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April 2007

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to Be an
Awesome
BABYSITTER

The
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EDITOR
Céleste Perrino-Walker

DESIGNER
Bill Kirstein

EDITORIAL COORDINATOR
Jocelyn Fay

VP PERIODICALS
Richard Tooley

SALES DIRECTOR
Ron Clark

EDITORIAL CONSULTANTS

Hans Diehl, Dr.H.Sc., M.P.H.

Winston Ferris, M.A.

Allan Handysides, M.B., B.Ch.

Gary Hopkins

Peter N. Landless, M.B., B.Ch.

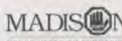
Stoy Proctor, M.P.H.

Francis A. Soper, Litt.D.

DeWitt Williams, Ph.D.



Member of the
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America



YOUTH TO YOUTH



Have a Care

OK, here's the thing—you can go for a walk right now, this very minute, and sure, you'll find maybe some gum wrappers, soda cans, or coffee cups on the side of the road or in the gutter or by the sidewalk. But do you know what you're going to find more of than anything? Do you know what you're going to find so much of that you could fill the bed of an ordinary pick-up truck without even trying?

I'll tell you what: cigarette butts, beer bottles, liquor bottles, beer cans, and empty cigarette packs in every brand imaginable. You'll probably even come across lit cigarettes that someone just tossed out the window without even bothering to put out first. Hope you're not out walking in your bare feet. Ouch! So what I want to know is . . . why? Why are people who drink and smoke such litterbugs? Why do they think it's perfectly fine to toss their litter out the windows?

Do you want to know what I think? I figure that if you don't care about what you're putting in your body, why would you care about the earth, clean streets, or what other people have to step on, pick up, or look at?

Which, if you think about it, is another reason not to drink, smoke, or do drugs. Deciding to make positive choices and stay away from drugs, alcohol, and tobacco is another way of saying, "I care. I care about my body and my health. I care about your lungs enough not to pollute the air you're breathing too. I care about the lives of all the other people on the road with me so I won't endanger them by drinking. I won't take drugs and then pull crazy stunts I won't remember that put people at risk for injury and disease. I care."

How about you? Do you care? Decide today to make your corner of the world a better place and have a care too.

Until next time, have fun, be cool, and make good choices,

Céleste Perrino-Walker
Editor



We've released a travel bug! A travel bug is any item that's tagged with a special ID tag. It travels from cache to cache carried by geocachers. Ours is a brass Community Crusade Against Drugs shield. Its travel bug number is 601996. To track its travels go to our new Web site, www.listenmagazine.org, and click on the "Where's Our Travel Bug?" link.

TURNING POINT

*We think that if we tell ourselves
the lie long enough it will
become truth."*



Deep in my gut something churns. It's sharp and biting and familiar. It's the lie that's living in our family. It has lived with us for as long as I can remember. We tell it to ourselves and somehow think it has the power to hold things together.

My father's truck rolls up outside the office tired and hurting—a willow branch tangled across the windshield. I crinkle my eyebrows and reach for the door.

"Don't get in," Sheryl says as I slide across the seat. The cab smells of alcohol.

"Sorry I'm late." He gets out of the truck and wrestles the branch free. I wonder where he went off the road, if anyone saw, if anyone was hurt.

"Get out," Sheryl demands, remaining stubbornly on the sidewalk.

Dad is climbing back in. "Your mother has dinner waiting." His voice is thick, his words muddled. He fumbles with the gearshift, and the truck jerks forward.

"Rachel, get out." Sheryl pulls at my arm through the still-open door. I feel torn, disloyal, but I move in her direction. Then he stomps on the brake.

"Go. Get out then!" He yells, and I climb down. We stand on

By Ruth Schiffmann

the sidewalk and watch him pull away.

"I'm calling Mom." Sheryl marches inside.

At home we all pretend nothing has happened because we don't know how to deal with this. We don't want to make him mad. We think that if we tell ourselves the lie long enough it will become truth. And so Mom puts dinner on the

toward me, and I want to evaporate into the night. I step off the sidewalk out of reach of the streetlight, behind a maple tree that has stood and witnessed the mistakes of hundreds of years.

Slowly he passes. Then the brake lights shine red like the heat in my face. My breath comes short and quick. I should get in the truck. I should take his keys away. I should

all drunken things with. Everything will be OK.

The next week my father does not come for us. Sheryl has arranged with her date to pick us both up from work. I think they will drop me off at home, but there is a careful of people, and they seem not to mind one more. We stop at one of their homes. Sheryl seems comfortable here, but I am not. There is beer and



table. Everything will be OK. Sheryl asks if she can go out on a date. Everything will be OK. I talk about rearranging the furniture in my bedroom. Everything will be OK.

I wake the next morning, and he is standing in my doorway. His eyes are teary, his voice pained. "I'm sorry," he says. "I messed up—again." He pushes the words out slowly. "I'm going to get help. I'm so sorry, Rachel." The moment is unfamiliar and awkward.

"It's OK," I say, and I mean it.

The next week when it's Dad's turn to pick me up from work, nothing has changed except that Sheryl has left early with friends. I stand alone watching a halo of light move over the trees, and my heart pushes hard in my chest. The truck snakes

tell him he needs to get help. Each thought assaults me, sits heavy on my heart, and makes me feel worthless. I stay behind the tree while he calls out for me.

Finally he drives off. I think about how I'll never be able to live with myself if he dies on the way home. I think about this as I walk—until it feels real. The tears are flowing, the fear inside me is huge, and I break into a run. I run all the way home, heartbroken and hysterical. I imagine a terrible accident. A father changed by near death. A brand-new life without six-packs and screaming. Then the house comes into view and I see his truck parked in the driveway as always, and my heart slows. My thoughts return to the familiar, the comfortable, the lie we cushion

vodka and orange juice and other bottles I don't recognize. I am amazed as I watch my sister open a beer as if she does it every day.

I sit overwhelmed and out of place when some boy takes notice of me. He speaks gently and smiles. I begin to relax. Then he excuses himself, crosses the room, and returns with two beers. He holds one out to me. In an instant the tears from every night I have cried myself to sleep fill that bottle. He presses it toward me. "No," I say. "I don't want it." I hear the lie again in my heart. Everything will be OK. But it isn't a lie anymore. Everything will be OK because I will not live with the lie any longer. I will make it truth by changing my future.

"No," I say again. "I don't want it."



By Vannetta Chapman

All addictions are monsters, but this one's the classic, two-headed kind. Mostly because it's legal and it's everywhere, and you don't really see it coming or why it's a bad thing. After all, everyone's doing it. Your friends. Your folks. Even your teachers. So it can't be all bad. Right? Not exactly.

Caffeine addiction is taking the country by storm. Just look at the Dow Jones if you don't believe me. If you bought Starbucks stock a few years ago, you're feeling pretty good about your portfolio right now. Wait a minute; you probably don't have a portfolio yet. If you're reading this, you've probably been to Starbucks, though. Try driving by any afternoon or evening. The place is lined with teens. It's the new hangout.

Maybe a latte isn't your cup of caffeine, though. That's all right. You can purchase a monster drink at your local school. That's right. You can pick one up on your way to math. It might get harder to purchase the 16-ounce, though, because of tougher nutritional guidelines—not because of caffeine content. It's the sugar the feds are watching.

Consume all the caffeine you want.

This is why you can get just as much caffeine from a can of pop as you can from a monster drink. In fact, soda is still the caffeine of choice in an informal survey I took. Sixty-six percent of students preferred soda over coffee or monster drinks. The classics always rule.

So what's the problem?

Addiction, man. It's never good when someone or something else is calling the shots.

