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Power Trip

A Dangerous
Past

While the
Bears Sleep

Behind the
Locker **Door**

**Kelli
Williams:**

Portrait of a
Young Singer

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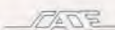


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A STRANGER IN THE FAMILY

My uncle was one of the most distinguished gentlemen I had ever met in my young life. He was funny and loved to tease me. Not having a father who was a part of my life from the time I was quite young, I found that my uncle helped to fill that void.

I had heard my aunt and mother talk about him and a problem that he had, but I never understood what it was. I thought he was just perfect—until my aunt and cousins went away for the weekend. My aunt had asked my mother and me to stay at their house and cook for my uncle while they were gone. I heard, "He should be OK, even though he's had a couple of drinks." I wondered what that meant. Little did I know that I was in for an education on what a "couple of drinks" can do to a person. I did not know that my distinguished-looking uncle was an alcoholic, and that a couple of drinks would be enough to set him off on a drinking spree.

I saw my uncle lying in bed with a silly look on his face, totally unlike the man I so highly respected. When he dragged out of bed, falling on the floor, and then crawling to the kitchen for something to eat, I just stood there with my mouth hanging open. Who was this stranger? He looked like someone I should know, but didn't act like that person.

What I learned was that my uncle had a problem with alcohol. He couldn't take a drink, even one drink. He knew that, but always thought he could control it—this time. Studies show that nearly all alcoholics who try merely to cut down on drinking are unable to do so indefinitely. Total abstinence is nearly always necessary for successful recovery. I have heard people who have abstained from alcohol for years say that they are an alcoholic.

An alcoholic suffers from a disease that includes alcohol craving and continued drinking despite repeated alcohol-related problems, such as losing their job, getting into trouble with the law, having family problems, and the list goes on.

My poor uncle—he never realized, when he tried his first drink as a kid, that someday his craving for alcohol would control him. That he would be unable to limit his drinking on any occasion. That he would need an increased amount of alcohol in order to feel its effects. He didn't think that someday those closest to him would lose their respect for him, and that he would become like a stranger to his own family.

Anita Jacobs



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POWER TRIP

by Arleen Wixtrom

When I heard what the rest of my gang had done the night before, that was the day I realized I was heading for big trouble. The kids I hung out with were pretty deep into weird stuff, but before now I hadn't given it a lot of thought.

My parents weren't around much, and I didn't have any friends at school until Mitch moved here. He'd come from a big city school to our small town. Soon Mitch found four other guys who didn't have any friends, and we all started hanging out together. We kinda became like family, sticking up for each other and helping each other out.

It was fun to be with Mitch. He thought of more things to do than anyone else I'd ever known. Like the day the six of us went to the park and hid in the bushes. When someone walked by, we jumped out of the bushes and screamed, "Get off our turf!" Some of the people were so shocked they looked like they would fall over dead. If

they ran, we chased them a couple of blocks. It seemed a pretty harmless thing to do and gave us a lot of laughs.

The next day we planned to meet at the park again, but I had the bad luck of having to stay after school. This time the police picked up the guys for harassing people. They bragged about it in school the next day. I had never been arrested, but I wouldn't have minded that night. It ended up not much more than a joyride to the police station, since they let everybody go. The police didn't even call their parents.

My parents wouldn't have been home, even if the police had called. They left for work before I went to school and got home just before bedtime. They always ate in the city before coming home. I would just warm up a hot dog or pizza or something. Some mothers cooked meals. I didn't know if my mother knew how. But it was OK. This way I could eat and go out whenever I pleased.

Thinking about my friendship with Mitch made me wonder why he became interested in me as soon as he moved here. I liked Mitch because he made me feel good



about myself. It was a super feeling, because I didn't think anyone else thought I was worth much. Mitch's mom was hardly ever home, just like mine, and his dad had left them years before. Like me, Mitch was on his own for meals too. Sometimes he'd take me to a real fancy place and buy us each a big meal. One day I started to ask Mitch how he got so much money, but he waved his hand and said, "Zac, don't ask." So I didn't.

Mitch became the best friend I'd ever had. He drank and smoked too much, but he was always willing to share with me. After a while the drinking and hanging in the park got boring, so we tried calling people from pay phones and intimidating them.

But soon that got to be old stuff, so we started hanging around outside of bars. Whenever a drunk would come out of the bar we'd pretend we were going to mug him. Our language got tougher each night. Those men wouldn't remember us when they sobered up, so we got away with it every time. One evening, though, we got kinda carried away, or at least Mitch did. He knocked an

old guy down, took his wallet, and ran. Just then someone opened the door, and the rest of us were just standing around like we were at a party or something. When the guy saw the old man on the ground, he gasped, and we took off out of there.

I was worried we might have been recognized, or maybe the old guy had died, and we'd get picked up for murder. I looked through the newspapers and listened to the radio, but there was never any mention of the robbery.

Then a guy a few years older than anyone in our group started hanging around with us. It was like Mitch had known him before or something. He called himself Bug. He didn't have a job; just hung around with us. One day he said we should pick out a name for our group. We decided on The Wall, because sometimes the seven of us would link arms and make a wall to keep people from passing us. We thought it was funny how intimidated most people looked when they couldn't get around us.

Bug came up with lots of new ideas for The Wall, which made us stick together tighter, because then we

had to keep everything a secret. I was becoming tough and soon pretended I wasn't afraid of anything. Sometimes I would stay out all night, sleeping in an abandoned house with the other guys. That way we could experiment with whatever new drug Bug brought in. If I didn't have any money, Mitch would always help me out. My parents thought I was home sleeping, because I'd close and lock my bedroom door before I left for the night.

But one Sunday I got the biggest shock of my life. It wasn't anything the gang had done. It was my mother! She actually made us dinner. We had roast and potatoes and salad instead of a can of soup or carryout. It was really nice, but made me suspicious. Something had changed with my mom. She'd been acting different lately.

Pretty soon my parents started coming home earlier and asking me how school was going. They'd never cared before. Why now? It was making it hard for me to meet with the gang. Mitch began complaining. "You're not getting tired of hanging around with the rest of us, are you?" The way he said it really bothered me.

I told him, "No, not at all. It's just that my parents have been home more and have been asking questions."

Mitch's eyes narrowed. "Like what kind of questions?"

I acted like it was nothing. "Oh, just wanting to know who I hang around with and stuff like that."

"And you told them?" Mitch questioned.

When I said I hadn't, he said, "Good boy," like I was a little kid or something. I didn't like it at all. Then he said, "Be there tonight." It was like an order. I knew something big was up. Before I could ask him what was going on, he walked away.

That evening I was dragging my feet from lack of sleep. My mother

noticed and asked, "Is something wrong, Zac?"

I told her I thought I was getting a cold or something and was going to bed early. I decided I would lie down for a while and sneak out later. I was still in my clothes on top of the bed when the sun's rays streaked into the window the next morning. I'd missed all the action with Mitch, Bug, and the others. They were going to be furious with me. I knew Mitch would come down hard on me for not being there.

When I got to school everyone was talking about something that had happened the night before. There was big trouble. Four guys from our gang were in jail for robbery. Bug had gotten out of town, and Mitch was dead. They'd robbed a house that Mitch was sure would be empty. The house wasn't empty, and the owner had a gun. I felt so sick about what had happened to Mitch that I got a pass from the nurse to go home.

That evening my mom started talking about the robbery. She looked pale. "Can you imagine that going on in our little town? Gangs and drugs and robberies? It frightens me terribly."

I saw her hands tremble, and she was almost crying. For the first time I saw our gang through the eyes of someone else. Maybe it hadn't been such a great idea to do cruel things to others just for the fun of it.

Then my mother said, "Zac, I worry about you. I don't ever want you to get mixed up with that kind of people, and I'm going to do something about it."

Her voice sounded so determined that I just stared at her. I wondered what she had in mind.

She repeated herself, saying, "Your father and I have discussed it. We really haven't been very good parents, and we want you to turn out to be a good man. We have failed you terribly."

"No, Mom . . ."


Her voice was firm, "Yes, Zac. Dad agrees that we need to change our lifestyle. We want you to bring your friends home so we can meet them."

