



Stuffed ■ 4



Time to
Get a Job ■ 12



Ashley
Schoenfeld ■ 30

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FEBRUARY 2009

STEPHANIE
SMITH

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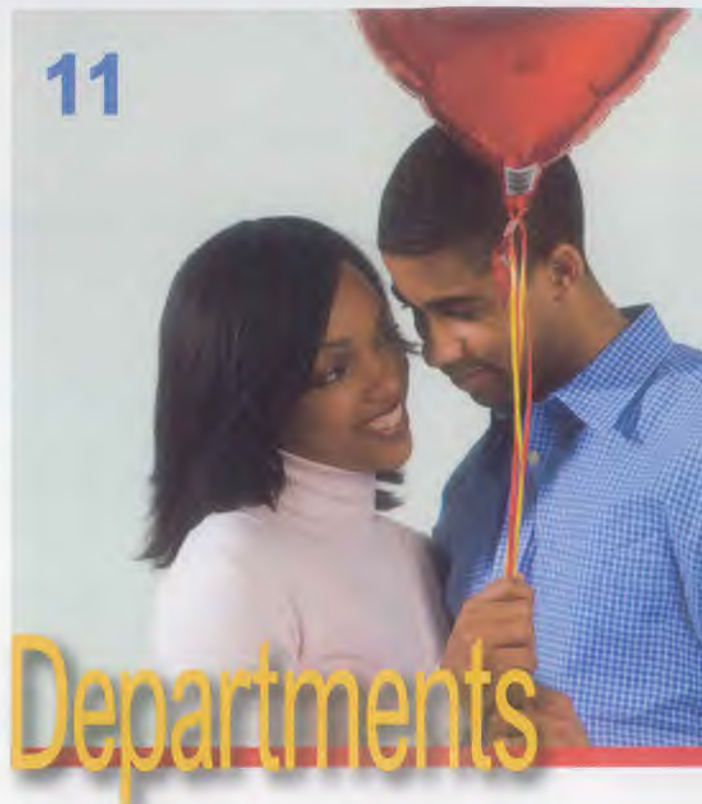
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Editor

Céleste Perrino-Walker

Designer

Bill Kirstein

Editorial Coordinator

Heather Quintana

VP Periodicals

Richard Tooley

Sales Director

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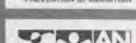
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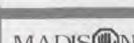
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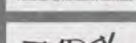
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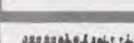
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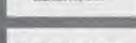
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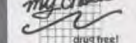
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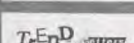
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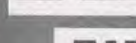
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I'm Just Saying...



Without knowing a single person in your class, I can tell you which of them everybody loves. Are you ready? Prepare to be amazed. This is the person who can always make you laugh, who drops the stress level in the room by several points on the Richter scale just by being there, who makes your day brighter by helping you see the humor in whatever happens no matter how bad it is. This is the person otherwise known as the class clown. So . . . am I right?

How, you might ask, am I so smart? How could I possibly know such a thing without knowing anything about your class? Because if humor doesn't make the world go round, at least it makes the ride more enjoyable. There's a lot of heavy stuff in life; and sometimes humor helps us deal with it. Laughing lets some steam off in an acceptable way, and helps us not take ourselves so seriously. If you can find the humor in a situation, you're halfway to coping with it.

Spread the LOL

Humor also helps when you're trying to get a sensitive or touchy point across. People who might otherwise not listen to your message will enjoy the humor of it, and they might think twice about what you're saying. Take Tim Hawkins, for example. I'm guessing that when he was in school, he was probably the class clown. Now he's a comedian and singer who has a funny video on YouTube called "I Don't Drink Beer." In fact, he's got several funny videos. He is so funny that if he doesn't make you snort milk up your nose you should check your pulse, 'cause you might be dead.

Now it's your turn. Yes, you. Pick a theme, anything you've read about in *Listen* or one of your own creation, and compose something funny to get your message across. Write a joke, a song, a video, a play, whatever. And then pass it around. Show your friends. Spread some LOL in the world and get your message across at the same time. If you want, send it to me at editor@listenmagazine.org. I'd love to see it. Maybe you'll see it in *Listen* magazine or on our Web site someday.

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



Céleste Perrino-Walker, Editor

To watch the video "I Don't Drink Beer," go to:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t4a611bJtBg>
or search for "I Don't Drink Beer," by Tim Hawkins on
www.youtube.com

LISTEN (ISSN 0024-435X) February 2009, Volume 62, Number 6. Published monthly (EXCEPT JUNE, JULY, AND AUGUST) and copyrighted © 2009 by The Health Connection, 55 West Oak Ridge Dr., Hagerstown, MD 21740. One year \$35.00 (U.S.). Outside U.S. \$42.00 (U.S.). PERIODICALS postage paid at Hagerstown, MD. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to LISTEN, P.O. Box 859, Hagerstown, MD 21741. U.S.A. and Canada, call toll free 1-877-474-6247. Outside U.S. and Canada, 1-301-393-3280. This publication is available in microfilm from Xerox University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. 1-313-761-4700. Printed in U.S.A. Unless otherwise credited, all pictures ©2009 Jupiterimages Corporation; spot images from Art Explosion Image Library.

