexual activity that they would otherwise (that is, if they weren't drinking) not have engaged in. And in today's jungle with HIV and a host of other sexually transmitted diseases that can be hazardous to your health, to say the least. According to one study, a whopping 70 percent of college students admitted engaging in sexual activity that they would have avoided if not for the alcohol they had consumed. At least 90 percent of campus rapes occur when either assailant or victim or both has been drinking. At least one in five students admits abandoning safe sex practices when they're drunk (even if they use them when sober). And 60 percent of college women infected with some sort of sexually transmitted disease report that they were under the influence of alcohol at the time they had sexual relations with the infected person. And then there are the thousands of unwanted pregnancies that would never have happened were it not for alcohol.

This is only the start of problems related to alcohol use. More than 15,000 people are killed each year in alcohol-related car accidents. That's more than 1,000 a month. It adds up to about one person being killed by a drunk driver every half hour. And that's only those who are killed. When you talk about those

who are severely injured or disfigured by alcohol-impaired drunks behind the wheel, the number skyrockets to 297,000 per year. If 15,000 a year equals one nearly every half hour, how many minutes pass before someone is maimed, burned, and/or crippled by someone who had been drinking and driving?

According to the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependency, "alcohol is typically found in the offender, victim, or both in about half of all homicides and serious assaults, as well as in a high percentage of sex-related crimes, robberies, and incidents of domestic violence." (See http://www.ncadd.org.)

Again, these are the secondhand effects of alcohol. We're not talking about the millions of Americans who every year are treated for alcoholism and alcohol-related health problems directly related to their drinking.

We're talking instead about secondhand sauce and what it does to the thousands of babies born each year (estimated numbers range from 4,000 to 12,000) with what is known as fetal alcohol syndrome, in which infants—because of the drinking of their mothers while they are pregnant—have physical and mental disabilities that can hinder them for the rest of their lives.

We're talking about the 50 percent or more boating accidents in which alcohol is involved.

We're talking about the 43 percent of all adults in the

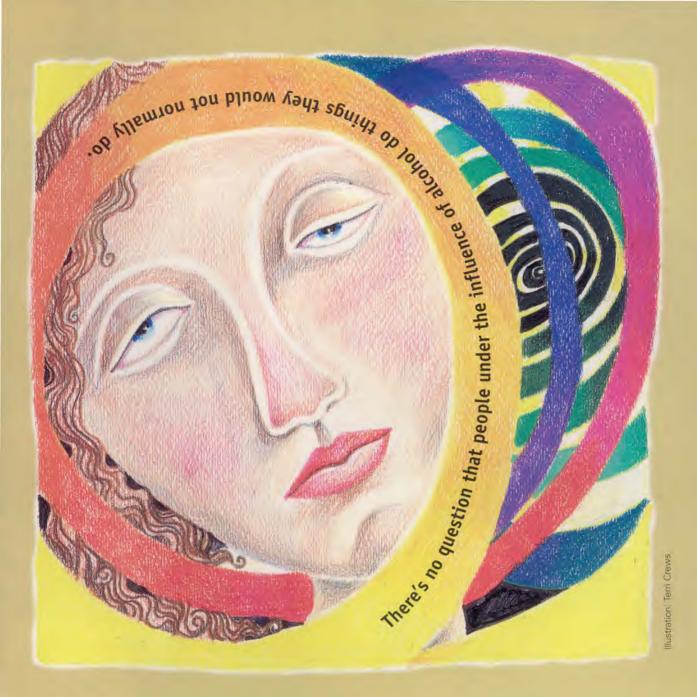
United States who either grew up with an alcoholic parent or other family member or who married an alcoholic. We're talking about alcoholics who are 16 times more likely to die in falling accidents or are 10 times more likely to be burned to death in fires.

They are only secondhand effects now, not the more direct ones, such as being one of the several million Americans (best estimates are about 8.1 million) who are alcoholics, and who in many cases lose their jobs or families or friends because of their drinking.

And the list goes on. Suicide rates are higher among drinkers. Divorce rates are higher, and drowning and industrial and other on-thejob accident rates are higher among those who drink, even if they aren't full-fledged alcoholics. In other words, while everyone knows that being an alcoholic is full of risks, what they don't know is that just "mere social drinking," mere "weekend and party drinking," comes with plenty of risks as well.

Two thirds of the U.S. population drink, a figure that is disturbing enough, especially when one considers all the negative effects of alcohol. But even more frightening is that 10 percent of those who do drink account for half of all alcohol consumption. Thus while two thirds will have to deal with some problem or another associated with drinking, it's scary to think about what that 10 percent face.