It was strong stuff she was saying. I knew some kids in school who would be the kind of friends my mother would approve of, but they weren't my choice of friends. *Admit it, I told myself, you're afraid that some of the kids in school will laugh at you. They'll make fun of you if you quit drinking and start acting differently.*

Then I remembered what Mitch had said to me once: "You won't come with me because you're scared the kids in school will laugh at you." But he'd also told me there was power in doing things you were scared to try. I wanted that power trip, and I wanted it at any cost. Sure, I'd been scared, but I did find a certain power in doing wrong and getting away with it. Mitch had been right—but yet so wrong.

If I could handle all the things I'd done with the gang, then why couldn't I handle hanging around with a different crowd of kids? I'd heard a baseball player once say, "Changing my lifestyle set me free." I didn't understand the getting "set free" part, but that guy sure had a confidence about him that I wished I could have.

I began to realize that when it came right down to it, I was afraid of Mitch, Bug, and a lot of other things. And that the main reason I went along with the things the gang did was that I was afraid of them.

Maybe it wouldn't be so bad after all. *In memory of Mitch, I thought to myself, I'll take his advice one more time. I'll go ahead and do what I'm afraid to do, and maybe I can even find some of that confidence that sets you free.* 

Seasons

Where has fall gone?
All the colorful leaves.
Where has fall gone?
Gone to follow winter.

Where has winter gone?
All the soft, fluffy snow.
Where has the winter gone?
Gone to follow spring.

Where has spring gone?
All the flowers and rain.
Where has spring gone?
Gone to follow summer.

Where has summer gone?
All the white sand and warm air.
Where has summer gone?
Gone to follow fall.

Shannon Sheesley, 13
East Point, Georgia

Why?

Is it true that I am different—
different from you?
Why can't you ask her?
Why keep your feelings inside?
Why?
Why not just tell her how you feel?
It may hurt; it might ruin a friendship,
But it's definitely worth it.
If she's worth keeping, she will
remain a friend.
If not, "Frailty, thy name is woman."
If you don't want to, don't.
Just do not tell me what you feel later;
I told you what I would have done.
Just swallow your pride
For the more you try
the better chances you have.
It's a proven fact.

Ketal Amin, 17
New City, New York

I Wish I Were a Kid Again

Remember . . .

When you were a kid and would find
The simple task of counting to 100
exhilarating?
Excluded from the dangers of the world,
You didn't mind spending time with
your parents.

You could play dress-up and be who-
ever you wished:
A singer, supermodel, or a very famous
actress—

You didn't really care how your hair
looked,
Or who you played with,
And you couldn't wait to be a teenager.
Now I look back
And see I've changed.

School has become more demanding;
Recess is gone.

Petty fights with my parents over cur-
few—

"The hockey game isn't over yet; I'll be
home later tonight"—

Always seem to end in an argument.
I find myself hardly ever home and
Finally see the rest of my secluded
world,

And the truths behind our failed society.
My looks always matter

And my friends seem to have changed.

I guess it will always be like that, wish-
ing I could grow up faster,

Then finding myself wanting to regress.

I see my faults, but now I'm not a kid
anymore,

and know I can only progress unknow-
ingly into the future.

Janine Cifuni, 16
Congers, New York

I Remember. . .

My childhood is filled with many
memories.

I remember making cookies for the
first time with my grandma and
eating lots of dough.

I remember waking up on
Christmas mornings before the sun
just to see what Santa had left, and
then tearing the paper off the pres-
ents so fast and hardly even paying
attention to the gifts.

I remember that childhood inno-
cence where you believed that
everyone and everything in the
world is good, and how it is too
quickly lost.

I remember that nothing seemed to
hurt anymore after Mom kissed it,
And how just her touch seemed to
make everything better.

I remember those fun summer
nights catching lightning bugs at
Grandma's house and drinking
Kool-aid.

These are all my favorite childhood
memories.

Dannielle Hartle, 14
Carrollton, Texas



Photo: PhotoDisc



Choices • By Kay D. Rizzo

Getting Along



Photo: PhotoDisc

With Others

As long as there is chocolate or strawberry, left or right, up or down, there will be conflict. So how do you deal with it? Are you more likely to fight or take flight? Is there another choice?

Take this tension test to find out how you react to trouble.

1. When your mom asks you to help clean the house for out-of-town guests and you'd planned to go to the mall with your best friend, you

- a. throw a hissy fit.
- b. pout but help out.
- c. nix your mall trip and pitch in.
- d. get permission to invite your friend for a "clean-athon and pizza party."

2. Your little sister sneaks into your room and touches your private stuff, so you

- a. toss your kid sister's dresser and toys.
- b. put a No Trespassing sign on your door.
- c. go ballistic at the dinner table.
- d. spend an hour with her exploring the mysteries of your room. Then tell her your room is open by "invitation only."

3. Your best friend borrowed your new ski sweater two weeks ago, and you want to wear it to the snow party. So you

- a. remind them that they have it and that you need it back for the party.
- b. wait a few more days. Perhaps they will remember on their own.
- c. accuse them of trying to keep it.
- d. tell your other friends about your problem.

4. A guy/girl acts like they like you when the two of you are alone. But when his/her friends are around, they ignore you. What do you do?

- a. Pretend it doesn't bother you.
- b. Discuss your feelings with him/her when the two of you are alone.
- c. Tell them what a jerk they are in front of their friends.
- d. Give them the arctic treatment.

5. You invited a friend to your birthday party and they didn't show up. You call them on the phone and say,

- a. "What's the deal? If you didn't want to come, you should've told me!"
- b. "Are you all right? Did something happen so you couldn't come?"
- c. "What happened? Did I goof and tell you the wrong time?"
- d. "I'm mad! Do you know how long I planned this party?"

6. Your history teacher accuses you of cheating on your term paper, but you didn't. How do you handle it?

- a. Tell her off in front of the class.
- b. Bad-mouth her to your friends.
- c. Talk to her after class. Show her your notes.
- d. Tell your folks and let them handle it.

7. A group of guys at school bully you incessantly. They live to embarrass you in front of the other students. You're afraid. What should you do?

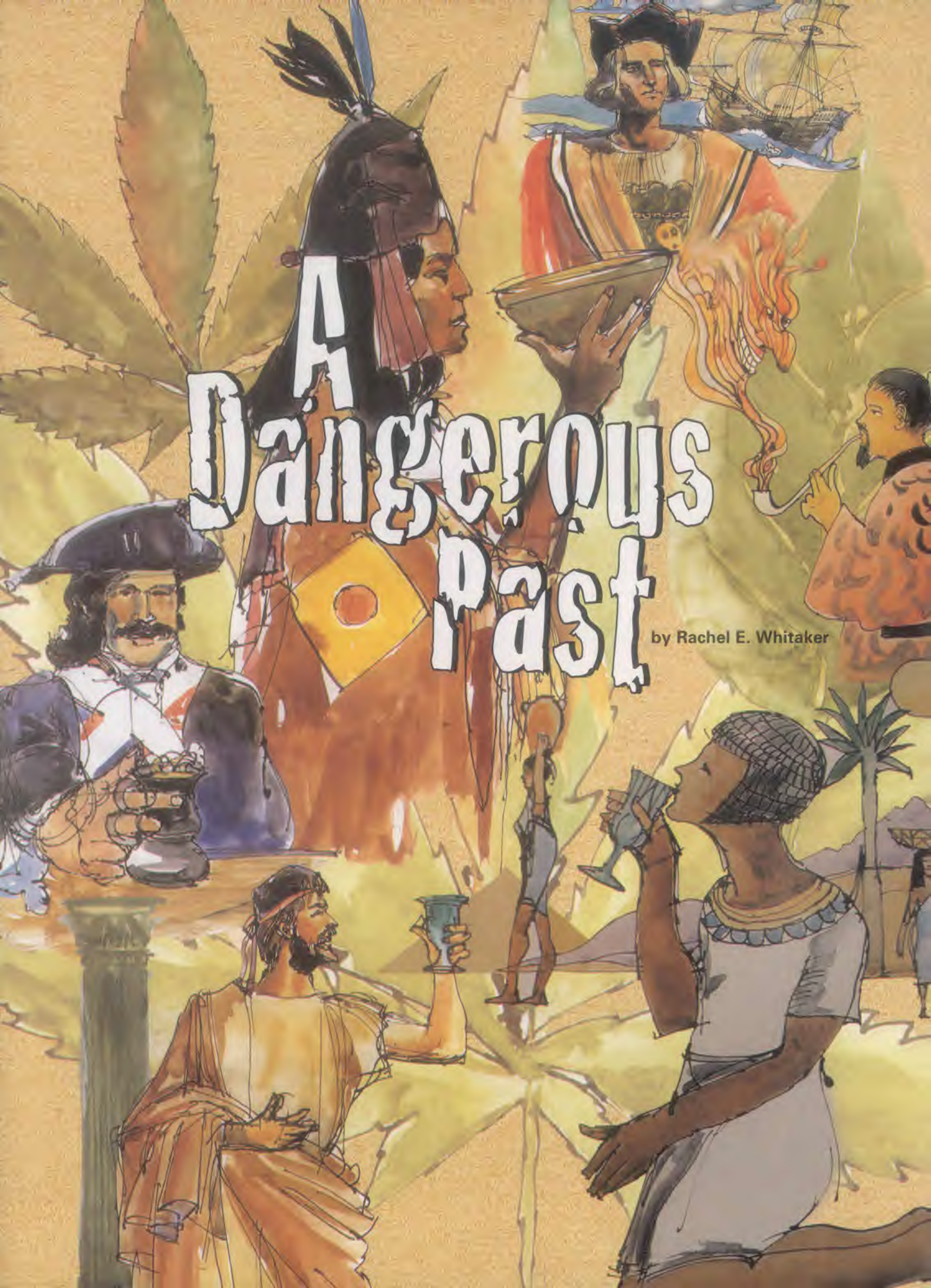
- a. Take boxing lessons and whip their butts!
- b. Take your uncle's pistol to school and scare the liver out of them.
- c. Show up late for school and leave early to miss meeting them in the halls. Use another route to your classes.
- d. Get help. Ask your principal, your guidance counselor, or your parents for assistance in solving this one.