**I tried diet after
crazy diet, but I couldn't
stick to any one
of them.**

STUFF

By Patricia A. Punt
Illustration by Rusty Barger

MY sister Beth and I grew up in a house full of chaos and drama, especially on weekends. There was always a lot of arguing and name-calling. Dad was gone a lot during the week, but when he was home he usually seemed mad about something. Some days our mother would make us dinner; some days she forgot, and we'd eat sandwiches. At mealtime Beth and I learned to eat quickly, before the next fight broke out. I don't know how old I was when I realized that both of our parents were alcoholics.

I also don't remember when I began hiding food in my room that I could eat later, away from everyone. I just know that I did it for many years, and I don't think my sister or my parents ever found out.

When I turned 16, my grandmother gave me her old car. I got my license and a part-time job. I loved working as a server at the local diner. The customers were great, especially the kids, and the money was good. For the first time ever, I felt as if I had real freedom.

That's when I began stopping at convenience stores on my way home from work. I liked being able to eat alone in the car. Just thinking about what I was going to buy made me happy. I'd eat even when I wasn't hungry, and I'd continue to eat after I was really full.

By the time I was in my late teens, I was stopping at every mini-mart or convenience store that was on the route home. I'd always start with a chocolate candy bar, and then at the next stop I'd purchase a package of cookies. During the third stop I had ice cream. Then a doughnut or cupcake followed by corn chips and pretzels. There were seven convenience stores between where I worked and where we lived.

I never wanted the cashiers to know just how much I was eating, so I'd buy only one treat at each place. Then I would go outside and eat it in my car. Alone. I couldn't help myself. In some strange way it made me feel in control of my life. It was my secret.

Now when I look at pictures of myself taken during that time, I see a young girl with curly dark hair and a sad smile. Unlike my sister, I wasn't overweight, so my addiction didn't show. But I was an addict, and food was my drug of choice.

Over and over I'd promise myself that I wouldn't ever, ever do it again. But I did. And I tried diet after crazy diet, but I couldn't stick

to any one of them. I pretty much walked around feeling like a failure.

One afternoon Beth found a bunch of the snack food wrappers in the car. I was horrified when she kept pulling the wrappers out from under the front seat. At first I tried lying. That was something else I did a lot of . . . lying. But Beth kept demanding to know where they had come from. She wouldn't leave me alone. Finally I told her the truth.



I felt really guilty, but I was also mad at myself. I realized I needed help.

The next week I joined a 12-step program that meets weekly at our local hospital. I didn't want to go that first week. I even asked Beth to go, but she refused. Finally I made a deal with myself—I would go and see what it was all about. The people were really nice, and no one

weighed me or asked me any questions. They just welcomed me. I continued to go each week. And I'm glad I did, because each session I learned something new.

Eating disorders often begin in childhood and can be a way to self-medicate. I guess I was trying to fill the emptiness I felt inside. And for the first time I met people who used food to make them feel better. Now I go to meetings instead of stopping to buy snacks.

Three years later I realize that there are different, healthier ways to deal with the stresses and conflict in my life. Talking to other people with similar problems has helped. I've also been keeping a food diary, and that has been helpful. I write down the foods I've eaten and how I'm feeling that day.

Recently Beth admitted that she too has an eating disorder, and is getting help. That's another thing I learned; eating disorders can run in

troubled families.

Today I have a different, healthier way to eat. For the first time I feel in control and really happy with myself. I'm glad I reached out for help. And I'm glad Beth is in treatment.

There is a lot more to life than just food.

IN 2004 16-YEAR-OLD QUANTRELL PRYOR, OF DEARBORN, MICHIGAN, WAS DRIVING A CAR WHEN HE WAS STOPPED BY POLICE. PRYOR PANICKED BECAUSE HE HAD COCAINE IN THE CAR, SO HE SWALLOWED THE COCAINE. ALMOST AN HOUR AND A HALF LATER QUANTRELL WENT INTO COCAINE-INDUCED CONVULSIONS AND DIED BEFORE HE REACHED A HOSPITAL. QUANTRELL'S DEATH, THOUGH UNUSUAL, IS A COMMON STATISTIC AMONG TEENAGE COCAINE USERS.

What's Cocaine?

The Web site of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) says that "cocaine is a powerfully addictive stimulant drug. The powdered hydrochloride salt form of cocaine can be snorted or dissolved in water and injected. Crack is cocaine that has not been neutralized by an acid to make the hydrochloride salt."

AKA

According to freevibe.com, cocaine has many names. If you hear someone talking about crack, coke, dust, snow, rock, or blow, those are some of the most common names for cocaine. No matter what you call it, cocaine is harmful and sometimes deadly. Some of the side effects of using cocaine can be devastating.

Side Effects

The high from using cocaine doesn't last long. Most of the time the

feelings of euphoria from cocaine use last anywhere from five to 30 minutes. After that, the side effects can kick in. The National Institute on Drug Abuse lists these side effects:

- constricted blood vessels
- dilated pupils
- increased heart rate that could lead to heart failure
- seizures and hallucinations
- headaches and nausea

Do any of these side effects sound worth it for five minutes of being high? Probably not. Don't listen to people who try to tell you there are no risks and you can do it once without getting hooked. It's just not true.

"The side effect is that doing coke always makes you want to do more coke," says Aaron, a 19-year-old cocaine user from Missouri. "Whatever amount you have is never enough, and so if there's not any more, you feel unfulfilled. And if you do more, you may not be able to sleep for a long time." Aaron adds that he doesn't know anyone who has done cocaine only once. "They decrease their use because it's not compatible with school or work any-

shares the warning symptoms. "Look for these symptoms, but be aware they can be caused by other drug use, not just cocaine," says McClanahan. "Suspect drug use if more of these symptoms are present. They are: red, bloodshot eyes; runny nose; frequent sniffing; change in eating or sleeping habits; change in school grades and behavior; change in friends; withdrawal; depression; exhaustion; carelessness about personal appearance; loss of interest in school, family, or activities; and frequently in need of money."