One teen explained it this way, "I think it affects me in a bad way because I drink it to wake me up. I am addicted to it. I know I need to stop, but I love it." Dude, check out a 12-step program. Or get a buddy. Like Java Joe, who writes, "Caffeine affects me in a weird way. At first I am really awake, but then I immediately come down, and I want to go to sleep. That's a good thing for me, because I need the sleep." Well yeah, unless you're drinking the stuff to stay awake at work (24 percent of teens who responded to my survey), to study (38 percent), to wake up in the morning (21 percent), or to stay awake at night (17 percent). It's pretty safe to say we have issues here.

In other words, it's an artificial thing. We're using caffeine to stay awake when our bodies are telling us we should be asleep. What a drag, because eventually we need the z's.

At this point Jodi Mindell comes into our discussion. According to Dr. Mindell (www.Webmd.com), teens are more tired today than ever. "One out of four high school students are falling asleep in school at least once a week." Now that can hurt your grade. Assignments aren't the only thing you might be missing,

though. Mindell goes on to explain that things can get even more serious when teens don't get the sleep they need. "Fifteen percent of teenage drivers are driving drowsy at least once a week." Sleeping through English is one thing, but sleeping through a stop sign is another.

Dr. Mindell attributes this sleep deprivation directly to the teenage caffeine habit. "Teenagers who drink caffeine are twice as likely to fall asleep in school." It'll wake you up for a minute, but then you crash.

Giving it up isn't easy, though. We like our caffeinated drinks. After all, 72 percent of teens in my little informal survey agreed that caffeine is a drug. It's just a drug we think we can handle. It's a drug that isn't really a problem—yet. Until they fail that class. Or run that stop sign.

Some of the teens I surveyed are taming the beast. One teen who recently gave up caffeine explained it this way, "I don't think caffeine could ever affect you in a good way. All caffeine does to your body is make your heart race faster and keep you awake whether you're tired or not. It can't be good. I think caffeine affects me in a bad way. Even though it keeps me awake, I do not believe it is good to interfere with our body and its need for sleep."

Sleep is what we all desperately need to get the grades, work the job, enjoy life.

Caffeine's a quick fix, but it comes with a price.

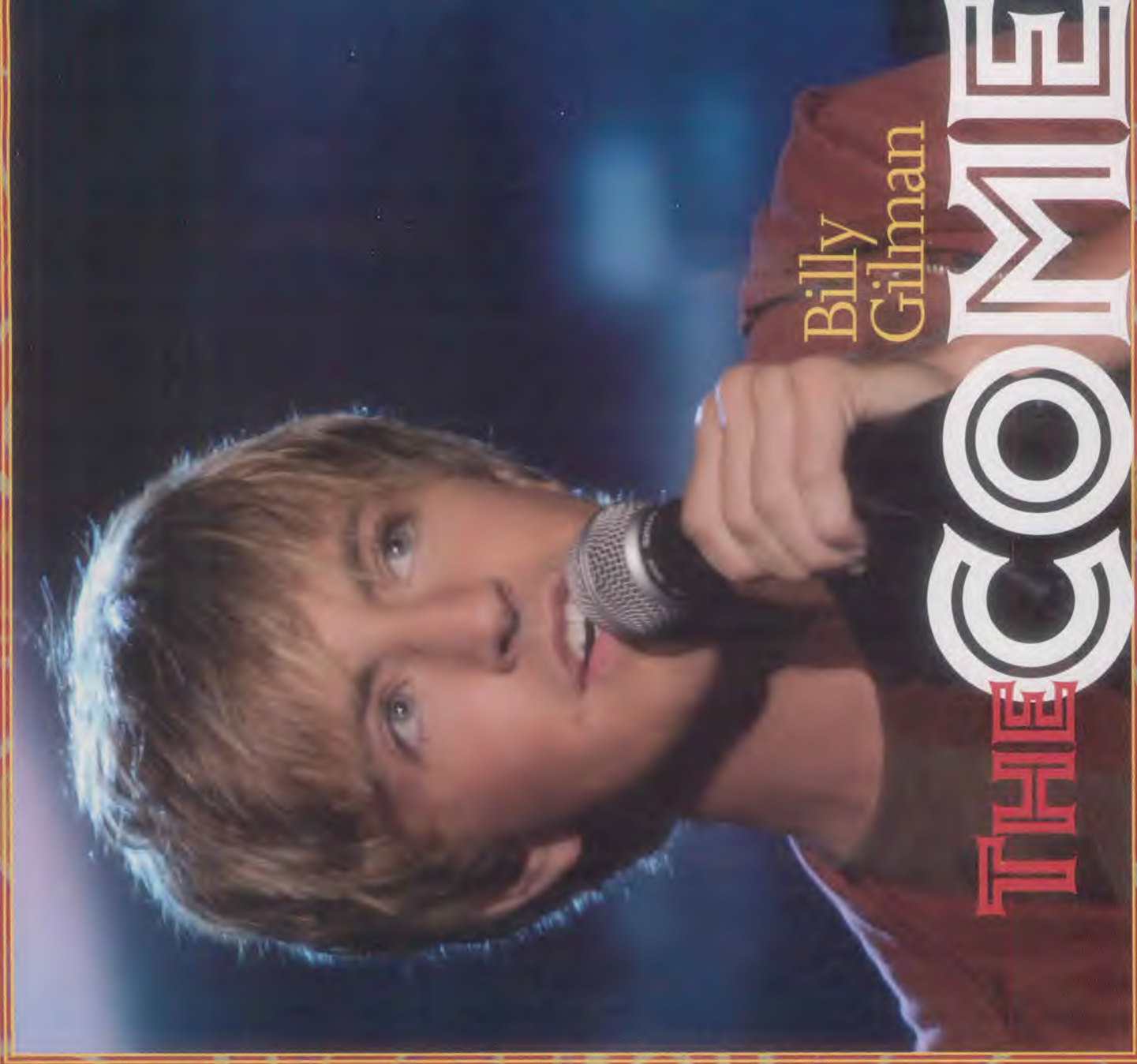
This monster may be a legal one, but don't let it rule you. Kick the habit. Get some sleep. Wake up feeling like your old self—the one who knew what it was like to have a natural source of energy.

Addiction



**WE'RE USING
CAFFEINE TO STAY AWAKE**

WHEN OUR BODIES
ARE TELLING US
WE SHOULD BE
ASLEEP.



Billy
Gilman

THE GO-MIE

"Dream big," Billy urges.

By Elisabeth Deffner

What would you do if there was something preventing you from participating in your favorite activity—and you couldn't be sure when or if you'd be able to participate in that activity again?

For singer Billy Gilman, the answer was straightforward. When a doctor at a voice clinic advised him not to speak or sing until his voice stopped changing, he did just that. He tried to speak as little as possible, and he told his agent he couldn't take on any more bookings.

It was the only decision he could logically make. But it wasn't an easy one, says Billy, now 18.

"I was a wreck," recalls the Rhode Island native. "It was tough. People would speculate, and they would assume, 'He's wrecked his voice.' There were headlines all over the place. But I didn't wreck it! It was just growing."

Worst of all, Billy felt stuck. His life had been moving along in the direction he'd

always wanted to go and now he didn't know what he was going to do.

The Road to Stardom

When Billy was 3 years old he watched a television special celebrating the anniversary of Sea World, an amusement park in southern California. His mother figured the toddler would enjoy watching the dolphins and whales, but Billy's attention was caught by something completely different: country singer Pam Tillis, who performed on the show.

"Forget the whales," he says with a laugh. "I was listening to her."

His family had taped the special, and when it was over Billy rewound the tape to listen to Pam Tillis's performance again. "By the time I'd listened to it twice I had the song down pat," he says. "I looked at my family and said, 'I'm going to sing with her one day.'"