RESULTS

FIGHTING FURY! If you answered 1-a; 2-a, 2-c; 3-c, 3-d; 4-c, 4-d; 5-a, 5-d; 6-a, 6-b; 7-a, 7-b: sounds like you waste unnecessary energy and time doing battle with the people around you. You'll be happier when you learn to choose your battles. Learn how to stand up for yourself without annihilating those you love.

WIMPY WASHOUT. If you chose 1-b; 2-b; 3-b; 4-a; 5-c; 6-d; 7-c, you probably run from conflict. While this may avoid trouble at the time, your anger remains buried inside you and will eventually hurt you.

GOT IT TOGETHER. If you chose 1-c, 1-d; 2-d; 3-a; 4-b; 5-b; 6-c; 7-d, it sounds like you have your priorities straight. You know when to speak up for yourself and when to get help.



A Dangerous Past

by Rachel E. Whitaker

Does it ever seem like the problems teens face today—drugs, violence, deadly diseases, family breakups—are new, or at least worse than they've been before? Maybe your parents or grandparents like to reminisce about how much easier it was to be a kid when they were young. The idea that society is going downhill may have some truth in it, but in reality most of these problems have been around for a long time. Drugs, alcohol, and tobacco, for sure, have been hurting people for thousands of years.

Alcohol is one of the oldest known drugs, dating back to antiquity. The ancient Egyptians were brilliant builders, but they weren't so smart when it came to beverages. They invented a beer made from barley that became one of the main staples of their diet. Like people today, they probably thought drinking was just a fun way to relax and enjoy life. They didn't realize that it was also a good way to destroy their brain and liver, and eventually kill them. Later, about 800 B.C., the Chinese discovered how to distill rice wine into hard liquor, making it even more poisonous.

It may be hard to imagine George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, or other famous founders of our country getting drunk, but the truth is that drinking was a big problem in the early years of the United States. Americans in the early 1800s drank enough whiskey to equal almost two shots a day for every adult in the country. And that was just the whiskey!

Not surprisingly, all this alcohol drinking had plenty of negative consequences. Social reformers who saw the poverty, crime, disease, family violence, accidents, and death caused by alcohol began trying to reduce these problems by encouraging people not to drink. Then some of them got a logical-sounding idea: If alcohol hurts so many people, why not make it illegal? So many people thought this was a good plan that in 1919 an amendment was added to the U.S. Constitution that banned making or selling alcoholic drinks in the United States. The time while this law was in effect is known as Prohibition.

Maybe you've heard that Prohibition didn't work. That depends on how you look at it. Of course, some people still drank during Prohibition, just as some people steal clothes from stores even though shoplifting is illegal. But making alcohol illegal probably cut drinking at least in half! The good effects of decreased drinking were almost immediate; for example, deaths from cirrhosis of the liver, a major disease caused by alcohol, dropped 44 percent.

Those are facts to remember when someone tells you that people would use drugs less if they were legalized. In

reality, making something illegal almost always makes it harder to get. That's why the people who wanted to drink eventually got the Prohibition law repealed. Today alcohol is legal in the United States for anyone over the age of 21, and unfortunately many people still think they need it to have fun.

Another drug that has been around for thousands of years is opium, which is the source for heroin. It comes from a milky liquid in the seed pods of a type of Asian poppy. Centuries ago people discovered that this substance could relieve pain and create a feeling of pleasure. Because of its painkilling properties, opium was used as a medicine. The ancient Greeks, for example, used it to treat headaches, toothaches, and diarrhea, and to induce sleep. Eventually opium use spread throughout Europe and Asia, and people praised its ability as a wonder drug.

Unfortunately, it soon became obvious that opium was highly addictive. Many people who took opium as a medicine couldn't stop using it even when their illness was gone. The problem of opium addiction got so bad in China that in the 1800s the Chinese government went to war with England to try to stop the English from bringing so much opium into China! In the United States many people picked up the opium habit or became addicted to medicines that contained it—especially when more powerful opium drugs like morphine were developed. Finally in 1914 the United States made opium products illegal except for carefully controlled medical uses.

Today, heroin is the opium product most likely to be abused. However, even morphine and codeine, two opium extracts that are still prescribed by physicians as painkillers, must be used very carefully to make sure patients don't become addicted.

When Christopher Columbus returned from his first trip to America, he brought with him another drug—tobacco. The Indians had been smoking and chewing the leaves of the tobacco plant for years. Columbus's new discovery wasn't a hit with everyone in Europe, though; apparently some people realized that inhaling smoke off burning leaves was about as dumb as it sounded. According to one story (probably legendary), a certain English gentleman was experimenting with smoking when his servant spotted him. Believing his master to be on fire, the quick-thinking servant threw a mug of beer on him to put out the fire. (There's nothing like getting rid of two drugs at once!)

However, many Europeans took up smoking, and soon tobacco became one of America's most profitable exports. (Unfortunately, American cigarette manufacturers

are still making millions of dollars selling their products in other countries where people don't know how harmful smoking really is.)

Americans picked up the tobacco habit too. Pipes, cigars, and cigarettes became fashionable and sophisticated. Some people preferred chewing tobacco or snuff, a powdered tobacco inhaled through the nose.

Not too many years ago most people weren't aware of the hazards of smoking. In the 1800s doctors would prescribe smoking to soothe throat and lung problems, not realizing that it could actually *cause* these diseases! Finally, in the 1960s scientists began to demonstrate that tobacco contributes to cancer, heart disease, and other health problems, and that the nicotine it contains is extremely addictive. Now most people realize that smoking is dangerous to health, but many of them are already addicted and have a very hard time quitting.

Cocaine was another of the New World's contributions to drug use. Cocaine is a white powder made from leaves of the coca plant, which grows in the mountains of South America. The Inca Indians who lived there chewed the leaves, believing that doing so gave them extra strength and endurance. When the Spanish conquerors first came to the area, they tried to get the Incas to stop using coca leaves. However, when they discovered that the Indians who worked for them in the gold and silver mines didn't mind the long hours, hard work, and lack of food so much when they chewed coca leaves, the Spaniards decided to pay their workers in coca, thus perpetuating the drug problem.

The Spanish brought coca plants back to Europe with them, but the drug did not become popular there until the 1850s, when scientists were able to extract a concentrated form of it, called cocaine, from the leaves. Cocaine was used as a medicine to treat many illnesses like fatigue, asthma, and the flu. Because it relieved some of the symptoms of drug withdrawal, doctors even used cocaine to help




opium addicts overcome their addictions! Unfortunately, they merely traded one addiction for another.

The well-known psychologist Sigmund Freud experimented with cocaine and at first thought it was a great miracle drug. He changed his mind, however, when he discovered that cocaine caused side effects like hallucinations, personality changes, and other bizarre behavior. Because it confuses the brain's electrical signals, people can die from cocaine overdoses. At the time heroin was outlawed, the United States banned the use of cocaine because of these dangers.