Speaking of money, cocaine use is expensive! Do you really want to spend your hard-earned cash on something you can't eat, play, or watch?

"Often new users are given the product to sample," says McClanahan. "As they become addicted, they are then asked to pay for the drug. Cocaine is expensive, and tolerance to it builds quickly, which means that a person needs more and more of it to get the same 'high.'" Despite all of the warnings about cocaine use, NIDA's statistics point to an alarming trend of cocaine use in America.

Cocaine

By Jessica Burkhardt

more, but they still do it when they're able to," Aaron says.

Signs of Cocaine Use

If you are not using cocaine but suspect that a friend might be, Kimberly K. McClanahan, an associate professor at the University of Kentucky and a licensed psychologist,

The Facts

The National Institute on Drug Abuse offers these facts about cocaine use in the United States in 2007:

- 2.0 percent of eighth graders have used cocaine in the past year
- 3.4 percent of tenth graders have used cocaine in the past year

- 5.2 percent of twelfth graders have used cocaine in the past year

If those facts aren't scary enough, things get worse. Much worse. According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, more than 35 million Americans (12 and older) reported at least one use of cocaine. The average age of most first-time users is 18 or older; and around 2.4 million Americans are currently doing cocaine.

To teens considering cocaine use, Aaron has a strong warning: "Don't think that you can do it and remain a recreational user, who does it only when it's available or offered to you." Once you try cocaine, you could be hooked, just like Aaron.

McClanahan also advises that if you are a teen considering cocaine use, giving up the substance may be much more difficult than you thought. "With any substance teens are more likely to become addicted more quickly than older people," says McClanahan. "This is because the brain is not fully developed until the early 20s, so influences upon it, such as drugs, can alter brain chemistry permanently."

Aaron and McClanahan both agree that cocaine is never worth a try. "I wish teens knew how easily this addiction can destroy their lives," says McClanahan. "Even people who claim to be recreational users [one to two times per week] report severe problems stemming from their drug use. I also wish teens knew that the good feelings they get from cocaine, e.g., euphoria, self-confidence, all go away when the addiction is full-blown. Once that happens, they take the drug just to try to feel normal; it's no longer fun." So are you willing to risk the rest of your life for five minutes of pleasure?

For the lowdown on cocaine, visit www.freevibe.com and use the pull-down menu to select "crack and cocaine." If you or a friend are using cocaine and want to get help, visit Cocaine Anonymous at www.ca.org, and you'll receive free and confidential advice as well as locations for meetings and downloadable brochures.



ne Kills

Reaching Her Dream—
The Right Way

STEPHANIE SMITH

*"So you don't know everything
So you cave to what they think, about you
You get lost in dreams
Of who you wanna be" ...
"Superstar."*

—Stephanie Smith, Jamie Moore, Aaron Rice

ROCK SINGER Stephanie Smith knows what she's singing about: she, too, got lost on her way to her chosen destination.

As a freshman at Greenville College, a small school outside St. Louis, Missouri, she connected with a band almost immediately. She was 18 and a band novice; the other musicians were juniors and seniors who had played with nearly a dozen bands.

"I was pretty new at it—and kind of stupid,"

recalls Smith, 24. "My entire identity became wrapped up in that, which is a dangerous thing."

The Nashville resident remembers that she was hungry for fame—and the band captured plenty of attention. Smith loved the spotlight. In fact, she says, she loved it so much that she allowed it to change who she was.

"The guys were really trying to hide things from me," she says. "One of the guys had an alcohol problem, and it was affecting his marriage. One of the guys didn't want me to know he smoked."

"My identity was so wrapped up in being a lead singer in this band that things I normally would have stood up for, I just started sweeping under the carpet."

Smith had always stayed away from substance use; she'd known people who had smoked, drunk alcohol, and used drugs. Some of them had ended up in rehab, and one had dropped out of high school after he was arrested. "That kind of thing just