But whatever category any-



one is in, whether in the general two thirds or in the specific 10 percent, the risks are always there. You don't have to be an alcoholic, or even what is considered a "problem drinker," to have drinking problems, either directly or indirectly. If you drink, in any amount, you are increasing the odds, often in direct proportion to the

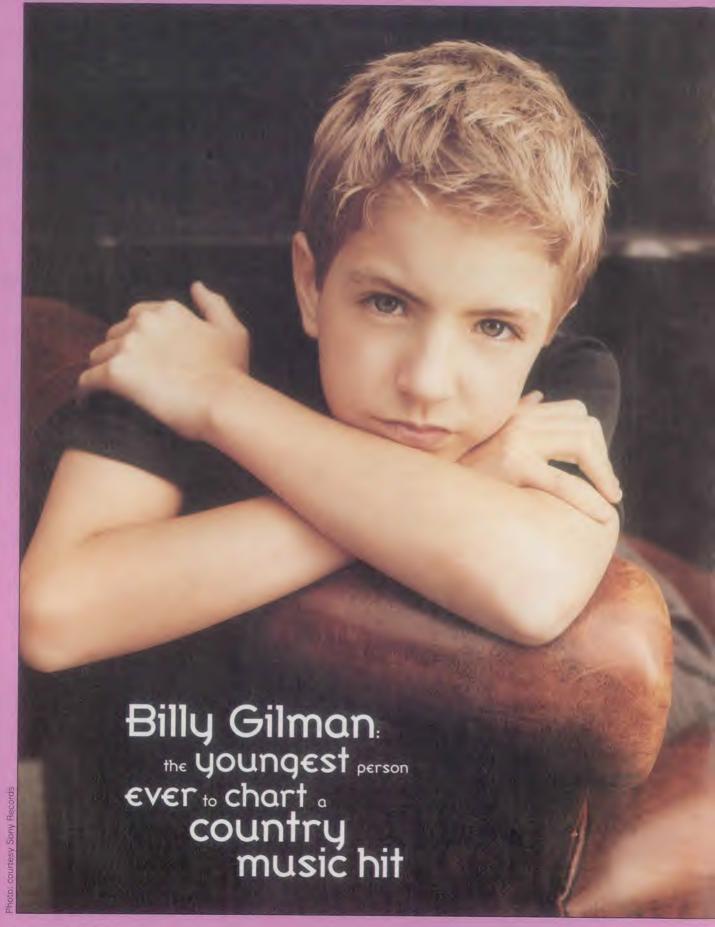
amount you drink, of facing some sort of difficulties that can make your life harder than it already is.

Such as Leonora. She certainly wasn't an alcoholic—hardly. And no one could even begin to call her a "problem drinker." She wasn't even close.

And yet she now has a very big problem related to drinking.

Like one of those people who were killed by a drunk driver. Or like those maimed by a drunk driver. Or like someone who now has a sexually transmitted disease . . .

If you thought secondhand smoke was bad, you've just got a glimpse (a glimpse, mind you) of the potential dangers of secondhand sauce.



# Gilman: Country's New Pint-sized Dynamo

y Kimberly Cheney

t only four feet seven inches, 12-yearold Billy Gilman packed a powerful punch with a singing voice so strong, articulate, and crystal clear that it reminded one of a finely cut diamond.

Billy burst onto the country music scene with the release of his debut single, "One Voice." The song soon topped the charts, and his album of the same title turned gold.

Not since LeAnn Rimes made her entrance into country music at age 13 has a child performer caused such a stir. When "One Voice" landed on the billboard charts, Billy replaced Brenda Lee to become the youngest person ever to chart a country hit, and he virtually made country music history.

"One Voice" is a sentimental ballad that seems to cry out for the American dream in its lyrics: "a house, a yard, a neighborhood where you could ride your new bike to school," and parents "who still believe the golden rule."

Spring 2000 was the highlight of Billy's life. Not only did he turn 12 in May of that year, but he toured the U.S., visiting such places as Buffalo, Baltimore, and Dallas. He also made television appearances on *The Donnie and Marie Show* and *The Rosie O'Donnell Show*, and performed at the Grand Ole Opry. But the biggest highlight of all for Billy was the release of his first album.

How does he feel about all the attention he's been getting? "It's just awesome," he says. "And being on *Rosie O'Donnell* was great. She is a warm person. She'll do anything to make you feel comfortable. She called me 'cutie patootie' a lot!"

But what really changed Billy's life, bringing his name to the attention of everyone, was his performance at the Academy of Country Music Awards. Even though Billy admits that he was nervous ("I was sweating bullets," he says), the audience was wowed and gave him a standing ovation. And his life hasn't been the

It seems that even Dolly Parton was impressed. After his performance she came up to him and said something he's never forgotten. "Billy," she said, "hope you know what you're doing, 'cause this is what you're going to be doing for the rest of your life."

Billy's response? "Yippee!"
And the way things look
now, he isn't going to slow
down anytime soon. A few
things that kept him busy
included having his Christmas
album released in October
2000, doing an appearance on
Seventh Heaven, and making a
movie appearance. But that's not
enough for Billy. He'd like to try
his hand at Broadway.

"I've been told that my voice is a 'fit' for Broadway," he continues. "So if I have some time off a couple of years down the road, they would like me to try a play—learn lines and all. I won't disagree with that!"

Now at 13 Billy possesses enough grown-up positive energy and maturity to rival that of any successful adult. For example, stepping out on stage in front of thousands









What really changed Billy's life was his performance at the Academy of Country Music Awards.

and thousands of people takes confidence and guts for some-

one of any age.