He'd always been surrounded by classic country music, listening to records by Eddie Arnold and Patsy Cline. So that was the kind of music he gravitated toward singing. Billy started performing at school and church events, and by the time he was

KID
BAC

"If you have dreams, go for them."



For more on Billy's work as the Muscular Dystrophy Association's youth chairman, check out <http://www.mda.org/comm/prog/youth.html>.



8, his grandmother suggested taking him to a vocal coach for more intensive training. That was when Billy met Angela Bacari, who is his manager and still coaches him vocally.

"I fell over on my couch," she recalls with a chuckle. "He was just so incredibly talented . . . and had passion unending for his singing."

Billy attended the local school up to sixth grade and did most of his performances on the weekends. His first album, *One Voice*, was released when he was 11 years old. His schedule was soon so filled with performing that he had to leave public school in favor of private tutoring. "I was just loving every minute of it," he says. "I wanted this to be my life."

So when the doctors told him that that life was over—perhaps temporarily—he didn't know what to do. "I thought, It can't happen to me—there's too much on the line," he says.

But it did happen to him. And for three years Billy Gilman's singing career was over.

The Road Back

Billy continued to live in the public eye, though. At age 15, the Muscular Dystrophy Association invited him to be its youth chairman. He has traveled around the country

speaking on behalf of the MDA, urging young people to get involved in this organization that raises awareness of, and funds for, research into neuromuscular disorders. "He's never tired when it comes to MDA, no matter what," says his manager. "He says, 'I never want to get old enough not to be their youth chairman.'"

"It's an unbelievable opportunity to do that and to

meet all these kids and adults that suffer with these diseases," says Billy. "You really realize, hey, your life is pretty good."

That was an important message for him to remember during those difficult years when he couldn't sing. Then, in early 2005, he made an exciting discovery.

"I woke up and it was like a switch turned on," he says. "[My voice] was so strong, and it wasn't hoarse."

He immediately called his manager and went over to see her. They ran through some vocal exercises and realized that yes, Billy's voice was back—but it was different. "I lost some high notes and gained a lot of low notes," he says with a chuckle.

"The relief, the stress, the worry, was off my shoulders. Now there's a future again. Now we're in the process

of building back up to where we've left off." In September he released a new album, *Billy Gilman*.

The ability to sing again is a relief in more ways than one. "I knew that my voice was my purpose," he says. "I know I'm meant to sing—to what capacity I don't know yet—but that is what I was put on this earth to do. That's what I feel."

When he couldn't sing anymore, he didn't just lose an activity he enjoyed—he lost his purpose in life. And so he started thinking about what else he might like to do. He'd been so focused on singing for so long it was hard to imagine there might be another career path for him to follow. Eventually he did develop a "Plan B," though. If his singing career falters, Billy plans to go to culinary school.

Most kids don't choose their future career at the age of 3! So what do you do if you aren't sure what your talents or interests are? "Dream big," Billy urges. "If you have dreams, go for them. When you find your path, just go for it, whatever profession it may be."

And, most important, make sure you stay true to those dreams and don't get distracted by dangerous activities that can turn your life upside down. For Billy, who has the support of his parents, grandparents, and manager, it has been easy to say no to drugs, alcohol, and tobacco—even though in his line of work those substances are always readily available.

"It's so accessible, you don't even have to ask. It's just there," he says. "It is not the answer. There's so much more to live for than to get caught up in that."

BILLY GILMAN DISCOGRAPHY

One Voice (2000)

Classic Christmas (2000)

Dare to Dream (2001)

Music Through Heartsongs (2003)

Everything & More (2005)

My Time on Earth (2006)

Billy Gilman (2006)

By Richard G. Edison

GOOD FOR YOU

Don't Call Me SUGAR

"Sugar in the morning, sugar in the evening, sugar at suppertime . . ."

For too many of us the words to this old song describe our daily diet. We Americans love our sugar! Each of us, on average, eats the equivalent of 20 teaspoons of sugar per day. Face it—we have an overdeveloped sweet tooth! And it shows. America is fast becoming the fattest nation on earth. So what can be done to satisfy our sweet tooth without ruining our health? Are artificial sweeteners the answer? Let's look at some sweet and some not-so-sweet facts about these sweet treats:

* **There are five sugar substitutes on the market—saccharin, aspartame, neotame, sucralose, and acesulfame potassium. They are used in everything from breakfast cereals and gum to soda and cookies.**

* Saccharin is up to 700 times sweeter than sugar. Now, that's sweet!

* **During World Wars I and II saccharin came to the rescue when severe sugar shortages developed.**

* Saccharin causes bladder cancer in rats. Since you're probably not a rat, you may not be too worried by this news. However, a study by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the 1970s suggested that using more than six servings of saccharin per day might cause bladder cancer in humans. But in 2000 the National Cancer Institute determined there was no clear evidence that saccharin caused cancer in humans.

* **Aspartame was approved by the FDA in 1981 and is 180 times sweeter than sugar.**



* Eating foods containing aspartame results in the production of modest amounts of methanol, formaldehyde, and formate in your body. Formaldehyde? Don't they use that to embalm bodies? Yummy!

* **People with phenylketonuria, a rare genetic disease, should avoid aspartame. It contains an amino acid, phenylalanine, which their body has trouble processing.**

* Another amino acid in aspartame, aspartic acid, can cause brain damage in humans at high doses. However, the FDA doesn't believe consumers could eat enough aspartame to cause any problems.

* **A study by the European Ramazzini Foundation in 2005 linked aspartame usage to two cancers, leukemia and lymphoma. This study is being reviewed by the FDA right now.**

* The National Cancer Institute says there is no credible evidence that the other three artificial sweeteners—neotame, sucralose, and acesulfame potassium—cause cancer.

* **Artificial sweeteners may help make you fat! That's the conclusion of a recent study at Purdue University. Researchers found that artificial sweeteners may interfere with our natural ability to gauge the caloric content of foods based on their sweetness. This may make us overeat and gain weight. Not so sweet, huh?**

Although available evidence indicates that artificial sweeteners are probably safe, questions still remain. So what can you safely do when that sugar craving hits? Why not try nature's candy? Fruits such as apples, pears, melons, strawberries, and bananas are deliciously sweet and packed with vitamins and fiber.



The sugars in dried fruit are even more concentrated. Either way, fruit will satisfy your sweet tooth every time—naturally!

By Richard Edison,
PA-C (Physician Assistant-
Nationally Certified)

By Elisabeth Deffner

Porno Problem

Grammy-winning gospel singer Kirk Franklin had a secret: since he was 8 years old, he revealed on the November 30, 2005, episode of *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, he'd been addicted to pornography.

Nothing could drag him away from his sexually explicit videos. Even after he married a woman he loved, he continued to watch the videos secretly.

In an attempt to break the habit, he drove to a dumpster in the middle of the night and threw away his porn collection—but later that night he got back in the car, drove back to the dumpster, and gathered it all back up.

Digging through the trash in the middle of the night—that was the turning point for Franklin. It pushed him to share his struggle with his wife, and together they have worked through his addiction. Now, he says, he's been “clean” for several years.

But for millions of people across the country, the porn addiction is an ugly reality that they just can't escape. According to Family Safe Media, pornography is a \$57 billion worldwide industry. Twelve percent of all Internet pages are pornographic.

Before the Internet became so prevalent, there were plenty of opportunities for people to view pornographic images or read pornographic material—videos, magazines, and books. But now that people can easily access pornographic Web sites in the privacy of their own homes, the problem is growing. It's part of a larger issue called “sexual addiction,” which is “any kind of sexual behavior that a person continues to engage in despite negative consequences,” says Dr. Omar Minwalla, the clinical supervisor at the Sexual Recovery Institute in Los Angeles.