Elisabeth Deffner

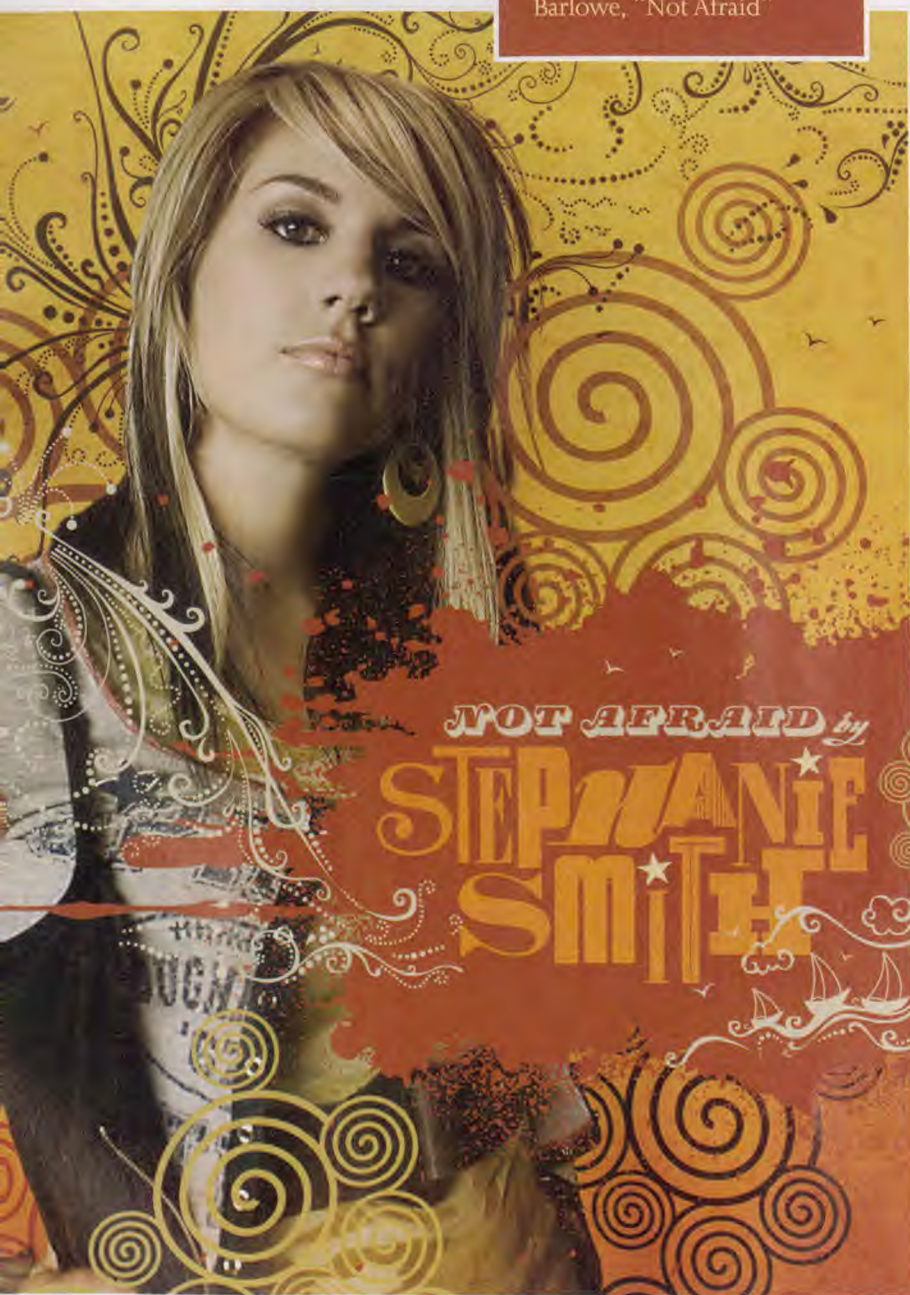


scared me away from it. Not me—no way,” she says. “To this day, I haven’t even tried a cigarette.”

She had thought her fellow band members felt the same way. When she discovered the truth, Smith tried to ignore it. But the problems didn’t go away, and in the end, they led to the band’s demise. The guys kicked her out, her mother told Smith she didn’t like the person she’d become, and Smith felt as though her life had fallen apart.

*“Sorry it’s over
I think it’s the best thing
for now
I’m takin’ the memories
I don’t want to leave them
all behind
Some were good, some
were bad,
some were in between
But I gotta do what’s right
for me.”*

—Stephanie Smith, Jamie Moore, Aaron Rice, Cary Barlowe, “Not Afraid”



“Our dreams crumbled,” she says.

Smith decided to turn her back on music. She signed up for a monthlong study-abroad class in Guatemala and spent a few weeks hauling cinder blocks up a muddy mountain to build stoves for families that couldn’t afford the appliances.

“It was a really life-changing event for me,” she says. Volunteer work is an immediate cure for someone as self-absorbed as she’d become. “The focus isn’t on you anymore,” she adds.



Meeting the people, seeing their poverty, and working to help them ignited a fire inside Smith. When she returned to school, she realized that she wanted to see and learn more. Her junior year, she signed up to study in Africa for the first semester. The impact of that experience was tremendous, as Smith experienced some of the challenges that many Africans face every day.

“For three weeks we studied poverty and development, and we lived it: we lived on one U.S. dollar a day,” she says. “You wrap your head around that for four months, then come back to the United States right around Christmastime! I walked into Wal-Mart to get school supplies for next semester, and there were two aisles of pens! I was like, I just need something that writes.”



*"Another day, and before
I begin
Something within me
says
I'm not okay, let's
address this emptiness
'Cause I'm really a
mess."*

—Stephanie Smith, Chris
Stevens, Jesse
Pennington, Steve Beller,
"Renew Me"



"Two years had gone by, and I hadn't touched music," Smith says. "I told my whole family and college campus, 'I'm never doing music again.'"

But then one morning she woke up with a new perspective. Maybe, she thought, music wasn't wrong for her—maybe she'd just been approaching it the wrong way. She decided that if she had the opportunity—if a door opened to her, so to speak—she'd give it another try.

That very afternoon she went to her college's "battle of the bands" audition to support some friends, and the door opened: the festival director spotted her and told her that a band had dropped out, and he needed someone to fill their slot. He asked Smith if she could be ready to go on in five minutes.

She said yes.

With a friend accompanying her



on the guitar, she performed at the battle of the bands—and won. The prize: two weeks later she got to sing on the main stage at a local music festival.

Her childhood idol, TobyMac, was headlining—and his bus rolled in just as Smith was performing. Some members of his band listened to Smith's performance, asked her for a

demo disk, and played it for TobyMac. The next thing Smith knew, she was talking to the musician she'd loved so much as a kid that she didn't even know that there were other musicians out there—and then they were discussing TobyMac giving Smith a contract to record with his label, GoTee Records.