William Gilman was born in Westerly, Rhode Island. He has a younger brother (now 8). When Billy was 3 he listened to country songs by Tammy Wynette, George Jones-all the classics that his grandparents played. His favorite song was Pam Tillis's "Queen of Denial," which he sang constantly. And Billy was hooked. When he was 5 his parents bought him a karaoke machine, which he quickly mastered, and he began putting on performances for the neighborhood.

"At show-and-tell in school, the other kids would do science

projects. I'd sing."

When he was 8 his mother asked, "What are we going to do? He's phenomenal." At that point his mother decided to find a voice teacher to give him lessons to enhance his talent. She contacted vocal coach Angel Bacari, who helped Billy fine-tune his singing skills and presentation.

"I've worked with my vocal coach to get my voice to where it is right now," says Billy, who has a natural stage presence and didn't need much coaching in the charisma department.

Angel became his comanager and through various sources made the necessary contacts, and Billy was soon opening shows of such noted performers as Jo Dee Messina. A tape of his performance was sent to Ray Benson, from the country group Asleep at the Wheel, and they produced Billy's demo tape.

Benson made contact with Scott Simon, now Billy's manager, who flew to Rhode Island along with a Sony music executive to watch Billy open for the country group Alabama.

Simon was impressed with Billy's stage presence and was awestruck at Billy's talent. People of all ages loved the new young singer from Rhode Island. From then on Billy's career took off. His parents have been a bit surprised with all the attention he is getting, but they are pleased.

Billy says, "My parents help me a lot. They have given me the confidence I need. My parents aren't pushing me; I'm the pushy one. I'm like 'Come on, I want to do this!' And they were 'No, no.' They're great." Obviously Billy's parents even-

tually caved in.

Billy realizes his career would be nowhere without their support and that of his extended family of grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins, and his managers.

This encouragement and emotional support has enabled him to make a lifelong commitment to stay as far away from drugs and other negative influences as possible. Billy says, "It's all about your surroundings and how you live. If you're depressed all the time, you'll be more tempted to say, 'Oh, I'm going to try them.' But if you're smart, you won't try drugs. I can't believe that some people do start, because they're so hard to fight. It's basically up to the parents to provide love and support."

Someone to talk to, such as

family, friends, and counselors. is Billy's recommendation for staying away from any substance abuse. Also, going after your dreams and goals keeps you motivated in a positive way.

"Singing on stage is overwhelming, and hearing the response from the crowd really gets your adrenaline going," Billy says. He agrees that the best kind of rush comes from doing something you love.

"If you want to be a singer, don't give up. It's a really tough business. If it's a passion for you and your parents feel good about it and don't push too much, you'll make it."

Billy, who considers himself just a normal kid who loves to sing, also loves bowling. Rollerblading, and fishing. Other favorites include ice cream, reading, pizza, baseball, and, of course, music.

Highlights of the year for Billy included visiting Universal Studios and riding down the California coastline in his rented tour bus.

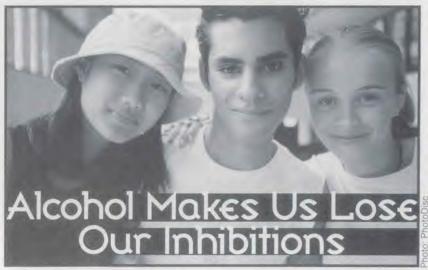
When Billy was asked what he liked best about his newfound career, he responded, "Being on stage. All I really want to do is sing and make the audience happy.'

When asked what the key to his self-confidence was, Billy responded with lyrics from the song he has become so famous

for, "One Voice."

"Finding out what you want to do the rest of your life is really important. 'One dream can change the world' is a little saying of mine, so just keep following your dream, 'cause no dream is too extreme." "





I'm 16 years old and have felt shy, self-conscious, and depressed most of my life. But when I drink alcohol I don't feel this way anymore. I feel more confident and social. Can you tell me why this happens? Christie

Alcohol is a central nervous system depressant. This means that it numbs the body and mind and in the process, makes us lose our inhibitions. so we feel less self-conscious. But this is only temporary. The effect wears off once the alcohol has left the body, and we become our old selves again. It is important to realize that alcohol is a very powerful drug. Finding out the underlying reasons you feel shy, selfconscious, and depressed is very important. Seek out a counselor who specializes in helping young people deal with these problems. They can help you develop confidence in yourself and your abilities rather than turning to a substance such as alcohol to help you feel better about yourself.

I have a friend who I recently discovered sells his mother's prescription painkillers to earn spending money. What can I do to stop him? Lucas

You are correct in believing this behavior is wrong. Not just because it's his mother's pills, but also because whoever he is peddling them to could become sick or even overdose as a result of taking them. It is also illegal to sell prescription pills on the street. Only pharmacists and doctors are authorized to prescribe and safely monitor dosages of medications to people who rely on them for illnesses, injuries, or other legitimate purposes. Since you are aware of this, it is important to inform an adult (a parent, teacher, or principal) and allow them to handle the situation. Your honesty and action may save someone's life.