And, he adds, it's actually a substance addiction.

The Biochemical High

The biggest difference between most types of substance addiction and sexual addiction is that addicts usually put substances *into* their bodies to achieve a high. In sexual addiction, though, the substances addicts are hooked on are already inside their body: the endorphins, adrenaline, and other biochemicals that rush through the body as it becomes sexually aroused.

“The sexual addict is addicted to that experience,” says Minwalla. “It is a mood-altering experience. Thinking about getting on the Internet can already bring on the arousal process.”

Like other addicts trying to kick the habit, sexual addicts can experience withdrawal. One man trying to stop viewing pornographic Web sites described himself as feeling anxious, irritable, and suffering from unusual headaches.

And, like other addicts, sexual addicts feel ashamed of the prob-



pornography

lem. They may have a difficult time even admitting there is a problem—but being open about the issue is the first step toward recovery.

The Problems Behind the Addiction

Many sexual addicts get hooked on porn because they are trying to block out unpleasant issues that they don't want to deal with—anything from feelings of loneliness to childhood abuse.

Experts agree that sexual addiction builds a wall between the addict and the real world, isolating the addict more and more as the addiction grows. Sexual addiction can also lead to violent behavior if the addict views violent pornography and comes to connect sexual arousal with acts of violence.

Studies by social scientist Dr. W. L. Marshall found that almost half of rapists used pornography before they sought out a victim to rape. In 1985 the Attorney General's Commission reported that "clinical and experimental evidence supports the conclusion that there is a causal relationship between exposure to sexually violent materials and an increase in aggressive behavior directed toward women."

In other words, though it may seem like a fun way to block out real-life problems, pornography hurts the people who get hooked on it—and it could cause them to hurt the people around them, too.

"It's easy to just feel pleasure," Minwalla says. "[Addicts may think] I can sit in my room and feel bad that I just got beat up and my parents don't listen to me—or I can masturbate [while viewing pornography]. It's a way of medicating pain and not knowing how to deal with that pain."

The Five Signs of Pornography Addiction

1. Increase in time spent viewing porn and intensity of the images viewed.
2. Life problems in a variety of areas—school, home, friendships.
3. Losing time reserved for other responsibilities.
4. Irritability if confronted about the addiction.
5. Attempts to stop viewing pornography are unsuccessful.

The Three A's

Why is pornography addiction on the rise? Because pornographic content on the Internet is:

- *Affordable
- *Accessible
- *Anonymous

Breaking the Habit

If you think you have a problem with pornography, try discussing it with an adult you trust. You can also turn to other resources for help in facing the problem, including therapists who specialize in sexual addiction and support groups.

To break the habit, you need to follow these steps:

1. Acknowledge that you have a problem.
2. Be honest about the problem.
3. Eliminate your access to pornography.
4. Educate yourself and your loved ones about pornography.
5. Get help.



By Dallas Woodburn

Dear Dallas,

"David" asked me to the spring banquet. He's really nice, funny, smart, cute—as you can probably tell, I like him a lot. The problem: he's shorter than I am. I feel like everyone will tease me or think I'm a giant. What should I do?

—I Want a Shrinking Potion

Dear Shrinking Potion,

Peer pressure doesn't refer only to dangerous things such as alcohol and drugs—it also influences your social choices, such as who you go with to social functions. You have a choice to make: you can either decide to let

what other people think control your life, or you can do what you want to do. If you like David, why does it matter what anyone else thinks?

However, I know that's easier said than done—and I know firsthand what you're going through, because at 5'10" I have been taller than many of my crushes. But there is no shrinking potion you can take. So, sister, I would encourage you to embrace your height. Stand tall! Walk proud! Wear high heels if you want to! And go with David. I say, judge by character, not physical characteristics. If your friends make fun of you, then they're the real small ones.



Dear Dallas,

My mom seems really depressed lately. She cries a lot, and when I ask her what's wrong she just tells me not to worry and to go do my homework. But I am worried.

—I Miss My Mom

Dear Miss My Mom,

I am so sorry you have to go

through this. Your mom is obviously having a tough time right now, and it sounds like she needs more help than you alone can give her. Talk to her about seeing a professional.

Say, "Mom, you've seemed sad lately, and I'm worried—will you come with me to a therapist? I want to see you happy again." Ask her to do it not just for herself, but for you as well.

If she won't go, talk to a trusted adult—a relative, clergyman, teacher, or guidance counselor—for help getting her help. You can also check out the American Psychology Association's public education information access line at 1-800-964-2000 to find therapists in your area who operate on a "sliding-fee" system. This way you pay what your family can afford. Your mom is lucky to have someone like you who cares so much about her.



It's Your Turn . . .

Dear Dallas,

I have a moral dilemma. My best friend burned me a CD for my birthday. It's a great gift—but then I found out he downloaded some of the songs illegally. Am I also guilty of "stealing" music by keeping this CD and listening to it?

—Guilty by Association

READERS, NOW IT'S YOUR TURN TO GIVE ADVICE. SHOULD "GUILTY BY ASSOCIATION":

- (a) Keep and listen to the CD—hey, he wasn't the one who downloaded music illegally;
- (b) Throw away the CD but not tell his friend—after all, it was a gift; or
- (c) Confront his friend and give the CD back to him, saying he can't support illegal downloading?

Make your opinion heard at www.listenmagazine.org/imlistening and see how your advice stacks up against that of other *Listen* readers. You can see results from past polls there, too.





Are You a Bench Warmer?

Life is great and can bring all kinds of experiences. Are you willing to take a chance and join in or are you someone who just watches the action pass by you from the bench?

By Nadia Ali

SCORECARD

Mostly A's You're a bit of both, ready to take the spotlight, stand up for yourself, and let people know what you think. But there are times when your shyness overcomes you, and you take a seat on the bench to observe the action going on around you. You're not afraid to come out batting if you need to and will give it your best shot!

Mostly B's Bring it on! You belong in the spotlight, party hard, and are not afraid to get involved in anything. You are always ready to take on a fight and won't back down from situations. You thrive on competition such as running for class president, sports, or scoring high in school. No matter what, you always come out slugging!

Mostly C's You are a bench warmer who assesses situations from the sidelines. Although that's not a bad thing, let others know who you are by joining in every now and then. Let your voice be heard and ditch that "sweet, shy" label. Muster up some courage, take a deep breath, get up from the bench, and show them what you've got!

1. Your teacher asks you for the answer to a question. Do you:

- a. Reluctantly fumble for words?
- b. Stand up, happy to discuss it?
- c. Shrink in your chair?

2. You see a cute guy/girl. Do you:

- a. Smile in their direction like you've never smiled before?
- b. Step up and introduce yourself?
- c. Give shy smiles, hoping they'll make the first move?

3. What best describes your wardrobe?

- a. Stylish trends in distinct colors.
- b. Curve/muscle-hugging clothes to put me in the spotlight.
- c. Basic, comfortable, and durable.

4. Your idea of the ideal pet is:

- a. A pooch.
- b. An anaconda.
- c. A goldfish.

5. On an unexpected school holiday you:

- a. Depend on others to pull plans together.
- b. Call around and hit the malls or trails with friends.
- c. Catch up on your homework.

6. Your best friend doesn't have time for you. Do you:

- a. Try hard to sort things out?
- b. Find a new best friend?
- c. Give them time to come around?

7. Your favorite game is:

- a. Charades—it's all about fun.
- b. Truth or dare.
- c. Board games, of course!

8. A school party is coming up. Do you:

- a. Offer to help with the decorations?
- b. Instantly shop for clothes?
- c. Make excuses for not going?

9. Your friends think you are:

- a. Fun loving.
- b. Off the hook!
- c. Intelligent and nice.