"I don't think I'd ever dreamed, when I was a little girl, that my childhood idol would offer me a record deal," she says with a laugh.

After the release of her album *Not Afraid*, Smith has a contract to release three more albums on GoTee Records. She's approaching music the right way this time, she says—not focusing on the attention she gets from it, but sharing her thoughts, her feelings, her point of view with her listeners through her words and her voice. And she can't wait to see where the next open door will lead.



GOOD 4U

"Come on, baby. If you really love me, you'll . . ."

In the heat of the moment, with a hot kiss still burning on your lips, those words may seem to make a lot of sense. After all, everyone wants to love and be loved, especially at this time of year when Valentine e-mails are cramming in-boxes and heart-shaped candies are flying off store shelves. But before you let a moment of passion lead to a lifetime of regret, consider the following:



By Richard G. Edison,
PA-C (physician assistant—
nationally certified)

The vast majority of teens who have had sex wish they had waited. Reasons they cite include fear of unwanted pregnancy, risk of contracting a sexually transmitted disease, and feelings of guilt afterward.

Almost 750,000 teenage girls get pregnant each year. Teen mothers are at increased risk of living in poverty, and suffering from depression. Their children are more likely to do poorly in school, drop out early, or end up having a child as teenagers themselves.

Three million teenagers contract a sexually transmitted disease each year. The most common STDs are the human papillomavirus (HPV), which causes cervical cancer, gonorrhea, and chlamydia. Other STDs include herpes, syphilis, and AIDS. These nasty diseases can result in infertility, painful genital sores, and even death.

Sexually active teens often suffer from depression, and are more likely to commit suicide. They also are more likely to use drugs or alcohol, and have a higher risk of divorce when they do get married.

"But I use a condom," you say. Guess what? Condoms fail 15 percent of the time, and they often aren't used correctly, resulting in increased risk of pregnancy and STDs. And the birth control pill offers no protection against STDs.

OK, enough with all the negative stuff. There are some real positive benefits from choosing to say no to sex before marriage. These include:

- **No worries** about the negative consequences of sexual activity, such as STDs, unplanned pregnancies, and cervical cancer.
- **Better grades:** Teens who are abstinent are more likely to do well in school.
- **Better relationships:** Couples who choose to wait tend to get along better, and when they marry have better sex lives and are less likely to divorce.
- **A better self-image and a better reputation among your peers.** Nobody wants to be thought of as "easy." In fact, your friends will look up to you for having the courage to say no. One study found that half of teens are choosing to be abstinent, and 73 percent say it's OK to be a virgin.

Remember, in spite of what you may hear from the media, real love is not about Valentine's cards, sweet-smelling roses, or even sex. Real love is about commitment, and putting the other person first. Real love doesn't pressure you into making choices you're not ready to make. So if someday someone whispers in your ear, "Baby, if you love me, you'll . . .," be smart and whisper back, "Baby, if you love me, you'll wait."

By Rita Dickinson

Time to Get a Job

TIRED OF ASKING FOR **MONEY** FROM YOUR **PARENTS**?
FRUSTRATED THAT YOU CAN'T **GO** PLACES AND **DO**
THINGS BECAUSE YOU **DON'T HAVE** THE MONEY?
TRYING TO SAVE MONEY FOR **COLLEGE** OR A **CAR**?
MAYBE IT'S TIME TO **GET A JOB**.

Working is a great way to line your pockets with cash, but it's also a great way to learn responsibility. On the job you'll learn how to get along with people from different backgrounds and different beliefs. Keeping a job requires getting along with your teammates.

There are several things to consider when contemplating a job:

1. What are your interests? It is important to find a job that you like. Keep in mind your first job won't be your dream job; but you should find something you have an interest in. If you hate your job, you won't keep it, either by your choice or your employer's.

Consider these options when choosing a job. Do you prefer to:



- ☐ work with people?
- ☐ work by yourself?
- ☐ work inside?
- ☐ work outdoors?
- ☐ have a stationary job?
- ☐ have an active job?

2. When can you work? Take into account school, responsibilities at home, and other activities you are involved in. The more flexible you are, the better chance you have of getting a job. Don't agree to hours you won't be able to work, just to



get the job. If you can't work when you said you can, you won't keep the job very long.

Availability:

___ Monday ___ Tuesday
___ Wednesday ___ Thursday
___ Friday ___ Saturday ___ Sunday

3. How will you get to work?

If you do not have your own car or bike, then you will have to work out a schedule of when you can work based on when someone can bring you to work. Have this figured out before you start to apply for jobs. If you can't guarantee you will have transportation when they need

you,
then you
will not get hired.

4. How much do you need to make?

If you are working for spending money, then minimum wage is enough. If you are trying to save for college or a car, maybe you should look for something that pays a little more. Keep in mind that if you have no work experience, it will be hard to get a job that pays much more than minimum wage.

5. How much can you work?

Again, you need to keep in mind school, responsibilities at home, and other activities that you are involved with. Be careful not to spread yourself too thin. If you are too tired from work, then you will have trouble completing schoolwork or other

responsibilities. If you go to school full-time, you probably should work no more than 20 hours a week.

Now that you have a better idea of what you're looking for and what your limitations are, it's time to start looking for a job. The first thing you should do is tell everyone you know that you are looking for a job. That is called "networking." Don't just sit around and wait for someone to call you with a job. Go out and get applications. More and more companies are requiring you to fill out applications on site. Make sure you bring all the information you will need with you. Be sure to have:

Work history.