Now, however, cocaine is available in an even more potent and deadly form, crack, which can be instantly addictive.

Cocaine was once added to soft drinks like Coca-Cola (which gets its name from the coca plant). Undoubtedly this addictive ingredient kept customers coming back for more! Once the harmful effects of cocaine became evident, the beverage manufacturers stopped using cocaine. Instead they added another addictive drug, caffeine, which speeds up the heart and brain. Caffeine is not as dangerous as cocaine, but it can cause heart and stomach problems and keep people from relaxing or concentrating.

Clearly, drugs and the problems they cause are nothing new. But the ancient Egyptians, the Native Americans, the European explorers, and the doctors and patients a hundred years ago didn't know how harmful these drugs could be. Today science has shown the many negative effects of using alcohol, tobacco, cocaine, heroin, and other drugs. We can't use ignorance as an excuse for taking these substances. In fact, most drugs are more dangerous now than in the past because they are available in more concentrated forms.

Some drugs might give a good feeling for a while (although they might also make you cough, throw up, pass out, or see things that aren't really there), but in the end the results can be deadly. If there's any lesson we can learn from history, it's that staying away from drugs is the best plan—unless, of course, you want to be history yourself. 

When 16-year-old Megan offered to help clean her grandparents' attic, she never dreamed it would be so much fun going through old boxes. In one large trunk Megan discovered several old photo albums filled with pictures her grandparents had saved since they were teens. Curious about the photos, one of a tanned young man sitting on top of a horse and another of a young woman wearing a cheerleader uniform, Megan asked her grandfather about the pictures.

common with your grandparents. "My grandmother doesn't have the faintest idea about the newest fashions or movies I'm interested in. It's hard to know what to talk about with her," says Kelsey, 17.

Your grandparents may be equally unsure what to say to you. "When my grandchildren were younger, all I had to do to make them happy was sit them on my lap and tell them a story," says a grandmother of four teens. "Now when the kids talk on and on about actors and musicians

Get to Know Your Grandparents

by Rebecca Sweat



Photo: PhotoDisc

"I was surprised how little I knew about my grandparents," Megan says. "Until I asked my grandfather about these photos, I had no idea that he used to take riding lessons when he was a teenager, or that my grandmother had been a cheerleader in high school." Since that afternoon Megan says that she feels much closer to her grandparents. "I realize now that not only do my grandparents have a lot of interesting stories to share," she says, "but talking with them about their experiences as a teen showed me how much we think alike."

Megan is fortunate to have been able to deepen the relationship she has with her grandparents. But for many teens, maintaining a close connection with their grandparents is not easy, especially during the adolescent years when they're experiencing so many new things. "The generation gap often widens at this time," says Helen Kivnick, Ph.D., professor of social work at the University of Minnesota, with a special interest in the role of grandparents. "Instead of seeing their grandparents as people with their own unique experiences and viewpoints, teens may see their grandparents simply as their parents' parents."

At times you may feel as though you have nothing in

I've never heard of, it makes me wonder where I fit in to their lives."

Another obstacle that can stand in the way of a close relationship with your grandparents is their serious illness. "Visiting grandparents in the hospital, seeing them sick and out of sorts, can be really terrifying for teens," Kivnick says. "Often they're confused about how they should act, or they may feel powerless to do anything to help."

What grandparents can offer.

While a close bond with grandparents is not always easy to maintain, it is definitely something worth pursuing. One of the greatest aspects of the grandparent relationship is the emotional support you can receive from it. "Because your parents are responsible for raising you, they can't always be supportive of your behavior, but your grandparents can offer unconditional love and encouragement," says Nancy Schlossberg, Ed.D., professor emerita at the University of Maryland. "The teenage years can be a tumultuous time, and there's often tension between teens and their parents. Grandparents can provide stability for the teen who is going up and down emotionally, and the

grandparents can act as a neutral adult with whom to talk."

Since they are actually a living family history, your grandparents can provide you with a better understanding of your parents and family background. "Talking to my grandparents about what Dad was like as a teen helps me understand why he reacts the way he does when I do certain things," says Ryan, 15. And Leah, 17, says, "Asking Grandma what it was like to immigrate as a child to the United States gave me a new appreciation for what my great-grandparents did to try to make a better life for succeeding generations."

Not only can you learn a lot about your family's background, but your grandparents can make history come alive. "Grandparents often represent a world that teens don't know much about," Kivnick says. "It's a firsthand connection to periods in history that may otherwise be completely foreign." Your grandparents may be able to give you a firsthand account of what it was like to live during World War II, tell you what families did for entertainment before television was invented, or describe your hometown before the shopping malls and freeways were built.

Having a close relationship with grandparents can also provide you with a more realistic picture of older generations. "Not all grandparents are white-haired, bent over, and walking with a cane," Schlossberg says. "There are many grandparents who are working, involved with careers, and have very active lives. The grandparent relationship gives teens a realistic picture of the aging process, that life is not over until it's over."

If your grandparents are suffering from poor health, there are also things you can learn from that situation. "Spending time with those who are seriously ill or dying, although it can be uncomfortable, can help you develop empathy and the ability to put yourself in another person's shoes," Kivnick says. "It's also enormously comforting for the person who's dying, and it allows you to make a valuable contribution."

Strengthening the bond.

Although there are obstacles that can challenge the development of a strong bond between you and your grandparents, they don't have to prevent it. One of the most important things you can do is focus on who your grandparents are and your connection to them, rather than the fact that they belong to an older generation. Understand that there are certain issues and feelings shared by people of all ages.


"Even though there are differences in the way that teenagers and grandparents look in terms of wrinkles, hair color, style of clothing, and so forth, there are many under-

lying commonalities," Schlossberg says. "Certain emotions—your hopes and dreams, disappointments and fears, relationship issues, and identity struggles—cut across generations and have nothing to do with age." For example, people of all ages can have identity struggles. Suppose your grandfather recently retired and is having to confront the issue of "Who am I?" That may be the same issue you are dealing with as you graduate from high school and contemplate a job or college and career choices.

Although 40 or more years may have passed since your grandparents were teenagers, don't assume that they can't remember what it was like to be young or that their experiences were totally different from what you're going through. Ask your grandparents how they met each other and what they were feeling at the time. Find out if they had a hard time understanding their own parents when they were teens. Ask your grandparents what growing up was like for them, and to describe some of their most memorable experiences. "You may be surprised to discover that your grandparents were concerned about many of the same issues when they were teens that concern you today, and can relate to how you are feeling," Schlossberg says.

If your grandparents are suffering from poor health, don't let not knowing what to say keep you apart from them. "In most cases it's not necessary for you to act in any special way around grandparents who are ill, as much as it is that you simply be yourself," says David Elkind, Ph.D., a professor at Tufts University and author of *Grandparenting: Understanding Today's Children*. "Your grandparents are interested in you as a person and who you are deep down inside." Telling them about your school projects, activities you are involved with, or even sharing your views on a news event are all ways you can make them feel a part of your life.

Like Megan, you may think you know everything about your grandparents. But stop and think a minute. Do you know when and where they were born? Where did they live when they were growing up? Where did they go to high school and college? What did they study? If you're not certain of the answers to these questions, there's a good chance you may not know your grandparents as well as you'd always thought.

Make the effort to spend regular time talking with your grandparents. "Older people need to know that others value their insight," Elkind says. "They want to be able to pass things on to the younger generation so that when they die, they're not completely dead, because part of them still lives." Give your grandparents opportunities to reminisce about their lives. Your own life will become richer in the process. 



*One of the
greatest aspects
of the grandparent
relationship is the
emotional support
they can give.*





Kelli Williams:

PORTRAIT of a YOUNG SINGER

by Derek C. Bowe

On stage, performing before an audience who responds to her every note and word, Kelli Williams is in her element. Confident and comfortable, she's a blur of energy, striding up and down, clapping, laughing, singing, and relishing the warm give and take with her fans. Their eyes are riveted on the 23-year-old singer—so much so that she and they are almost one. To everyone present Kelli seems to have been born to sing!