10. When others don't agree with you, do you:

- a. Discuss it for a while and then put it down to a difference of opinion?
- b. Argue relentlessly?
- c. Give in because you don't like confrontation?

DigiRoom 62

By Dallas Woodburn

Illustration: Zach Baldus

Mr. Emerich: In this Life Skills 101 class, we're going to play a computer game called DigiRoom 62.

You will each take on a virtual personality, and your character will interact with your classmates' characters in different situations.

You will have to make tough decisions and learn from the consequences.

Today we're continuing with our virtual party!

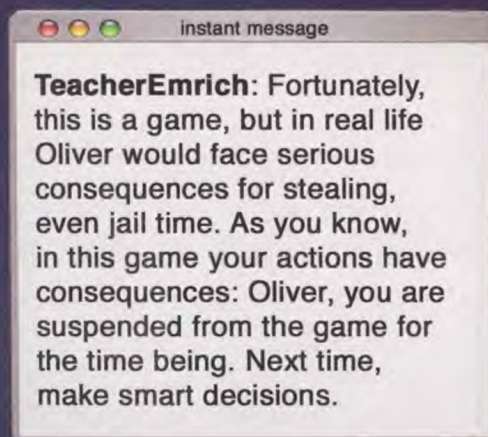
OnlineOliver: hey dude, this party's lame . . . wanna go xplore the house?

VirtuKev: sure.

OnlineOliver: check it out! this must b the master suite! sweet!

VirtuKev: wow, these people r well off.

filthy rich is more like it!



Next Issue:
Will the
DigiRoom 62
party end on a
sour note,
or will the kids
learn something
from the
situation?

Smacked DOWN:

"For a quarter of my life, I corrupted myself into thinking that the only real way to handle things and have fun is to use drugs and alcohol, and it blinded me from the real problems and made me think there was nothing wrong and that everyone just does what I do."

—Entry called "Admissions" from Brenden's journal.

By Keri Collins

Smack. Horse. Mud. Junk. Brown sugar. Hell dust. Chiva. Thunder. Call it what you want. Just don't call it harmless.

After a night of partying, Chris Cooper left Milan Malina asleep at a friend's house, figuring his buddy would be OK. Some weed, a little alcohol, and a couple caps of chiva—no wonder Milan had passed out. Then Chris got a call—Milan was in the hospital. Buddies filled the waiting room when Chris arrived. Together they went to say goodbye. When the priest pulled back the sheet, "There was Milan's face—blue, caked with blood, eyes closed for all time," Chris said. In "Texas Heroin Massacre" (Rolling Stone, May 27, 1999) Milan's father explained to journalist Mike Gray, "They said he was snoring throughout the night. The reality is, he was aspirating [inhaling] his vomit."

Heroin: A Long-term "Downer"

Inject it. Smoke it. Inhale it. Eat it. Heroin's versatility allows users to feel its effects in seconds: intense pleasure, a lack of pain, a rush.

"Heroin is about as mellow as you can get," a Plano drug dealer told Gray. What he didn't explain was that the immediate effects of heroin make it highly addictive. Eventually the body develops a tolerance to it so that more and more is needed to feel good. He didn't point out that users experience slow and slurred speech, impaired night vision, irregular heartbeat, itching, and vomiting. That heroin is an opiate that impacts the brain and nervous system, slowing down your breathing—or stopping it. That injecting the drug exposes users—through sharing of injection equipment or fluids—to HIV, hepatitis B and C, and other blood-borne viruses.

Using heroin is like wrestling with a tireless demon. What begins as a source of excitement turns into an addiction that takes over your life. Profound physical dependence on heroin forces users to spend increased time and energy getting and using the drug. Withdrawal from heroin is so painful that addicts take it to avoid agony, rather than to get the euphoric feeling they first experienced. Withdrawal symptoms include insomnia, diarrhea, vomiting, and muscle and bone pain, and can last from one



week to months. Prolonged heroin abuse results in scarred and collapsed veins, bacterial infections of the heart valves and blood vessels, liver and kidney disease, and lung complications.

Opium Poppies: A Pretty Flower's Lethal Legacy

The caps of chiva that killed Milan Malina had a long journey before they arrived at the party. In a field in Mexico, the petals from the exotic opium poppy blossoms had fallen, revealing green pods ready to harvest. The pods were processed into black tar heroin, which was packaged and shipped to the U.S.-Mexico border, and carried across in small amounts. In the States, the heroin was ground into powder and then mixed with a filler substance, packaged into gel caps, and

sold illegally. What did Milan pay for the heroin that cost him his life? About 20 bucks. The availability of high-quality heroin at low prices is one reason behind its growing use by teens and the increase in heroin-related deaths because of overdose.

Reality or Illusion?

In the Dallas Morning News Sergeant Terence Holway of the Plano Police Department Narcotics Division said, "The short story on heroin users is they want to escape reality. Heroin is a sedative. I consider it a loner drug . . . they want to escape and not live in the real world." But what's the reality of a drug addict? It's not the positive experience shown in movies, which depict pleasure, but rather withdrawal pain, contracting HIV or hepatitis, and trading sex for drugs or money. Many people think heroin—as long as they don't inject it—is not addictive or dangerous. They're wrong.

Take Brenden Thayer, who died in 2005 of a heroin overdose. Brenden snorted heroin to escape family problems, shyness, and disinterest in school. At 16, Brenden loved music and playing guitar—but sold the amplifier his dad bought him on eBay for \$700 to spend on drugs. He told his dad he was doing "a little marijuana and alcohol," and his dad believed

the illusion. Until he walked into his son's bedroom to wake him up for school and found him dead in his bed; a plate with heroin residue was the evidence found by paramedics responding to the 911 call.

Help for Heroin Addicts

Withdrawal from heroin isn't fatal, but it isn't easy. In addition to detoxification, medications can be used to reduce the severity of withdrawal symptoms. Effective treatment includes behavioral therapy to learn how to cope with life's stresses. If you or someone you know needs help, the National Alcohol and Substance Abuse Information Center is available toll-free or online 24/7 at 1-800-784-6776, or www.addictioncareoptions.com.

The Truth About Heroin

Junk

Sugar

Chiva

PRIME TIMES

REAL PEOPLE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

THE PROJECT

Josh had every opportunity to stay out of jail, but his addiction was more powerful than his will to be free. I watched this long-limbed deliberate young man from behind the camera lens every day for months. It was my job, as a documentary filmmaker, to stay impartial, to not get involved, only to observe. However, that didn't squelch my yearning to grab Josh by his lanky shoulders and shake some sense into him. For I knew the path he was choosing would ultimately kill him . . . much too young.

Josh was part of a mismatched group of 16 kids between the ages of 14 and 17, all subjects of a documentary project more than three years in the making. These kids weren't in school or living at home. They weren't hanging out with friends

By Michael Fitzner

A
long-term
adolescent drug
and alcohol
treatment
facility

INTO THE LIGHTHOUSE



or working part-time jobs. They were residents of a long-term adolescent drug and alcohol treatment facility called the Lighthouse.

I had begun making this film, *Into the Lighthouse*, three years earlier. Because my focus was an adolescent facility, there was a mountain of red tape involved with getting clearance. This was all happening just as reality television was in its infancy. To the best of my knowledge no filmmaker had ever been granted unrestricted consent to this type of facility. What I was documenting was something most people had never seen before.

THE KIDS

Ashley was 16 and presented a sweet, gentle demeanor. Joe was beaten by his addiction and willing to try anything to stay alive. Tate just wanted to stay

out of prison. Chris was angry . . . all the time. Brandon talked a good game, and Kerry tackled this new way of life like it was her last chance. Each of these kids had a story to tell. Some were casual users whose parents had finally had enough of their lying and late nights. Others were in trouble with the law or worse. Some came from well-to-do families, while others struggled to get by with only one or even no parent to help guide them. While different in so many ways, each resident of the Lighthouse drug treatment program had one thing in common. They never thought this would happen to them.