References. Know the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the people you plan to use as references. Ask them beforehand if you can use them for a reference; it doesn't look good to the potential employer

if the reference acts surprised about the call.

Availability. Know when you can work.

Bring a pen. This will help you look responsible.

Make sure that you fill the application out completely. Correct spelling and penmanship is important. If they can't read it, they won't call you. If you don't understand a question the application is asking, please ask someone. If you guess, you may guess wrong. Asking questions demonstrates the kind of qualities an employer is looking for.

Last, when you interview, remember to smile and make eye contact. Don't worry about being nervous. The person interviewing knows that you will be nervous. Just answer their questions honestly. Practice in front of a mirror, or with a friend. Good luck!

Whenever you go out to look for a job, make sure you are dressed appropriately. Sometimes you will be asked to interview on the spot. Be dressed for it.

- ✓ no loud colors or prints
- ✓ not a lot of jewelry
- ✓ very little makeup
- ✓ make sure your hair is clean and combed
- ✓ clothes need to fit and be comfortable
- ✓ no strong fragrance
- ✓ brush your teeth

■ GUYS:

slacks
golf shirt or button down shirt
casual/dress shoes /no canvas or sandals

● GALS:

slacks or skirt
dressy shirt
casual/dress shoes/no canvas or sandals

I'm Listening



By Greg Woodburn

Dear Greg,

I have a problem and hope you can help me. This girl at my school hates me for no reason. Honestly, I have never done anything to her, but she is making my life miserable! She not only teases me and calls me names, she even opens the stall doors when I'm in the bathroom. I'm tempted to be mean back, but know that won't help. What should I do?

—Menaced by a Mean Girl

Dear Menaced,

I'm proud of you for not lowering yourself to retaliating—not only would that not make things better, but it surely would only make them worse. Sadly, bullying is all too common in schools, and not just among boys. Hollywood has even made movies about “mean girls.” Try to ignore her name calling and verbal teasing—bullies want to get a reaction. However, the prank of opening the stall door will require a little teamwork: ask a friend of yours to go with you to the bathroom and guard your stall. If this doesn't work, you must have the courage to report the mean girl to a teacher, or your principal, before the bullying gets worse. Good luck.

Dear Safe,

One of the most important things you, and your friends and classmates, can do is to take school violence seriously, because it is a very real problem today. This means treating any safety drill your school has as though it was the real thing. If you see someone suspicious—or even just out of the ordinary—on campus, report it! Also, if you hear someone talking about doing something crazy or violent do NOT assume they are joking. Often after a violent event has happened people later report having heard warnings about it, but they didn't take the threats seriously. So tell an adult if you hear something, because as your signature says, it's better to be safe than sorry.

Dear Greg,

Our school had a bomb threat recently, and now I'm worried about school violence. This time it turned out to be a false alarm. Is there anything I can do to help keep my school safe?

—Better Safe Than Sorry

**It's
your turn to
give advice.**

Dear Greg,

I cheated on my girlfriend Reneé two months ago and went out behind her back, but I've never been able to forget about it. Reneé never found out about it, and we're happy together now, but I still feel terrible—it was a stupid mistake, and I'll never do it again. Should I confess at this late date, or let it slide?

—Guilty Conscience

Should Guilty Conscience:

- Come clean and tell Reneé what he did?
- Keep his lips sealed since a confession now will only hurt Reneé?
- Confess to Reneé's best friends, and see how they think she would react?

Make your opinion heard
at www.listenmagazine.org/imlistening.
Then check back next month when
the results are posted!

Having a boyfriend can be a fun part of growing up and can enrich your life. But there are some relationships that spiral from fun to unhealthy. If your friends and family have been making noises about your boyfriend being a little “too” involved in your life, perhaps it’s time to take this quiz and see if you are in the relationship danger zone. (Boyfriends: you can take the test too and see how you score!)

Is Your Boyfriend Too



Controlling?

By Jody Ellis-Knapp

Quiz

Mostly a's: Danger Zone. Your boyfriend is isolating you from friends, your family does not approve, and you are a little scared of him. This could escalate into abuse or violence. Find someone to talk to who can help you step away from this toxic situation, whether it's a parent or other family member, school counselor, or clergy.

Mostly b's: Questionable. Your boyfriend isn't controlling you to the point of being scary, but there are some red flags that you should be aware of. Make sure to continue to cultivate your friendships with other people, and don't let your boyfriend dictate your future plans.

Mostly c's: Solid. You appear to be in a healthy relationship. You and your boyfriend spend time together, yet also have lots of other friends and interests. You are having fun and enjoying the relationship, while still being realistic about the future.

Results:

1. My boyfriend and I spend time together

- a. Every day. We do things only with each other—never with other people.
- b. Often, and we sometimes do things with other couples.
- c. Every few days—we are both pretty busy! Sometimes we join a larger group of friends.

2. My boyfriend calls or texts me

- a. A lot and gets angry if I don't respond right away.
- b. A few times a day, and leaves a message if I don't answer.
- c. Once or twice a day. He understands if I don't get back to him right away.

3. My parents

- a. Do not like my boyfriend at all.
- b. Haven't even met him.
- c. Like my boyfriend, and approve of me dating him.

4. My friendships

- a. Have changed. Most of my friends have “dropped” me because I am never available.
- b. Have changed a little, but I still get together with them a couple times a month.
- c. Are the same as they've always been.