I am a 17-year-old high school senior who recently had memory loss the next day after drinking alcohol. It was very scary. Why did this happen? Karenna

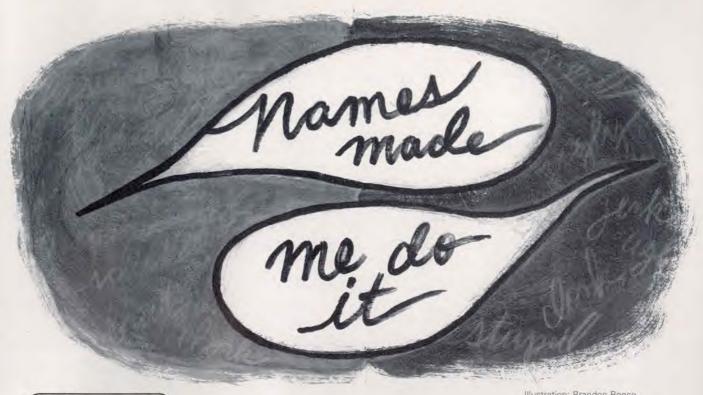
The memory loss you described is referred to as a "blackout." Blackout is induced by consuming large amounts of alcohol and/or other drugs. Being in a blackout can be very scary, because it does not mean you are unconscious. In a blackout you can walk, talk, and even drive, but your mind does not "record" the memory. Blackouts are serious. It is often one of the signs of the early stages of alcoholism. It is possible to hurt yourself and others, commit crimes, and have sexual encounters with absolutely no memory of it. I would strongly encourage you to turn down the alcohol. There are many other ways to have fun without consuming alcohol or other drugs. Participate in such activities as bowling, skating, swimming, tennis, skiing, or other things. They're a much healthier and safer option.

o ahead, ask Gary his advice on some of those big questions.
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



by Clare Adrian

Illustration: Brandon Reese

n a recent 60 Minutes, in a segment entitled "Secret Service Studies Shootings," reporter Scott Pelley interviewed several young convicts. From the mouths of murderers came the reasons for their crimes. Reporter Pelley summarized them: "No one listens, no one cares." Luke Woodham, killer of three, broke down into tears as he revealed the pain he experienced being the object of repeated name-calling.

Many of us can recall the hurtful feelings attached to belittling, ridiculing names being directed at us.

Ouch! Every time you call me a name It feels like a hit.

And every name adds pressure to the same spot Bit by bit.

So that now it's hard to think a pleasant thought

About myself. In this web of gloom I'm caught Like there's this big ol' paddle that hits my head Every time I stand up. I live in dread Of hearing it smack

Alongside my back. Name-calling Leaves a sting

I can't forget without some way of knowing Those names are really merely going Somewhere else and not stopping at me. Can't soft words describe this person you see?

Name-calling is so common that we feel if we don't join in, we may risk being called names that put us with the very people we're making fun of. Names such as nerd, softy, goody-goody.

The effects of name-calling can be far-reaching. To avoid the discomfort, we learn from name-callers not to do what perhaps comes naturally to us. We take on behaviors that are safe from name-calling. But wait a minute. As teens aren't we just beginning to find out what behaviors fit our identities? Changing to please others could get very confusing!

Why do we call one another names? Someone actually suggested to me that namecalling is supposed to harden us, to prepare us for the tough realities of the world. Seems to me it assures that the world will continue to be a tough place. Often when we are children adults may call us names to remind us of the message they really mean: I'm the authority here; I know more than you do; I'm frustrated that you did the same thing again, that you made the same mistake again; and on and on. It's easier to punish with a belittling name.

I grew up the youngest of seven children and the only girl. Each brother had his way of reminding me, through name-calling, of some of our parents' philosophy of life and of the society around us. Their labels of "crybaby," "brat," or "just a girl" were meant to tell me that we live in a male-dominanted society, and that I certainly lived in a male-dominanted household! I was not equipped with the emotional strength that they had learned to use to block their feelings. Males learn early that to show hurt by crying is girlish, an inferior quality.

Why did those names hurt me? Usually a chain reaction of events would occur to get me to cry. Since I was very young and my limited vocabulary didn't get me what I wanted, I'd become frustrated. This would please my brother. He had succeeded in setting the stage for name-calling. He would tell me what society thought of me: I was a spoiled brat. It's quick, to the point, and had an immediate effect for the name-caller. It was much more fun than giving in to little sis. The name-calling triggered a reaction that sent a message to my brain, releasing chemicals that traveled to my emotion center, and I cried. This elicited name number two: crybaby.

Any time a sense of power can be achieved it feels good, so the name-caller picks on someone perceived as weak. It's too much bother to learn the internal strengths of people. It's too risky to spend that much time with a person while the rest of the group looks on. It's quicker and easier and to the point to look only at someone on the outside and then join with others on a label