And they're right. Her mother, Carolyn Williams, says that as a baby Kelli "had strong lungs, putting up a strong cry" whenever she pleased! Convinced that Kelli was musically gifted, Mrs. Williams said to herself, *This child has got to do something with that voice!*

It wasn't hard for Kelli to develop her musical talent. Her father sang, her mother sang, her aunts sang; singing was almost as natural as talking in her young world. Her parents and other family members had a singing group, first called the New World Singers and then the Eddie Williams Singers, that often rehearsed in the Williamses' basement. Young Kelli was there too, carefully listening and absorbing everything. Then one day when she was 6 she joined the adults, singing in perfect pitch!

From that day her musical career took off. Lacking a microphone, she practiced with a hairbrush. And without an audience she sang to herself in the mirror, developing stage presence. Soon 6-year-old Kelli tackled a Larnelle Harris tune in church, singing it impressively.

Polishing her abilities as she grew, Kelli sang before larger and larger audiences. In 1993, when Ed McMahon's *Star Search* beckoned to her, Kelli, now 14, was ready. So ready, in fact, that she captivated TV and national audiences and won the title of Teen Vocalist Champion three times. Clearly she was on her way to reaching her goal of spreading love and happiness through music—and she hasn't looked back since.

When she was 15 Kelli recorded her first album, *Kelli Williams*, and at 19 her second

album, *I Get Lifted*, was released. Two years later the popular album *In the Myx* was nominated for Urban Gospel Album of the Year. Her song "Love Wouldn't" was nominated for two Dove Awards and Contemporary Gospel Song of the Year. This year she has received a Stellar Award nomination as Contemporary Female Vocalist of the Year.

From her *Star Search* win to today, Kelli has spent much time recording in the studio, singing solo on the road, and performing with musical greats like Mary, Mary, CeCe Winans, Kirk Franklin, and Take 6. In addition, she's laying the groundwork for an upcoming album. As she puts it, "I love singing, and I love making music!"

One wonders whether as a teenager Kelli wanted to do so much work, and if it caused her to miss out on the fun part of growing up. "I really wanted to be doing what I was doing," she stresses. "I was not pushed. My family was supportive, and I think that they helped me become more disciplined. But singing was something I wanted to do." When as a teen Kelli sometimes couldn't join her friends at fun places because she was on tour, she says, "I wasn't really heartbroken, and they understood where I was coming from, because singing was what I had always wanted to do."

Although being a top-notch singer is demanding, Kelli says she doesn't compete with other musicians. She acknowledges that it's important "to stay on top of your game and what you're doing," but points out that "your competition is with yourself." Her focus is on writing the best songs that she can and developing herself to the fullest—not on winning Dove and Grammy awards. She believes she'll achieve them at some point, but explains that right now she's learning to seize every moment that comes to her, trying to take something positive from it.

When asked what makes her happiest, she lets out a great laugh. "Oh, man! When am I happiest? I could be happy in a lot of situa-



tions. That's a hard one! I'm really happy when I'm singing, but I could be just as happy when I'm having a big dinner with my family. Just all my aunts and uncles. When we're all together playing games, you know, and running around at the mall."

Family is extremely important to Kelli. She has an older sister, Shelli, who's a nurse and the mother of three. Kelli admits to having been something of a pest when they were growing up, wearing Shelli's

clothes and trying to listen in on her phone calls. But as they grew older, they became closer. As Kelli puts it, "Love helps one to take the good with the bad in relationships." She's devoted to her nieces and nephew. "They're like my children," she beams with pride. In their turn, they're proud of their aunt, the musician. She tries out new tunes on them, saying she counts on them to tell her whether they're any good.

Like Shelli, Kelli is married. The lucky man is Royce

Malcolm, 26, a supervisor of a Nashville telecommunications company. Obviously contented, she boasts, "He's awesome!" What's responsible for their happy union? one wonders. She reveals that before they married they had a friendship that blossomed into love. They hung out with each other as youngsters, but weren't always a couple. Even when apart they'd always call each other up, getting caught up on their lives and offering advice on how to handle dif-

ferent situations and people.

Kelli says that there was no pressure from either one of them in the relationship; they just relaxed and let their friendship grow. The result was a marriage that is now three years old and sees them eagerly supporting each other's careers. "We don't have that jealousy thing going on, you know. I guess there are people who have that in their relationship, but Royce and I are each other's number one fan."

Kelli's young fans are also important to her, and she takes seriously her role of entertaining them. She gives them the best she can offer and tries to help them in their decision-making process. "Your life is nothing but a bunch of choices," she observes. She points out dangers such as drugs and premarital sex, but she says that when talking to young adults she doesn't have any one particular

issue to address. "It's kind of just whatever is on my heart at the time." At a recent concert fans were greatly moved by her music and by her plea for a loving, healthy lifestyle. She says that they streamed toward the stage and gave up "bags of marijuana, condoms, and guns."

Kelli feels strongly about peer pressure and young people. "If you're not a leader, then you're a follower," she observes. "You've got to want to be in control of your own destiny." If you allow someone to set your agenda or dictate how you look, "then you're not being yourself. You have to create your own self-image; you have to create your own ideals. And that's what being an individual is all about."


To young men particularly, she admits that it's nice to have the "bling," "ice," or fine house. "However," Kelli continues, "don't follow the peer pressure of selling drugs and going about getting the things you want the wrong way. Make decisions that will help you to have those things and to do it honestly." To young women, whom she values for their inborn worth and potential alone, she says, "You don't have to run around with no clothes on to be accepted."

Hard work and self-development are also high on Kelli's list of priorities. She explains that the work of a singer is not all glamour. Apart from being ready to drop everything at a moment's notice for a recording

session at an unexpected hour, Kelli has to rehearse constantly to be good at what she does. But she says that's the price of success in any venture. "If you want to be a physician, if you want to be a lawyer, if you want to succeed at something, there's work that has to be done." She has recently started college herself, as a part-time student, owing to the demands of her career. "You always need to be learning," she affirms. "I realize that it is very important."

What are the future goals for this remarkable young woman? you wonder. "Singing, singing, and more singing," Kelli declares with a laugh! To that she'll add more of the songwriting that she has been doing lately and for which she was honored with a Dove nomination. "What I'm doing now I'm happy with. I'm probably more excited now when I go and sing than ever before. It's kind of gotten to me more, because now I'm coming through with what I want to do."

A few people may say that her music is "wild," but she doesn't let that bother her. At the concerts there may be screaming, but she says that she and her audience are "having a good time."

A good time indeed. One that features the best of a class act, Kelli Williams, who is young like her audience, knows what makes them tick, and has dedicated her life to them. 



Photos: Tony Baker



Photo: DigitalVision



Can You Become Addicted to Pot?

You can't become addicted to pot, can you? I've read on many Web sites that it is safe. Marylynn

Don't believe everything you read on the World Wide Web. It can be a powerful learning tool about many different things, but much of what is said about pot is inaccurate and misleading. More and more studies have shown marijuana to be an addictive drug. Consider the fact that studies have proved that babies born to mothers who are chronic marijuana users go through withdrawal after birth. Withdrawal symptoms from nonaddictive substances are extremely rare. Most treatment centers around the country treat patients who are there for an addiction to marijuana—more so than other dangerous drugs. Withdrawal signs usually show up between 10 and 15 days after the last use and usually include sleeplessness, nervousness, anxiety, restlessness, and a loss of appetite.

My parents used drugs in the past and nothing ever happened to them. Adam

Your parents are lucky people. There are some parents who have tried dif-

ferent drugs throughout their lives and have survived without having to face any consequences as a result of it. This isn't to say that drugs are a safe and reliable alternative to living life on its own terms while remaining clean and sober. Had your parents continued their drug use, chances are that they would not be in a position to say that they made it through the years without any problems. Everyone is different in their own way. Some people can go a pretty good length of time before they find themselves running smack into a heap of trouble, and others feel the heat the first time they get high.

Pot's organic. It can't hurt anyone. Lindsay

So is poison ivy, but you don't find many people putting it in a pipe and smoking it. Just because something is organic does not mean it is safe. There are literally hundreds of plants that can be fatal should someone ingest them. One hit of a bong or pipe of pot can contain more than 150 cancer-causing substances and nearly twice as much tar as a cigarette. Couple this with the fact that marijuana can cause other problems, such

as short-term memory loss, impaired abstract thinking, and slower reaction time. Even though marijuana is a plant and grows wild in many parts of the country, it is interesting to know that cows won't eat it and birds refuse to build nests in it. Makes you kind of wonder what *they* know that many humans don't.