5. When we get in an argument

- a. My boyfriend gets angry to the point of being a little scary.
- b. Things can get pretty heated, but we usually cool off after a day or so.
- c. We argue, but usually come to a compromise.

6. My future plans

- a. Have changed completely. My boyfriend doesn't want me to plan anything that does not involve him.
- b. Have changed somewhat—my boyfriend wants us to go to the same college.
- c. Have not changed at all. I have my own life to lead, and a lot of big plans!

7. My boyfriend is

- a. Very jealous. I can't have guy friends anymore, and I have to reassure him constantly.
- b. Somewhat jealous when I spend time with other friends.
- c. Is not jealous at all. We both are secure in our relationship.


Written by Dallas Woodburn

Illustration by Jeremy Shires

"This week it is Eric's turn to write our class blog. As you know, the assignment is to blog about a personal experience in the past year that has affected you. I want everyone to read and comment by Monday . . ."




WINDERMERE BLOGOSPHERE



My older brother, Chris, and I have always been close. But sometimes it's difficult for me because Chris is one of those talented people who is a top student and great athlete, and has tons of friends.

"Guess what? I got a B-plus on my math test."

"B-pluses aren't going to get you into an Ivy League school like the one your brother's in."



"Did you ask your teacher if there's any extra credit you can do? Maybe we can look into getting you a math tutor . . ."



"Hey, you're Chris Allen's brother, right?"

"Yeah, I am. You know him?"

"Everyone knows him, dude. He's a *legend* around here!"

"Hey, little bro! Guess who's home from college for the weekend!"

"I'm home every weekend, but you're still the only one anyone cares about."

"That's not true at all. What's wrong, E?"

"Do you have any idea how hard it is to be your younger brother? I'm forced to live in your huge shadow."

"What are you talking about? I wish I were more like you!"

"Really?"

"You're so funny, smart, and creative. I'm so proud of your band, bro! I wish I could play guitar—any instrument, actually—even half as good as you do."

Lynette: Your band is awesome, Eric. You were my favorite act at the talent show last year.

Nadine: I think it's great that you and your brother can be not only friends but also inspirations for each other.

Eric: Yeah, Chris helped me realize that just because I'm not exactly like him, that doesn't mean he's better than me. Now we're each other's biggest fans.

When you go to school, do you feel safe? Many teens say no. When this question was asked in a recent USA WEEKEND survey, 29 percent of students admitted that they did not feel safe at school. And of those surveyed, 91 percent of students said they had personally seen a classmate get picked on. Many students (64 percent) felt that it was either somewhat likely, or very likely, that a major violent act could happen at their school.

One of the reasons students don't feel safe at school is the risk of school shootings. The Columbine High School tragedy in April 1999 resulted in media frenzy. Since that fatal

**SIX SCHOOL
SAFETY MYTHS
TO SHOOT
DOWN**

GANGS & GUNS

BY PAMELA S. BACON



assault, the fear that a crazed student could enter a school with a gun and start shooting students at random is always in the back of students' minds. The truth is, however, that such violent crimes as the Columbine shooting spree actually affect only one in a million students.

While it is very unlikely statistically that a major violent act, such as a school shooting, will occur at your school, there are, unfortunately, two other major safety risks that you could face: gangs and guns. How do you protect yourself? The answer is clear. Arm yourself with the truth. The following are six common myths associated with school safety.

MYTH 1: ONLY BIG-CITY SCHOOLS HAVE GANGS

The number of gang members is rising again, and not all gangs are in the city. When surveyed in 1999, 66 percent of large cities, 47 percent of suburban counties, 27 percent of small cities, and 18 percent of rural counties reported active youth gangs. Although large inner-city high schools do report the largest number of gang activity, these statistics show that gangs can be anywhere.

MYTH 2: MORE STUDENTS ARE CARRYING GUNS TO SCHOOL

Actually, the number of expulsions resulting from students bringing guns to school has gone down (from 5,724 to 3,930). In 2005, 8

percent of students in grades 9-12 reported being threatened or injured with a weapon in the previous 12 months. Keep in mind, however, that although there may be fewer guns being brought to schools, even one gun is too many.

MYTH 3: GANGS ARE THE BIGGEST PROBLEMS AT SCHOOL

There's no doubt about it. Gangs are a serious problem. An even bigger problem at school, however, is bullying. In 2005, 28 percent of students ages 12-18 had been bullied at school during the past six months. Students who are bullied feel like victims, believe they are unsafe, and may be more likely to commit future crimes as a result of being victimized.

MYTH 4: MOST SCHOOLS DON'T HAVE VIOLENT CRIMES

Thankfully, very few schools (0.9 percent) have ever witnessed a violent school shooting, such as Columbine. Other violent crimes, however—theft, fighting, drugs, and weapons—continue to be major problems in schools. In 2005, 86 percent of public school principals reported at least one associated crime.

MYTH 5: MOST SCHOOLS USE METAL DETECTORS

Surprisingly, few schools actually use metal detectors. Of all of the security measures used, including a requirement that visitors sign in and locking doors throughout the school day, metal detectors were the least commonly used. Only 5

percent of students reported the use of metal detectors.

MYTH 6: FIGHTING IS NOT A PROBLEM AT MY SCHOOL

If this statement is true at your school, great! Teens surveyed by USA WEEKEND don't agree, however. Almost three quarters of students (a whopping 74 percent) admitted that they had seen schoolmates physically fighting. Three out of 10 students who took the survey said they personally had been threatened physically.