THE METHOD

Imagine being told you can't see your friends anymore. Imagine having your favorite clothes, your music, your makeup, your life stripped from you and replaced with something foreign. Getting sober is as much about shifting a person's fundamental belief about their world as it is about not drinking and taking drugs. To accept that the way you have become accustomed to doing things is more than likely going to lead you to a troubled and unfulfilling future is tough to swallow. No one wants to be wrong. No one wants to be told that they have to change, but that's the way it was in the Lighthouse. However, here's what most of the people I followed failed to understand when they first came through the doors of treatment. Thrust into an environment where they had to eat, sleep, and interact according to someone else's wishes, they were given a gift. It was the gift of a second chance.

In an interview with one of



the counselors, I asked, "Isn't what you teach here a form of brainwashing?" "Yes," they replied. "But if you're a kid who is getting in trouble with your parents or the law because of your behavior, possibly has poor grades because of using or just not caring, has poor self-esteem, and is increasingly uncomfortable in your own skin, your

brain probably needs some washing."

THE UNEXPECTED

I must admit, what I expected to encounter while shooting this film was a series of violent outbreaks and escape attempts haphazardly masterminded by a group of outwardly belligerent teenagers. What I got was the exact opposite. Admittedly, some simply followed the letter of the law, knowing that they couldn't be kept inside forever. But there were those who deep down welcomed the change. Indeed, they struggled with the rules and regulations put in place to help them, but eventually saw this experience as a means to a better end.


Once released from the Lighthouse only a few of the 16 kids I followed were able to stay sober and begin to achieve the kind of life they had once envisioned. They got "the gift."

Others from the group had to give treatment another more earnest attempt sometime later. Still others simply slipped away, winding up in jail or disappearing altogether, their addictions growing stronger, their friends and family fearing the worst. So does this mean treatment doesn't work? On the contrary. What *Into the Lighthouse* teaches is that treatment isn't for everyone. In fact, it's not even for the ones who need it. Treatment is for the ones who want it.

Into the Lighthouse is now showing on the Documentary Channel. The DVD is distributed in the U.S. through the Documentary Channel Store online and is being distributed throughout Australia by Frontrow Video.

How to Be an Awesome Babysitter

By Penny A. Zeller



How can you go from being an “average” babysitter to being an “awesome” one with no shortage of calls to earn spending money? What are some extra things you can do to convince parents you are the one for the job? Here are six tips to get you started!

1. Ask questions. Are there certain things the child cannot eat? What time is bedtime? Where can the parents be reached in case of an emergency? For an infant, be sure you know where the diapers, wipes, and bottles are located.

2. Take a babysitter training course. Sally Herrholz is the executive director of Safe Sitter, which helps to train safe, nurturing babysitters. “We are a national nonprofit organization. We’ve been in existence since 1980,” says Herrholz. When you successfully complete the Safe Sitter training course, you will receive a completion card at the graduation ceremony. The program is available throughout the United States and in England through churches, schools, hospitals, and fire departments. Besides rescue skills, Herrholz says there are other important things babysitters will learn through the course. One of those things is how to stay calm in a scary situation and provide comfort to the child.

Another important thing is how to keep yourself safe while babysitting, including how to safely screen potential jobs. “Don’t put yourself at risk,” cautions Herrholz. “Don’t advertise on the Internet or public places [that you are looking for babysitting jobs],” she adds. Also, do not babysit for people you do not know.

For more information on Safe Sitter, log on to www.safesitter.org. On this site you will also be able to find out locations of a Safe Sitter class near you.

3. Learn CPR, first aid, and the Heimlich maneuver. Being certified in all three of these life-saving techniques is not only valuable, but makes you more valuable. Check out your local YMCA, Red Cross, fire and rescue organizations, or community college for available times and dates of classes. Be sure to sign up for infant and child CPR, as some classes are adult CPR only. Once you have passed the class you will be given a card showing you are certified.

“No one should become a babysitter until they know how to rescue a choking child,” says Herrholz.

Remember, safety first! Parents will tell you that their child’s safety is the most important thing to them. Be sure you learn good safety habits, such as not leaving the stove on and not leaving poisonous items within reach of little

hands. Do you know that small children should not eat bananas, grapes, carrots, or hot dogs because they can choke on these foods? Do you know what to do in case of a fire? In case of a power outage? In case a child has an asthma attack? Who to contact if the parents can’t be reached?

4. Play with the kids. Parking them in front of the TV for two hours is not nearly as cool as sitting down and playing with them. Children adore older kids. Can’t think of anything to keep the little ones busy? Here are some ideas for fun games children enjoy.

Infants: Babies love to be held. Grab a brightly colored book with lots of pictures, such as a book about animals. Point out the pictures to the baby and mimic the sounds each animal would make.

Toddlers: Toddlers have a lot of energy and love to play games. Find a ball and roll it back and forth with them or build a high tower with Legos. If it is nice weather and there is a dirt pile or sandbox in sight, head outdoors and build tunnels (toy cars work great on homemade roads!) or castles.

Preschoolers: Host a tea party. Bring special snacks that parents approve of, such as fun cereals or crackers. Painting, drawing, and playing preschool board games also rate high on the list for kids this age.

5. Be courteous. Call ASAP if you have a change in plans and can’t make it for your scheduled time to babysit. Have a backup person if you can’t make it. Join a friend or two in forming a “babysitting co-op” where, in the case of an illness or an unexpected event, you can take one another’s places babysitting. Be sure to get the family’s permission first.



CUT OUT THE INFORMATION TO THE RIGHT and make as many copies as necessary to take to each of the families you babysit for. Complete the information and ask if you can post it on the refrigerator or other prominent location. **Check each time before babysitting that no information has changed.**

6. Go “above and beyond.”

Don't just feed the child you are watching, but clean up afterward, too. Also, don't be a “jabber jaw.” Avoid being on the phone while you are babysitting unless it's absolutely necessary. Your top priority is being a babysitter.

Follow the above suggestions and you will have no problem getting and keeping babysitting jobs and earning that extra cash. A word of caution: once you can prove that you are a dependable and awesome babysitter, your work schedule may suddenly become very full!