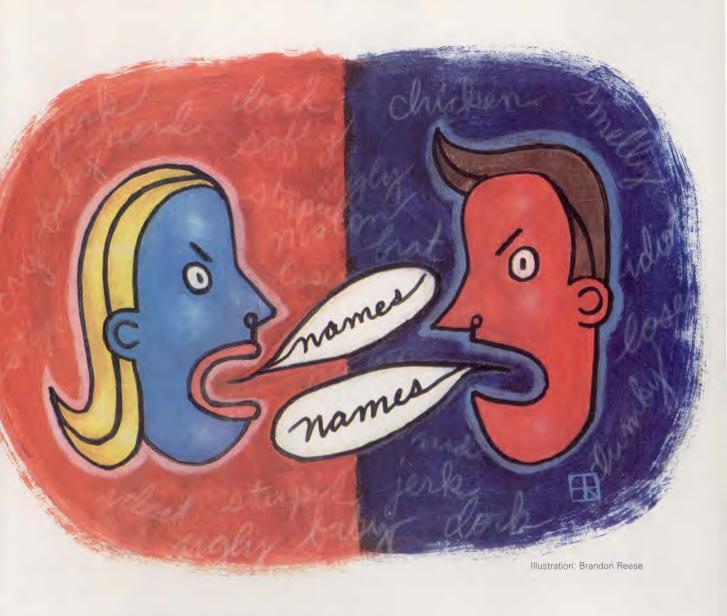
or two to describe that person. Then the name-callers can band together to say "Aren't we cool? We have the power. We are safe. We agree on something easy to say." The group members support each other on the names. It's easier than breaking away from the pattern and saying, "Now wait a minute. How do I know this is true about this person? Let's get to know them on the inside." Is that too much bother?

In another sense name-calling is a common method to define who we are not. Conversely, dressing, eating, doing whatever we do as others do it helps define who we are. But it is not necessarily a choice. It's safe. It's a way to avoid being the subject of name-calling. Many times people who cannot afford name-brand clothes don't have the opportunity to join with others in the safety net of look-alike clothes.

When my daughter was very young we lived a great distance away from my brothers. She attended a private school and was not familiar with name-calling. It just wasn't done there. It was a shock to her when she became an out-sider to the already formed cliques in the public middle school. Later when we visited my brothers she was driven to tears by their chiding. I was chastised by one brother for not preparing her for the world by a steady dose of ridicule. He believed it was a necessary part of growing up, like learning to tie shoes.

Though names can hurt and haunt us, the majority of us grow up OK and don't become psychopathic murderers. But for those who hear only labels for what others are afraid to be themselves, what a gift it would be to hear words that described a person accurately: "You're so sensitive, creative, musical."

It is not easy to be confronted by name-callers, but being prepared with a comeback is helpful. A response I've heard recently is a "yo' momma . . ." derision, a phrase that is meant to hurt the name-caller right back and is very effective in its purpose. But does it break the cycle? Perhaps those of us who understand that name-calling is hurtful can educate the name-



callers. We can help them understand what they mean with a "you-mean statement": "You don't like my clothes." "You don't like what I just did." Another possible comeback if you don't want to turn and walk away for the umpteenth time is an "I-feel statement": "That hurts." "I feel left out."

Putting the two together—"I understand you don't like my clothes, but it hurts when you call me that name"—educates the name-caller that you are a real person. And with time the names can roll off your back like drops of water off a rhinoceros.

To add a bit of humor to the mix would

really throw the name-caller off guard. I realize these suggestions are easier said than done. They take practice.

Both sides of the coin are challenging: being the object of name-calling and refusing to join in with name-callers. But if we each make an attempt to change the cycle, we will be heroes inside a world that glorifies cowardice with name-brand generalities.

I would like to hear from anyone who has been hurt by names. I would also like to hear from the experts as to what it feels like to reach the teen years without injurious name-calling. E-mail me at clarity@trib.net.

# Over the tedae

production): terrorists and/or other bad guys holding a group of people or even one person (usually a beautiful woman) hostage when, out of the darkness of night, some hero comes scaling down the side of a building, nothing but a rope between him and eternity. He bursts into the room, and though there are 20 bad guys, all armed to the teeth with automatic weapons, none seem able to shoot straight, and the hero saves the day.

by Harry Myers



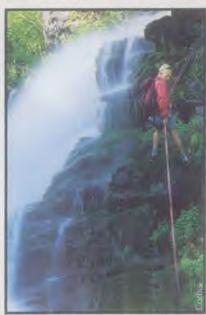
All the Hollywood antics aside, it is pretty cool the way these heroes drop down the side of buildings, towers, mountains, whatever. The fascinating thing about these antics is that it's not that hard. People do it all the time. And even without all the bad guys and guns, it can be one thrilling experience.

in the adage that says how it has to come down. And that's what rappelling is all about, coming down. Depending upon where you are, and how you got there, you can come down in various ways: walk, fly, fall, ski, sled, bike, roll, whatever. Or you can rappel.

First of all, you ask, what is rappelling? Most

#### The sport of rappelling







#### guarantees high excitement.

It even has a name, a fancy-sounding foreign name. It's called "rappelling" (French for "to recall") and it's something that most people—with a few basic physical requirements, and the proper training and equipment—can do. Talk about a fun way to spend an afternoon. It's guaranteed: after your first rappel down the side of a cliff, you might find some of your video games extremely boring.

There are few activities out there that take the concentration, stamina, and confidence that rappelling requires: few, though, can yield the fun, excitement, and sense of accomplishment.

There's an old saying: what goes up must come down. Fair enough. But there's nothing

people have an idea that it's basically using a rope to come down the side of a mountain or building or tower. And that's basically what it is, using a rope to come down the side of a mountain or building or tower. So far, so good. (See? We said that there's nothing to this.)