What's the big deal about getting high once in a while? Doesn't just about everyone do drugs? Rochane

It's not really fair to brand everyone as drug users. It might surprise you to know that current research shows that a minority of young people have used drugs in the past year. Most of these teens realize what a drag illicit substances can be and don't want to bother with the pain and problems that often come with them. Those who do get high on a regular basis rarely notice those who don't, because they have little in common with them. I'm not certain if you're a drug user, but I would be willing to bet that if you gave up getting high, you would find many others who don't get high either.

Go 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.

SHINE ON!



by Shellie M. Frey

They're kind of like the Spice Girls, but with a whole-some twist. And when they belt out the songs of their hearts, fans literally feel as if they're in the presence of angels—the kind with plenty of soul.

Meet SHINE—the fresh-faced, girl-power ensemble that could very well be the female version of 'N Sync. As the bright, talented, and super congenial Natasha, Hanne, Loretta, and Nicola break into their hit song “Do It Right” from their debut album of the same name, the audience's spirits start to rise. Combining their heavenly beauty and divine dance moves with their smooth-as-silk harmonized vocals, it's clear that SHINE truly has star power—a

light that all can see. But perhaps the determined bass beat of their inspirational music best symbolizes their devotion—to life, to love, and mostly to their Christian values.

"I feel like I'm living my dream job," says Loretta, who, like the other members of SHINE, grew up longing to become a singer and dancer. Now, with the opportunity to integrate their two passions together via SHINE, their dreams have become realities.

"I feel like my true heartfelt desires came true," says Hanne, who once suffered various leg problems and was told she'd never be able to dance seriously.

SHINE's beginnings came after Loretta and Natasha spent two years training at the School of Creative Ministries, which teaches the art of Christian performing. Loretta Andrews, a former member of World Wide Message Tribe, and her happily married twin, Natasha Andrews, nurtured a dream that began with the faith that "we can begin to make it happen, if we would open up our eyes" (quoting lyrics from "Do It Right"). They then added to the mix Nicola Rodgers, a rambunctious redhead, and Hanne Pettersen of Norway, the dancer who thought her dreams of performing didn't have a prayer.

Now, besides touring all over the world performing selections from their hot new CD, SHINE visits public schools throughout Europe, particularly the U.K., giving fans more than an encore. Often they will spend an entire week with students, conducting workshops in dance, music, and drama, and talking about their Christian message. "We really enjoy it," says Hanne, explaining the variety of activities they're involved in at the schools as well as their concerts.

"Kids have to know that we care about them," adds Natasha. "We can't

**I can be
different—
I have a
choice to **not**
sit there and
smoke or get
drunk.**

just burst in and say, 'We're a band . . . bye!' They have to trust us."

And do they ever. Kids turn to SHINE for all kinds of advice—such as how to avoid the pitfalls of drugs and alcohol. "It's really important for teenagers to be able to stand up and say, 'I can be different; I have a choice not to sit there and smoke with all the others,'" says Hanne. "I can actually say no."

"I'm the kind of person who doesn't like not being in control of my body," explains Loretta. "The whole idea of being so drunk that you don't remember anything has never seemed to me to be a good time. You don't know if you had a good time! But there are so many other practical reasons why it's not a good idea. You just feel really awful; you feel sick and ill. Or you wake up the next morning and don't know what you've been doing. These are things that you are going to regret if you drink. So none of that has really appealed to me."

As far as precisely how to keep drugs and alcohol out of your life, all the girls agree that it's vital to avoid people and situations that might make you vulnerable to temptation. "If you are weak in that area, run away from it," counsels Hanne. "Don't hang out with people who do

things like that. It may sound harsh, but don't hang out with people like that or put yourself in situations where it will tempt you. Get out of it. And don't seek those kinds of environments if you can't trust yourself with them. Stand up for your rights and see that you don't need to take second best in life just because you're scared of what your neighbor will say. Because that's just something someone says. The consequences that can happen just because you gave in one time can be so much more and lifelong. Thinking about just saying no and maybe feeling silly for a few minutes or even an hour can result in such a better life than just giving in because you were scared because of peer pressure."

With so many opportunities ahead of them, the SHINE girls can't afford to get mixed up with negative influences like drugs, alcohol, or other people who are into that. Instead, they say that keeping busy with goals, hobbies, and school, and thinking of others every day not only help you stay away from negative influences, but also help you live a happier and more productive life, too. "We've got one chance to make our life a good one," says Nicola, who advises youth to live in the present and not wait until tomorrow to do good. "It's about how we can be used now, today. There are so many opportunities that come up that we can let pass by; so many people we meet that we can have input in their lives and be used. It's not the case of doing massive, amazing things that are going to make us successful. It's about being our best in tiny situations and the little things; being our best and looking to do as much as we can every single day. In doing that, we're not going to miss out on the bigger picture. That's how we're fulfilled. . . . So make the most of every opportunity and enjoy yourself."

Whether it's in school, sports, the arts, or relationships, the girls also agree that it's important to dream big, and when doubts and fears arise, face those fears and work through them to be all that you can be in life. "Never settle for second best in anything," says Hanne. "I believe that everyone knows, if they are very honest inside, what their dreams and hopes are. And I think, dream big and hope big and go for it. Don't think that you're this gray little mouse and that you can't achieve anything."

Everyone needs to initiate positive friendships and relationships. With all the togetherness that the girls experience on a daily basis, they have really learned some practical skills that have helped them get along well over the long haul. "I think a lot of it is learning to understand each other," says Nicola, "not always being defensive, and understanding that everyone wants to help each other and help other people. So for us, I think just listening to each other and understanding each other and forgiveness really help. Because everyone offends others sometimes; I've offended other people, and other people have offended me. But you don't need to hold on to that and let it fester. The key is letting go of things quickly—understanding where it came from, understanding what the intention was and talking to each other, and not being so defensive. That's been the key for us."

And the key to success, for SHINE, is to look to the heart. "Follow your heart's desires and do whatever it is that you want to do," says Loretta. Success for this fabulous foursome is to SHINE ON with all their light—and with as much rhythm and soul as they can. 🎶



1 **Natasha Andrews (23)**

- From Milton Keynes, UK
- Happily married to Gareth
- Famous for being late
- Likes chocolate and dalmations
- Previously sang with Sting, Diana Ross, Gary Barlow and 911

3 **Loretta Andrews (23)**

- From Milton Keynes, UK
- Famous for sleeping with her eyes open
- Likes food, animals, and the sky
- Formerly sang with World Wide Message Tribe, Sting, Diana Ross, Gary Barlow and 911

2 **Nicola Rodgers (21)**

- From Northampton, UK
- Famous for laughing—at all the wrong times
- Likes chocolate mousse, dogs, and—not surprisingly—laughing!

4 **Hanne Pettersen (21)**

- From Oslo, Norway
- Famous for speaking lots of languages, including "dog"
- Likes shopping, snowboarding, and, of course, dogs

Fun SHINE Facts

While the BEARS SLEEP

By Clifford Johnstone



If you mention the word "camping," most people think of nice treks in lush, colorful woods. Birds, animals, and warm, breezy days with a soothing wind rustling leaves overhead. Or they think of sweltering afternoons with cool baths in a silvery-colored river and nippy nights beside a crackling campfire.

What they are thinking about, of course, is summer camping, when most people who camp camp. Summer, after all, makes sense: That's when most people have vacation time. Plus summer is summer; it's hot in the day, cool at night, kind of ideal for camping. Which, of course, is why people camp in the summer.

Some people, anyway. On the other hand, there are thousands all over the world who love to camp in the—winter! We're talking ice, we're talking snow, we're talking howling winds that can reach a chill factor below zero! We're talking a backpack twice as heavy as in the summer. We're talking about freezing days (and colder nights); we're talking about frostbite, hypothermia, dehydration, and snow blindness.

Are we having fun yet?

nity to expand your horizons, to test your mental and physical strength, as well as to have experiences in which you can learn a lot about nature, yourself, and even life (that last sounds kind of hokey, but some of those who winter camp will sometimes describe the experiences in almost religious terms). One winter camper even wrote a book about winter camping: he called it *Paradise Below Zero*.

For winter campers the advantages are worth the effort. First, you don't run into the crowds that you often find during the summer, with their litter and noise. How many campers have had to listen to someone's boom box blasting Bon Jovi in the middle of the night (which kind of kills some of the whole purpose of camping)? This is not a problem most winter campers face.