SPECIAL BABYSITTING INFORMATION

for the _____

Family

Parents' cell phone number: **Emergency: 911** _____

Emergency contact name _____

and phone number:¹ _____

Police station: _____

Fire station: _____

Poison control: _____

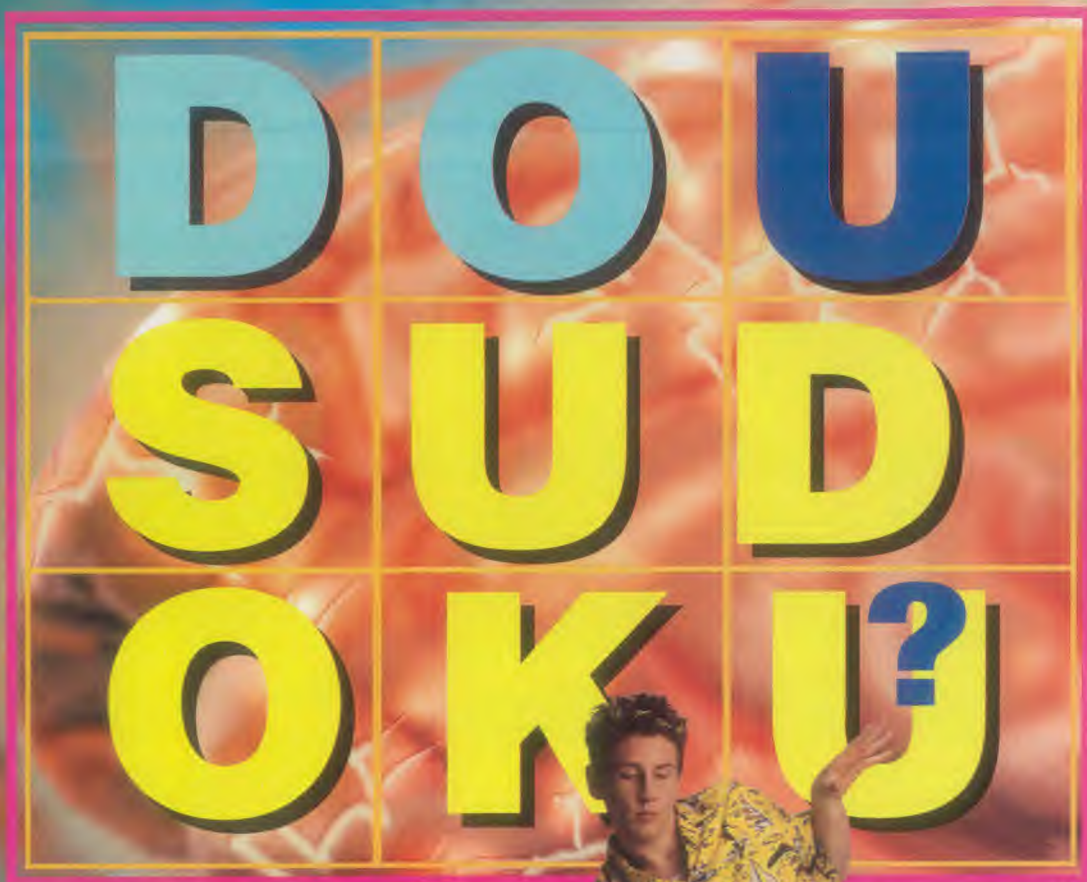
Name of pediatrician: _____

and phone number: _____

Any food allergies: _____

Other information:² _____

¹This can be grandparents or a close friend of the family.
²This can include special instructions from the parents or feeding instructions (how to mix formula, etc.)



Gymnastics for the Brain

BY MARIE LYN BERNARD

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Sudoku-style:

It certainly worked for Aniek Huijsman—the 17-year-old gamer was crowned World Sudoku Champion in October 2006, followed closely

Listen 25

Sudoku is a logic puzzle.

by 19-year-old Jan Mrozowski, of Poland. Huijsman beat out winners from more than 400,000 qualifying matches of "Multi-play Sudoku," in which four people race against one another to complete the same grid.

Nonpro Sudokuers find the game equally addictive. Though many casual players wait for the puzzle in their daily newspaper, most Web-savvy teens are familiar with Sudoku Web sites, which provide multi-player tournaments, variants on the traditional format, and—most important—a constant influx of new puzzles. Popular sites include www.samuraisudoku.com, www.sudoku.com, www.sudokuprime.com, and www.websudoku.com.

"It becomes like a high, when you're on a roll and you think you're almost done," says Nicole, 15, who has been playing for two years. "You get to this point where you are not going to give up without winning! And then you start all over again with a new puzzle!"

A Little History

Dell has been publishing Sudoku, under the name Number Place, in its variety puzzle books since the late seventies. Japanese audiences warmed to the puzzle more quickly—their alphabet isn't crossword-friendly—

and dubbed the puzzle "Sudoku," and the puzzle's popularity exploded.

In 1997 Gould found a Sudoku puzzle in a Japanese bookstore and spent 6 years developing a computer program to efficiently produce Sudoku puzzles. In November 2004 Gould published his first puzzle in *The Times* in Britain. The game was picked up by all major British papers by the end of the year. The *New York Post* caught the trend in April 2005, and now almost all major newspapers around the world carry a Sudoku puzzle. Six of the 150 books

on the *USA Today* bestseller list are Sudoku books.

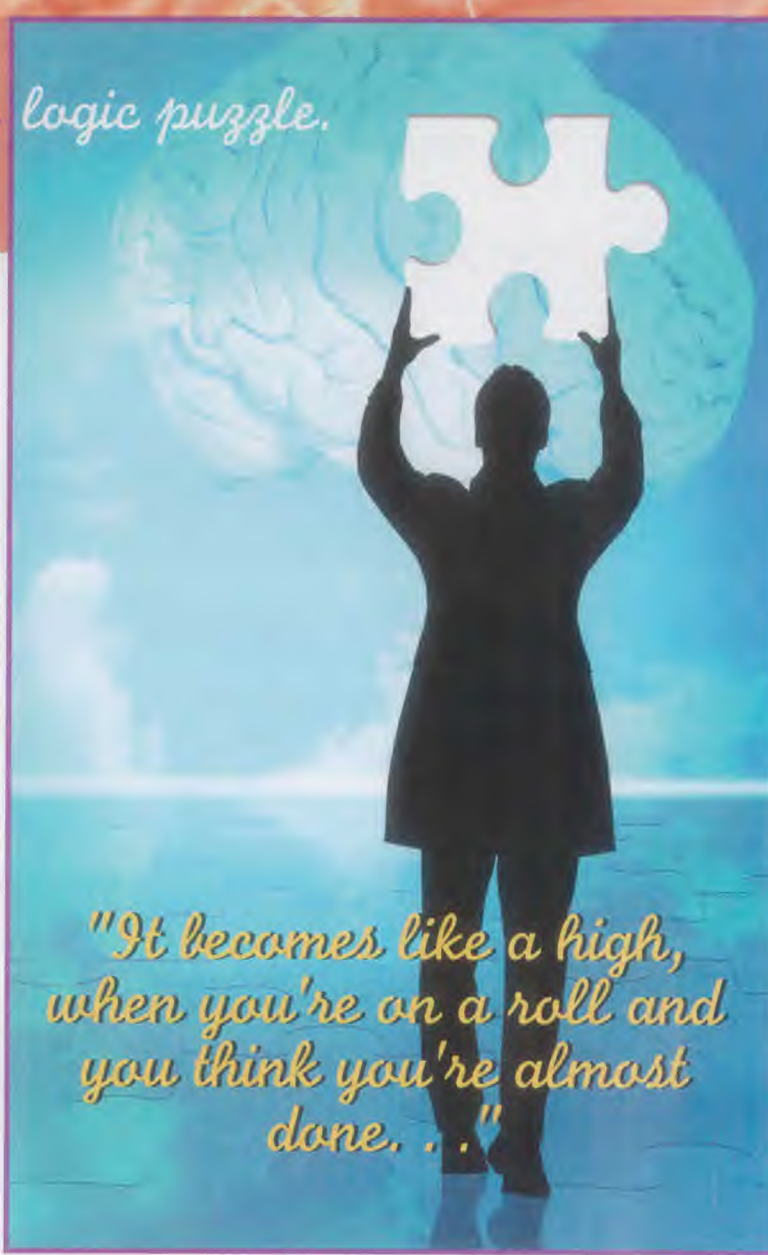
What Does the Future Hold for Sudoku?

In October 2006 Mobile-Rated released *M-Sudoku*, which you can download online and play on your cell phone. A variety of Sudoku games are offered for personal computers, including *Ancient Sudoku*, *Sudoku Quest*, and *Desktop Sudoku*. Shareware such as *Sudoku Companion* and *Sudoku Dragon* both generate and solve Sudoku puzzles for PCs and Macs.

Products such as *The Handheld*

Sudoku have been in stores for several months, and new versions for video gamers, computer users, and Web surfers appear every day.

Who knows what's next for this game, but as long as there are Sudoku players to fuel the flame, its popularity will only increase with time! Isn't it time you learn how to Sudoku?