Second, do you have to be some fitness freak to be able to do it? Not really. Remember, you are coming down, as opposed to going up. Gravity is working with you, not against you. Sure, you need to be basically in good health; you need to have what one Web site calls a "smidgen of strength and a little bit of coordination." But besides that (and a sense of adventure and a willingness to take some risk,

for rappelling can be dangerous), you should be able to handle it. In fact, one company that teaches rappelling and takes people on excursions claims this: "Our youngest rappeller was 5 years old and weighed 32 pounds. Our oldest was a 74-year-old gentleman. And the heaviest was a person who weighed 320 pounds." If you think you can match someone 5 years old, someone 74 years old, and someone 320 pounds, then you should be just fine.

Rappelling is basically the art and science of moving from a higher to a lower area in a uniquely fun and thrilling way. The equipment is basic and generally not outrageously expensive, but it is highly recommended that if you buy your own stuff, you're not chintzy on quality. If you use cheap shampoo, the worst that could happen is you get dandruff; if you use a cheap or improper rope, you could split your head open and die. Shell out a few extra bucks now (it could be cheaper than a funeral).

The key to the sport of rappelling, as in most other sports, is safety. However much fun, though, it's not worth getting hurt over. As someone once said: "There are old rappellers and bold rappellers, but no old bold rappellers." The point is well made. Get proper training, use proper equipment, follow the rules, and—unless you happen to get hit by lightning, or a satellite falls out of the sky on

your head-you will be just fine.

The gist of rappelling is this (though there are different rappelling techniques): you get to the top of something high, preferably (especially for beginners) a cliff. You hook the rope up to something secure, what they call an "anchor." Something that you know will hold a lot of weight (shrubs are not recommended; an SUV or other similar entity is). Next is what they call the "belay," a second person who is also secured to the anchor, who kind of acts as a backup, even funneling you an extra rope. The belay person watches what you are doing and can, if need be, stop or slow your descent. Next you are put into a special harness that holds the ropes. After you have on your helmet, gloves, and all the equipment, after you have checked and rechecked knots, clips, hooks, and everything, you are ready to, well, step off into space

and basically walk down the face of the cliff.

As almost any experienced rappeller will tell you, it's scary, especially the first time (but that's half the fun). That first step is the hardest, but once over the hill, so to speak, you're in for the time of your life. If you can talk to someone who has done it, they'll tell you—it's an incredible rush. And even though the face of the cliff you might be going down for the first time is only 30 to 70 feet (the longer ones, those of 300 feet or so, are recommended for more experienced rappellers), you'll feel as if it's Mount Everest or something. It's an incredible sensation, one that more than likely you'll want to come back to again and again.

Warning: rappelling can be addictive. And the more you do it, the more fun it becomes, because your confidence increases as you get

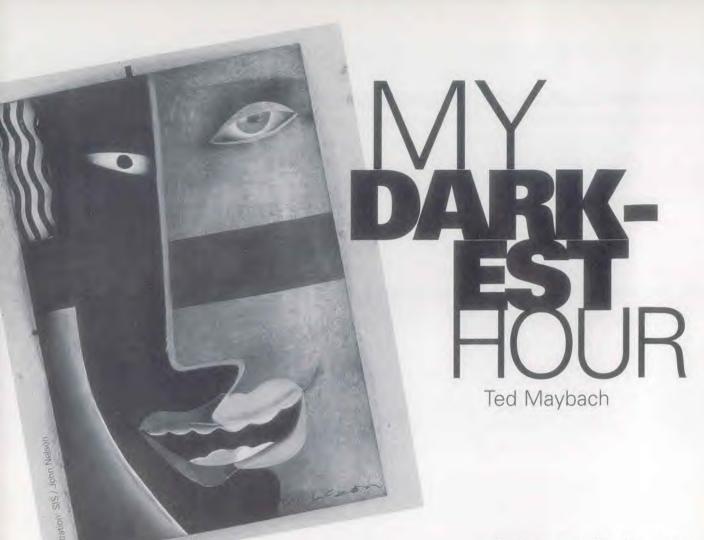
better and better.

Rappelling, however, isn't something that you should learn on your own. Don't go out and buy a book or get some information on a Web site, and then try it yourself. You are looking for big trouble. However easy it may sound, it is easy only after you have had the proper training. And it's certainly not a sport for anyone high on drugs or alcohol. If you want to be doing those things, you might have a hard enough time getting down the stairs, much less the side of a 70-foot cliff.

Instead, for those who are serious about trying this exciting outdoor activity, seek out a club or company that teaches rappelling. There are many organizations, particularly those that promote outdoor adventures, who can train you and even take you on rappelling excursions. The Boy Scouts of America even teach it.

And it's not that expensive, either.

What a great thing for a bunch of teens to get together and spend the time learning how to rappel. Though some might view rappelling as nothing but a way to get down a mountain, those who have done it know that it's a sport that requires skill and stamina, which is why when people do it they have a great sense of accomplishment. Maybe not as much as dropping down the side of a building at night and rescuing people from 20 armed terrorists, but it's definitely cool all the same.



lay in bed all night. Too drained and tired to move and too stoned on booze and pot and psychedelic mushrooms to sleep. My heart painfully beating in my chest; pounding, skipping beats, out of rhythm. I was only 20 years old. Was this a heart attack? Was one of my heart valves going to tear? Listening to my heart and waiting for the frighteningly painful off-rhythm contractions. I waited for sleep.