Then there's an awesome, powerful beauty to winter landscapes that you can't find in the summer. Places take on a whole new atmosphere, a whole new face, a whole new mood that they don't have at any other time, and winter campers want to be there to experience it. Those who have camped in the winter know the stunning

"The pipes are iced solid, the car won't start, the dog's got his tongue frozen to the food bowl . . . Hey! Let's go camping!" From the Web site Sasturgi.com.

Apparently so, because despite these and other risks, every winter there are many adventurous souls who, after much preparation (and that's the key word, preparation), enter into one of the most challenging and rewarding of all winter sports, and that is winter camping.

Winter camping? Sounds almost like an oxymoron, like flatland mountain climbing or waterless yachting. The only people who camp out in the winter are soldiers, who have to; or refugees fleeing for their lives. But to camp out in the winter for the fun of it?

Yet that's exactly why winter campers camp; they camp in the winter for the fun of it. No one says it's easy; no one says it's for everyone; no one says every moment is wonderful; no one says it doesn't take endurance, dedication, sweat, and patience (in winter camping almost everything, from walking to cooking, can take up to twice as long as in the summer). However, for those who do it and love it winter camping offers a great opportu-

majesty of winter forests—a beauty, a power, and majesty that melt away in the spring. Mosquitoes aren't a real problem; and for the most part, the bears are sleeping. For many winter campers there's a great sense of satisfaction that comes from having roughed it safely in what can only be called hazardous conditions, something you don't get from living in an RV parked at a campsite with electric outlets, showers, and a convenience store.

For those souls who might be thinking of winter camping, there are a number of points you need to remember, because it's not something simple. It's not summer camping with just an extra pair of long underwear. On the contrary, it takes a lot of preparation and a lot of experience. That's why those who want to winter camp should never go it alone the first time (some would say that you should never go it alone no matter how experienced, but there are those who do). They should go with someone who has done it before. If you don't



know anyone personally who has done it and will take you, there are various organizations that specialize in winter camping, groups like the Sierra Club Snow Camping Section, Outdoors Unlimited, Cal Adventures, Shasta Mountain Guides, and so forth. The Boy Scouts teach it as well. Type in "winter camping" on an Internet search engine, and you will find plenty of resources to meet your needs. More books have been written about it than you would think, too.

Apparently, it's a pretty popular activity, with all sorts of groups willing to teach you how to do it. The Colorado Mountain Club (www.cmc.org/cmc/wntrcamp) expresses it like this: "If you miss the snowflakes, feel the lack of oxygen, and cannot stand overheated rooms, perhaps it's time to experience the outdoor comfort with the Winter Camping School. The Winter Camping School is not a survival class. It teaches how to prepare for and to enjoy comfortably the night outside, how to pull your gear instead of carry it, and how to become a gourmet cook. And it also offers lots of tips to make the uninviting pleasant."

And that's part of the point. Being

in the woods in the winter can be quite uninviting. That is, unless you are prepared. And the preparation all depends upon when and where you are camping.

Indeed, not all winter camping is created equal. Depending on when you camp, where, and for how long, the variables change. The main thing, of course, is to keep warm, to keep dry, and to keep yourself full of fluids (dehydration can be a big problem). That's why it's essential that you come prepared with the right equipment, and that includes clothing, food, sleeping gear, cooking equipment, first aid essentials, the right footwear,

And that's because winter camping is serious. In fact, many winter campers, instead of using tents (the most common form of protection), actually build igloos, snow caves, or snow pits to sleep in because they know that winter camping is a serious sport.

It's one thing to sleep in an igloo (what an experience), but imagine the experience of sleeping in an igloo you have just built (too bad you couldn't send back a post card; and yes, you're right, there is no room service)!

A snow cave sounds just like a cave. It may not be all that comfortable, but it is unique. A snow



Photo: Eyewire

and so forth. An extra sweater isn't going to do you much good in an ice storm in the Rockies in December or, in fact, for any kind of winter camping at whatever elevation. Winter camping means living outside in weather conditions that have killed many people over the years. That's why preparation is essential. It could mean the difference between life and death—it is that serious.

cave is basically a hole dug in the side of a mound of snow. A snow pit, on the other hand, is created by digging a trench in the snow down to ground level. The trench is a little longer than your body and about three to four feet wide.

Igloos, snow caves, snow pits? This is heavy stuff, but winter camping is a heavy sport.


Don't forget your snowshoes! 

Photo: Jedd O. Springer



BEHIND the LOCKER DOOR

by Willard Souris

Though they grew up together (he first remembered her in kindergarten, when he got sent home early for throwing a block in her face), it wasn't until Jeremy began his senior year in high school that he really did take notice of Sally. How, indeed, she had changed: long thick hair that reached down her back like a well-groomed mane, eyes soaked in radical blue, skin that looked like smooth cream. Sally definitely was not the little girl he once threw blocks at.

He wasn't quite sure how to approach her, he being the shy, pimply, skinny type who wasn't much in the girl department. But he never saw her with another guy, and she always smiled and waved at him.

What he did notice was that every day Sally would kind of hide behind her locker door, which opened against a wall. Every day, sometimes three times a day, he would see her stand there, do something, and then close the door and walk away. Normally a high school student standing by her locker wouldn't mean anything, but he just sensed something was going on, something that he wanted to be part of. Finally, curious (as well as looking for an excuse to approach her), he got up his nerve, walked over, and, barely peeking around the locker door, asked, "Hey, Sally, what are you always doing back there?"

She turned around, but before she did, he saw her quickly swallow, then hide something behind a book. When she saw who it was, she calmed down, pulled out a water bottle, and offered it.

"Vodka," she said. "Wanna swig? I think I can trust you."

"Vodka?" he asked, glancing around. No wonder she was always smiling and waving. Jeremy never drank; he remembered as a child watching a neighbor, an old man, drink himself to death, and swore he would never start on that path. But here he was, in the confines of Sally's locker, with her trusting him, offering him something that she probably wouldn't everyone.

"Sure," he said, stepping behind the locker door, right next to her, so close he could smell her breath on his face. He took a swig, swearing to himself he would die before he coughed.

"Thanks," he said, not stepping away but feeling so good, so warm and comfortable, so secure there behind the locker door with Sally.

"Come back again," she said, closing the door with a bang. "There's more."

"Sure," he answered calmly and as nonchalantly as one can when they really want to shout and scream and dance and yell for joy. And so he did come back—every

day, in fact; sometimes four times a day. Eventually he even started getting his own vodka—a neighbor would buy it for him—although he always put it in Sally's locker so they could drink it together. Soon nothing mattered more to him than standing by Sally's locker, swigging booze with her. Whether it was the booze that made him so happy, or whether it was her, or both, he wasn't sure anymore.

Of course, and unfortunately, Sally and Jeremy, though pretty heavy drinkers for kids their age, aren't alone. About 80 percent of all high school students in the United States have used alcohol (more than 60 percent more than those who use marijuana). About 10 million Americans between the ages of 12 and 20 had at least one drink last week. That's *at least* one drink—which means that like Sally and Jeremy (who between the two of them had 25 drinks during an average school week), millions gulped down more than one, a lot more than one. Approximately 9 percent of the nation's eighth graders, 22 percent of tenth graders, and 33 percent of twelfth graders have been drunk—that is really drunk—within the past month. Eighth graders drunk?

About 10 million current drinkers were under age 21 in 1995. Of these, 4.4 million were binge drinkers, including 1.7 million heavy drinkers. The numbers are about the same today.

Here's the sad truth: despite all the talk about cocaine, heroin, ecstasy, and marijuana, alcohol use remains what it has been for decades—the number one drug problem among young people in America. It is not that these other drugs aren't as potentially dangerous as alcohol; some definitely are. It's just that alcohol is considered the worst problem because it's the one that is the most abused. After all, people don't have to find some drug pusher hiding in an alley to sell them a bottle of booze. You can buy it at the corner store, and, if you're under age (like Sally and Jeremy), there are still many ways of getting booze.

One doesn't have to be getting A's in trigonometry to figure out what's going on here. Because alcohol is so readily available, it's so readily used. It's that simple. Each year students spend \$5.5 billion on alcohol, more than they spend on soft drinks, tea, milk, juice, coffee, and books combined. On a typical college campus, students spend \$446 for alcohol per student, an amount that far exceeds the per capita budget in the college library.