"It becomes like a high, when you're on a roll and you think you're almost done. . ."



Rachel
Bishop

Curt
VanderWaal



What's up with that?

Please send questions to: whatsup@listenmagazine.org.

My friend played a wild drinking game at a party last weekend, and he was laughed at because he got fried so quickly. I don't drink much, but when I do, I pretend to drink a lot, because I don't want to be called a wimp. I'm a little worried that I'll get pressured to drink more if someone finds out. Got any suggestions?

—Oliver, age 17

Believe it or not, Oliver, your inability to hold your alcohol is probably a good thing. People who can “drink anyone under the table” are much more likely to become alcoholics than those who have a low alcohol tolerance. These drinkers are more likely to drink to get drunk and are more likely to hang around people who drink like they do. As a result, they often don't see that they are headed for trouble.

Unfortunately, the movies and television often glorify this sort of drinking behavior, making it seem fun and funny. However, there's nothing funny about getting drunk and doing things you'll later regret. Here are a few quick suggestions for resisting the peer pressure to drink.

The first step is to realize how many people your age are not drinking. In 2005 a national high school survey of approximately 50,000 students found that about 40 percent of tenth-grade students hadn't taken a single drink of alcohol in the past year. That's a lot of teens who are saying “no” to alcohol. Second, if the main goal of the party is to get drunk, look for another party. Finally, if you are at a party where alcohol is served, politely and assertively say that you don't drink. If you stay firm with your decision, people will generally respect you and stop bugging you. It's not always easy, but the decision to stay sober is always a good one.

Shelly, this is a hot topic right now, because style and a slender body image are so highly valued in our society. The fashion show organizers in Madrid realized that the extreme skinniness of these girls was actually encouraging eating disorders in society, and they took a huge risk by banning underweight models and publicly stating that being extremely thin is not healthy. Unfortunately, researchers are finding that some women are drawn to the modeling world because it reinforces eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia (you can learn more about these disorders and get 24-hour-a-day help at www.nationaleatingdisorders.org). While being skinny is not always bad, the intense pressures of the modeling and fashion world often push models to the edges of starvation for weeks at a time. If they don't get help, these models and others like them can ruin their health and ultimately even lose their lives.

I love how models look, but I just heard that when fashion models in Madrid get too skinny, they can't model in the show. I've tried to be very careful with what I eat so I stay thin, but now I'm confused—why are they restricting these girls on their weight when they look so good?

—Shelly, age 15

Balancing Act



I knew that drinking wasn't the only thing that my folks disagreed on.

We had an awesome assembly at school today," I told Mom as we washed and dried our dinner dishes.

I was about to tell her more when suddenly the door opened, and Dad walked in.

"Hi, dear," he said to Mom before he bent to kiss me. "Hi, Mindy."

"Hi, Dad." I could smell the stale beer on his breath and immediately understood why he had steered clear of Mom. He wasn't high or acting strange, but my mother got ticked off whenever Dad drank. The friction between them always felt awful, and I knew it wouldn't be long before the silence was so loud that I'd escape to my room.

The bad news was that this happened every day. Dad continuously showed up after dark, as soon as Mom and I had cleaned the kitchen. Even worse, my folks rarely spoke to each other. The only good news was that they didn't fight. I felt like my life was out of my control. I loved my folks, but I hated living in that house with them.

"I can't handle alcohol," Mom told me once. "I used to drink when your father and I went out to parties. I always came home and got sick. So when you were born I decided to give it up altogether."

By Diane E. Robertson



"But why do you mind Dad's drinking?"

She shrugged her shoulders and said nothing. It was up to me to figure it out. I knew that drinking wasn't the only thing that my folks disagreed on, though.

"Your father tries to tell me what to do," she said one day while we were folding laundry.

"But isn't he the boss of our family?"

Mom shook her head. "Your grandma died when I was just about your age. While your grampa worked all day, I went to school. Then I came home and took care of my four brothers and sisters. I had to cook, clean house, shop, and be a mom to them."

"Didn't they help at all?"

"Yes, but I was in charge. Even though I was a teenager, I had to

make adult decisions. That's the reason why I have a hard time yielding to your father."

I bit my fingernail and watched as she folded a pillowcase. "Why did you marry him?"

She smoothed the wrinkles out of a T-shirt before she looked at me. "I wanted to get out of that house and have an easier life."

"That's the reason you married him? Oh Mom, I can't believe you said that." I turned away so she wouldn't see the tears that sprang to my eyes.

"You ask too many questions, Mindy." She picked up the folded laundry and walked out of the room.

Why did she burden me with that information? Sometimes I wished my folks would get a divorce. Dad was gone most of the time, anyway. I knew he really loved me, and maybe that's why he stayed. He bought me presents. Usually it was something small, like a candy bar or a paperback book. Once he bought me a new winter coat. It had fur on the collar, and I loved it.

"Return it," Mom had said.

"No," he had snapped in a way that meant the discussion was over. I kept the coat.

That showed me that money was another control issue between my parents. The part that bothered me most was that I was trapped in the middle. I felt guilty accepting gifts from Dad because Mom got jealous. At the same time, I felt like I was hurting him when I had fun with her. It was a balancing act to try to make them both happy, and I always blew it.

I've learned a lot by watching my parents. Because of their differences, I realize how important it is to stay true to myself. One way to do that is to search out and spend time with people whose values match mine. They may not be easy to find, and I might get lonely at times, but in the end, that's better than just settling for whatever comes my way.



By Tamika Piper

SIGNS OF FALL

Oops! We Goofed!

In the "It Takes Wits to Knit" article in our October 2006 issue, Alex Kosztowny, who had been interviewed via e-mail, was identified as a "she" when, in fact, Alex is a guy! Alex was kind enough to accept our apology, and he sent us a great pic of him knitting so we can set the record straight. (See, I told you guys knit!)
—Ed.



Fall is a musical for the senses. Every color, sound, and smell stirs a person's emotions with beauty. The sight of the red and orange leaves dancing to the ground seems like a ballerina twirling in her crimson gown falling to the soft green carpet below her. The birds are not singing as happily as before. Do they know the chill is coming? Have they fled to different places? The geese make a perfect formation. It seems that they too know winter is coming. The lonely garden sits tired and discarded in the corner waiting for spring so it can be joyful again in its new beginnings. The smell of fresh sweet apples fills the air. They wait anxiously to be plucked from their branches. The grand finale is the wind chime's melody as it is being kissed by the cool autumn breeze.

To have your poetry, essay, or letter considered for this spot, mail it to: Editor, Listen Magazine, 55 West Oak Ridge Drive, Hagerstown, MD 21740 or send it by e-mail to editor@listenmagazine.org.

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Great Dates

Dating is fun, interesting, and exciting. It can also be disastrous and dangerous. We've got some important tips and adventurous ideas for you to consider before your next date.

Marijuana: Getting Stupid

Using marijuana probably won't

kill you—not outright. But it makes you stupid—which very well could kill you.

Prime Times: Annie Wignall's Care Bags

Thousands of children are forced to leave their homes every year. Teen Annie Wignall decided to do something positive to help them.

Banish the Moving Blues

Facing a moving experience? We'll tell you how to make it positive.

You think you're pretty smart, right?

**Celebrate
National
Library Week
April 15-21, 2007**

Today's library is not what you remember. It's even better.

Want to research your next vacation? Get homework help? Write a resume? Surf the Web? Or maybe you just want to curl up with your favorite book and enjoy some peace and quiet. It's all @ your library. Make a visit to your library a regular part of your schedule and bring the family.

A message from George Lopez about America's libraries

ALA American Library Association

The Campaign for
America's Libraries

www.ala.org/@yourlibrary