I could not sleep. I did not know what permanent damage the drugs and alcohol were doing to my brain, my heart, my nervous system. I could not read, because I could not focus my eyes or concentrate. I could not go for a walk, because I could not get out of bed. I could not even dress myself. I lay in bed helpless. Waiting for the "buzz" to go away. Waiting. Waiting to be sane again. This was the great contradiction in my life. When I was sober, I wanted to be high. When I was high, I wanted to be sober.

I started drinking when I was 15. My parents drank. At parties all my relatives drank. Movies and television show actors drinking. My friends and I, we drank for amusement. We

drank so we could tell stories at school. We drank because we thought it made us seem older. We drank at parties to overcome our shyness with girls. We drank because we thought there was nothing else to do. When I drank, I wanted to be the one who drank the most beer or shots. I wanted to be the drunkest, the stupidest, and the rowdiest.

Now I lay in bed waiting for the light of morning to show around the curtains of my window. The effects of the drugs had worn off only slightly. Did I need a shower? Was I hungry? Thirsty? What time was it? Did I need to urinate? Would I have a heart attack right now? Was I supposed to be somewhere today? When was the last time I brushed my teeth? Should I put on some clothes? What if one of my roommates sees me, talks to me, asks me something? I didn't know. I didn't know. I didn't know! I asked myself these questions and others over and over, over and over. Never getting answers or never remembering the answers.

Another hour passed before I was able to force myself to sit up. I did not feel it, but I was dehydrated and hungry. I had not eaten any food or had any water to drink for more than 18 hours. I was tired, because I had not really slept for a few days. But my body told me nothing. I felt nothing. The drugs in my system were confusing my body. I didn't know when to eat or drink water or sleep.

I finally walked to the bathroom, confused and weak. All
the same questions running in
a loop inside my head. What if
one of my roommates saw me?
I couldn't even speak. How did
I open the door to the bathroom? I couldn't even get
dressed.

Inside the bathroom I stopped in front of a mirror. The mirror reflected my body from the knees up. In high school I was athletic and healthy. I was energetic and happy. In my mind I saw that I was still this person: the high school athlete who had college scholarship potential. The bright student who elected to take all the highest level science classes. The kid who seemed mature for his age.

Now only a couple years later I stared in disbelief at my reflection. I saw my real reflection, not the one I had created in my mind. Not the one I had clung to. My face and cheeks looked gaunt, bloodless, and were covered with pimples. My eyes were sallow and the skin around them darkened. My hair was thin and scraggly. My neck looked long and thin. My shoulder bones protruded. The bones of my ribs and hips showed through the skin. The muscles in my legs were basically gone.

Gone. Gone was the once healthy athletic body. Gone was the bright student who could get A's in high school or college. Gone were the days I thought I could drink and smoke and party without consequence. Gone, all gone.

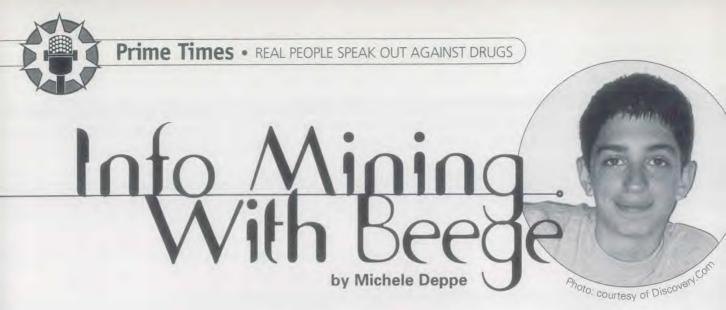
Was this new reflection the person I wanted to be? Did I want to have a heart attack? Did I want to become a lifelong drug addict? Did I want mornings with terrible headaches and depression? Who was going to make the decisions in my life? A booze bottle? My friends? A drug dealer? No, no, no! I returned to my bedroom. I picked up the clothes I had worn the night before. They were dirty, and they smelled. I looked around the room. It was a mess. The bedsheets had not been washed for months. Was this the person I really wanted to be?

While I was growing up people always said I had a lot of energy. I smiled all the time. I could not walk straight home from school. I had to run across a field or jump over a pile of snow or do somersaults in the grass or wrestle with one of my sisters. I loved to read books. I loved to fix bicycles. I loved to play sports. Now, as a young man, I still had a lot of energy. But as a young man I was using that energy toward self-destruction. Using the energy to drink and smoke and stay up all night. Using the energy to overcome hangovers.

So that morning I made a decision for myself. I determined that I was going to go back to being a kid. I was going to have fun. I was going to use my energy in a positive way instead of a self-destructive way. I started reading books again. A cousin of mine gave me an old mountain bike. I repaired it and started riding. I took the Greyhound bus to the mountains and went backpacking. I studied Spanish and started speaking Spanish with my neighbors in Chicago. I ate good food. Healthy food. Food that made me feel good. I found a good job that I liked. Everything positive.