And the results are, not surprisingly, disastrous. "The total cost of alcohol use by youth—including traffic crashes, violent crimes, burns, drownings, suicide attempts, fetal alcohol syndrome, alcohol poisonings, and treat-

ment—is more than \$58 billion per year” (D.T. Levy, K. Stewart, “Cost of Underage Drinking” [U.S. Department of Justice Office and Juvenile Delinquency Prevention, 1999]).

But then how does one put a price tag on the physical, moral, and mental devastation that alcohol has brought to the lives of millions of Americans? You can’t, for some things are beyond money.

Take, for instance, the thousands of lives lost every year in America because of drunk driving. On an average, about eight young people are killed every day from drunk driving-related incidents. Eight a day! That means within a work week an entire high school classroom of students would be wiped out.

Look at these grim numbers: approximately 240,000 to 360,000 of the nation’s 12 million current undergraduates will ultimately die from alcohol-related causes—more than the number that will get M.A.s and Ph.D.s combined. During a typical weekend an average of one teenager dies every hour in a car crash. Nearly 50 percent of those crashes involve alcohol.

According to a Web site by MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Drivers), “more than 35 percent of all 16- to 20-year-old deaths result from motor vehicle crashes (National Center for Health Statistics, 1997). Thirty-seven percent were in alcohol-related crashes. Estimates are that 2,104 persons aged 16 to 20 died in alcohol-related crashes in 1998 (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 1999).”

Of course, the problem with alcohol doesn’t stop with just vehicles. That’s only part of it. Youth who drink alcohol are 7.5 times more likely to use an illicit drug (50 times more likely to use cocaine) than young people who never drink alcohol. In other words, alcohol can easily become a gateway drug to the “hard” stuff.

Then there’s some of the direct physical impact of alcohol itself, such as alcohol-induced liver disease; and, lest one be duped into thinking it’s the kind of disease that comes only after a lifetime of guzzling, the fact is that this disease, also known as cirrhosis of the liver, is the seventh leading cause of death among young and middle-aged people.

Of course, Jeremy wasn’t thinking about all these things; he was thinking only about Sally. But then school ended, Sally moved away, and all he had were memories, however blurred at times, of Sally and Sally’s locker. And, of course, he had something else to help him remember: a drinking problem that, even today in his 20s, just won’t go away, no matter how hard he tries. ☞



Photo: Joel D. Springer

W

hy do you suppose a nice girl like Shana Matthews would want to spend her time hanging out with a loathsome bacterium like *Escherichia coli*?

The answer to that question was broadcast on dozens of television shows and circulated in prestigious publications like the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *USA Today*.

The reports all centered around Shana Matthews, an energetic sunny-blond 14-year-old from Palm Bay, Florida, who used the nasty *E. coli* bacteria as her catapult into the world of genetic science. In fact, conducting a science project about the factors that influence *E. coli* will be a major step toward preparing her for her future career.

Other people immediately realized the value of her project and considered her research to be an important contribution to the slow and steady growth of genome applications. As a result, Shana was named the first-place winner of the Discovery Channel's Discovery Young Scientists Challenge, floating to the top amid 52,000 entries. All of those hours in the lab netted Shana a \$10,000 scholarship and a trip to visit the Roslin Institute in Scotland.

The competition was vast, and science project ideas are as numerous as grains of sand on the beach. So, how did she manage to eclipse all of the other science projects entered in the contest?

By thinking with her heart, first and foremost.

"It really all started because the people that I love suffer from genetic diseases," Shana explains. "My dad and grandma have diabetes, and my mom is affected by a genetic eye disease. There is hope that through scientific solutions we can cure these diseases."

With a well-deserved bad reputation, *E. coli* is usually associated with undercooked meat and is responsible for an estimated 73,000 cases of infection and more than 60 deaths in the United States each year. Scientists have begun uncovering ways to utilize *E. coli* to make helpful new products that encourage good health instead of causing harm to people. In lab experiments, *E. coli* has proven that it can take directions from a little enzyme called plasmin and act on those instructions to manufacture a new substance.

"*E. coli* is like a chemical factory," Shana explains. "It will carry out whatever task the plasmin directs it to do. For example, the drug taxol, used by cancer patients, has always been harvested from the bark of a yew tree. Scientists figured out the gene sequence, like a code that makes up the substance found in the yew. Now we can put the gene sequence in a little plasmin and combine that with the *E. coli*, and the *E. coli* will make the drug substance for us . . . no more chopping down all of those trees!"

Shana's science project focused on how to have the best conditions for the *E. coli* to perform the desired outcome. She experimented with seasoning times, salt solutions, and other environmental factors that aid *E. coli* in its transformation.

After completing the science project Shana won a first-place prize at her school, which allowed her to be considered for the Discovery Young Scientists Challenge. The Discovery Channel then mailed Shana a "bid" form, which she filled out and returned. From that point on, it was up to the judges.

"I was so excited when I finished the project, and I was happy that I had challenged myself to do something difficult. I felt like I did a good

job, but I never thought that it would lead to all of this," Shana says.

It is important to note that her success didn't occur overnight. Shana started doing science projects in the second grade and has kept feeding her insatiable curiosity by learning new things both in school and outside the classroom.

Doing science projects has helped Shana have a focus. "Contests like these keep you going, otherwise it would seem like you are doing all of this work and no one cares. The competitions point out the next step and prove that people are interested in what young scientists can accomplish," she says.

Shana is grateful for family and friends who have impressed her to continue with her endeavors. "I am really lucky to have the help and guidance of my science research teacher, Mr. Richard Regan. He could work in so many different fields, but he chooses to teach junior high kids, and that is really cool." Her dad, who has a degree in chemistry and works for a company that makes computer chips and wafers, also inspires her.

Shana's keys to success include perseverance, which has unlocked many doors in her quest to make a tiny ripple in the gene pool. She shares that a lot of her work on the project included personal Internet research. "This stuff isn't part of the curriculum you learn at school," she says. "I spend hours collecting data that scientists are recording on the Net. You have to go after the information wherever you can find it."

In addition to winning first place for her science project, titled "An Investigation of the Factors Affecting Colony Transformation Efficiency Rates," Shana won a special prize called the Travel Channel Dream



on a research project about the sea grass in the nearby Indian River. Shana explains, "The boaters and developers are taking away the sea grass and the animals that depend on it. I am working on starting a program to restore the sea grass. Also, we want to find an effective way to detect water-borne viruses."

With her goals firmly hitched to science Shana hopes to continue her education at an Ivy League college. "I'd love to go to a cool university like Harvard, Stanford, or Yale," she con-

Working Toward a Cure

by Michele Deppe



Science Trip. That honor was given to her based on an essay she wrote explaining that her dream science trip would be to go see Dolly, the famous cloned sheep. She will make her journey to Scotland to see Dolly and to investigate the normally closed-to-the-public Roslin Institute.

What is it about science that can keep her coming back to research projects year after year? Shana thinks that science is intriguing because of its constant development. "The thing I like about science is that it is always changing," Shana states. "Math is always the same; so are history and English. But the further we delve into science, the better things can get. By

discovering even small changes we can make life better for people."

Busy outside of the lab, too, Shana is a member of two soccer teams, and coaches one as well. When she isn't playing soccer, she serves as the captain of her cheerleading squad. Her favorite indulgence is just hanging out with friends, going shopping, talking, and laughing a lot. Partying and using alcohol and drugs aren't things Shana would include in her entertainment, and she thinks that is a sure way to lose sight of her dreams.

Even friends and her love of sports can't divert Shana from plunging into science whenever she gets the opportunity. Currently she is working



fesses. "I hope to become a physician and specialize in genetics. I want to keep working to find better solutions for diseases and more effective medical treatments." Perhaps one day it will be Shana who finds the cure for our common diseases, and she might just use that nasty old companion: E. coli. 🦠

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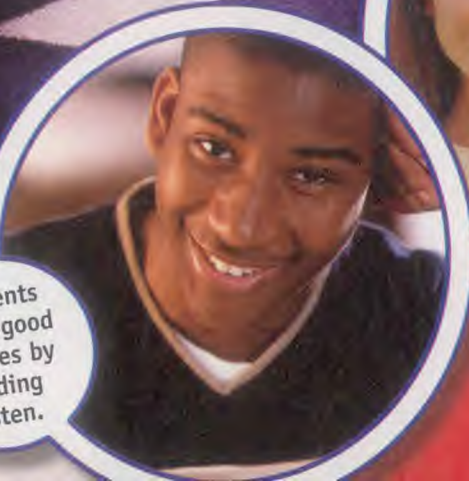
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