If you want to avoid my darkest hour, here are some suggestions: find some friends who will go swimming at the lake with you instead of sitting in a smoky bar drinking. Learn to program computers. Learn how to play hockey instead of experimenting with drugs or sitting in a dark room drinking until you can't speak. Practice one of the martial arts. Go to the YMCA every day and play basketball. Eat some pizza. Go mountain biking or rappelling.

Practice living.



amuel Johnson, an English writer, critic, and poet who lived in the 1700s, once said, "Knowledge is of two kinds: we know a subject ourselves, or we know where we can find information upon it." The same holds true today. We don't have to know everything, but it is helpful to know where to look.

Fourteen-year-old B.J. Pinchbeck (nick-named "Beege" by family and friends) offers one of the best places on the Web to research any subject that you need to investigate. And he can even help you score some high marks at school. B.J. maintains a Web site that is full of resources and leads you to links that can help you turn your computer into an information gold mine. "Basically," says B.J., "if you can't find it here, then you just can't find it."

B.J.'s claims are not overrated. His site is hosted by the Discovery Channel, and provides organized links to 695 educational sites on the Internet. The links delve into almost every area of interest: social studies, math, history, art, computer science, English and foreign languages, music, reference, and health. B.J. even has a special section called Teacher's Corner to help educators find cutting-edge resources. Inserted throughout the site are B.J.'s comments about each link, with glowing recommendations for the best sites. Sometimes B.J.'s Web site gets as many as 10,000 visitors a day, and he receives e-mail from all over the world. He hopes to set up a

live chat section in the future that would allow him to answer everyone's questions at once.

Despite his young age, B.J. has already been managing his information enterprise on the Web for almost five years. It all started with his obsession for surfing the Internet. At first it was sort of an accident, B.J. explains. "My dad and I were surfing the Internet and found a site that had a Web editor that we could download and try for 30 days. We downloaded the program and found out that it was not very difficult to make a Web page."

B.J. came up with the idea that it would be great to have all the information that he needed for school and his other interests located in one easy-to-access place that other people could use too. He bounced the idea off his dad, who thought it was a great concept. The Pinchbecks created an all-in-one home page called "B.J. Pinchbeck's Homework Helper."

Thousands of kids have welcomed B.J.'s help with their homework. The site has been successful beyond B.J.'s wildest dreams, and he is stashing away into his college fund the small payments that he receives from the advertisers on the page. The popular Homework Helper site has received almost 100 awards and has made B.J. a bit of a celebrity. He has been a guest on *Good Morning, America* and *Oprah Winfrey*, and has been featured in such magazines and newspapers as *People, USA Today, Newsweek, Family* 

PC Magazine, the Boston Globe, and the New York Times.

B.J. has done a little traveling outside of his home state of Pennsylvania for the Discovery Channel. He went to Chicago to do a promotional shoot with the "Internet Coach" who appears on the network, and he participated in a large conference for teachers in Orlando, Florida.

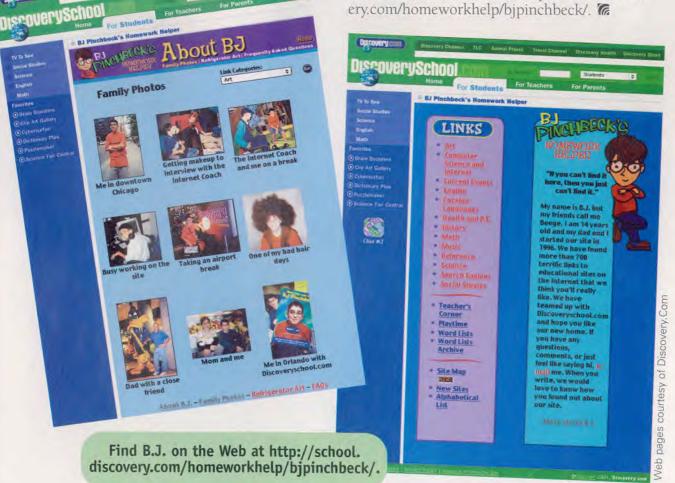
B.J. looks forward to a career in business, and it isn't hard to imagine him running his own corporation someday. He has competed in the national Academic Games, and keeps up a good grade point average. He also loves Rollerblading and plays a mean game of paintball and laser tag.

Eager to share what he has learned, B.J. has some stellar advice for kids who are interested in setting up their own home page, even if your goal is not to provide homework aids for the masses

For research, he confides that his favorite search engines are Metacrawler, Savvy Search, and DogPile (see links for all on B.J.'s page under Search Engines). B.J. says that when setting up your own Web page, "keep it simple." He warns that a lot of people don't like clicking on sites that have too many graphics and waiting for them to load. A lot of B.J.'s time spent on the Homework Helper site is dedicated to keeping the hundreds of links up-to-date. So the more links that you include, the more there are to keep track of because of the inevitable changes that happen over time. B.J. even gives tips on editing HTML in the Computers and Internet section of his site.

Obviously B.J. is a very bright teen, but even more rewarding to him than his own capabilities are those that he encourages in so many others, by directing them to the right information so that they can learn and do well in school.

Find B.J. on the Web at http://school.discovery.com/homeworkhelp/bjpinchbeck/.





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