Clearly knowledge is power. If you know and understand the truth about school safety, then you can be armed and ready to protect yourself—if and when an emergency situation occurs. One of the easiest ways that you can be a part of the safe schools solution is to keep your eyes and ears open to potential problems. Many fights and violent acts that have taken place in schools could have been prevented—if only one person would have stepped forward and said something to a counselor, teacher, or principal. If you suspect gang activity, see someone with a gun, or witness someone being bullied, don't wait to speak up. When it comes to school safety, even one person can make a difference. You can be that person!



**Who Says
Volunteering
Is a Waste
of Time?**

Lend a Helping Hand

By Andrea MacEachern



When I was younger, I didn't volunteer for anything. I thought it was uncool and stupid to volunteer my time and not get paid or gain anything from it. I waited until someone asked, or begged, which was more often the case, and even then, I would not give my all unless there was something in it for me. Now I see that, although volunteering doesn't pay with money, you gain a lot more than that by helping the community and people in need. That is reward enough for me!

It all started in 1999. I applied for a grant intended to help young people pursue careers in the arts. I was picked to participate in the 10-week program, which included a four-day-long workshop in relationship building and related topics. I think my attitude changed within hours of arriving for that workshop. Here were a half dozen people volunteering their time to help me, and they were happy to do it. My ideas about volunteering continued to change over the course of that weekend, and on the last day of the workshop it was our turn to give something back to the community and see for ourselves how important it is to help others.

We arrived at a seniors' complex near noon. I remember being terrified! I didn't know how to relate to seniors. I didn't know what to say, how to act, or how they would react to me. That day turned

out nothing like I thought it would. The hours passed quickly, and when the time came to leave, I wanted to stay. I felt like a new person after that experience, and I've been volunteering ever since. I continued to visit seniors over the next few years, but also started to look for volunteering gigs in the arts to help with my budding career.

When the East Coast music awards came to my hometown of Sydney, Nova Scotia, I put my name in. I started out checking tickets for a music association event. Then I moved to stacking and placing chairs at other seminars and events. These may seem like mundane jobs,



If you think volunteering sounds like fun and you want to know where to start, check out some of these resources or ask an adult for suggestions.

<http://www.volunteermatch.org/>
<http://teenadvice.about.com/cs/volunteering/>
<http://www.littleredwagonfoundation.com/>
<http://www.bestbuddies.org/>

For some great volunteer ideas, check out:
<http://life.familyeducation.com/slideshow/volunteerwork/29594.html>

but I felt useful, and I was helping out a good cause. I was also meeting a lot of people and making connections in the industry. It was also setting me up for a better and more exciting gig the following night; The Gala Awards Ceremony! I started off that night passing out programs to people trickling in at the front gate, then I was asked to help show people to their seats. That night I made many new friends and contacts and also got to meet a lot of the new up-and-coming Canadian musicians.

I moved to Newfoundland the following year, and it didn't take long for me to find another cause to volunteer for. Rogers Community Television was looking for people to operate the cameras for a new local talk show. During the past six years I've done not only camera but also audio, guest relations, switching, and electronic titles, and I directed St. John's City Hall coverage for two years. During that time I've met wonderful people and made lifelong friends. I've also gotten to meet a lot of people from the arts community, and I always know what is going on in my area.

I am still volunteering my time with Rogers once a week, but unfortunately, with a full-time job I can't take on any more volunteer gigs at the moment. In a lot of ways my volunteer work is more rewarding than my paid work. If only I didn't have to pay rent and buy groceries, I would volunteer every day of the week. I recommend everyone take on at least one volunteering opportunity on the side. It is a way to help people in need, help out your community, meet new people, and have fun. It also looks great on a résumé. There are many opportunities out there for volunteers, from Scouting to soup kitchens to Big Brothers/Big Sisters. So get out there and start volunteering, and see what you've been missing!

Making Our Place

EUGENE, OREGON'S TEEN CENTER PROVIDES A HAVEN FOR TEENS

By Suzi Steffen

Walking on some of the streets in downtown Eugene, Oregon (population about 140,000), you're sure to encounter some kind of transient (temporary) teen population. If they want, they can get out of the life by going to hang out at a place where it's cool in the summer and warm in the winter, a place with a well-stocked refrigerator, couches, computers, and a staff—and peers—who can help them get focused on a goal, stay away from alcohol and drugs, and find a community.

Eugene's Nuestro Lugar/Our Place is not a religious place, but teens of all spiritual inclinations (or none) are welcome. After teens from the local nonprofit group LEAD (Leadership, Education, Adventure, Direction) decided in early 2006 that they wanted an actual space—a physical site where they could come after school for snacks, homework help, and safe friend-

ship—both the staff and the teens began working to make their goal a reality. They went to Eugene city council meetings and spoke, respectfully and with organization, during the public comment time. They went to town hall meetings of the mayor's task force on sustainability and spoke of their environmental passions, their desire for green businesses downtown—and their need for a teen center.

The teens, such as Terra Williams (then 17) and Caleb Pruzynski (then 13), impressed adults with their focus, dedication, and unwavering devotion to the goal of having a place to call their own. And because the mission of LEAD was “develop the leadership skills of low-income youth (ages 12-17), empowering them to address community problems, and change the world,” the teens got to put those goals into action.

One of the unique features of the teen center in a

fairly White Eugene was, from its earliest days, a dedication to bilingual meetings and bilingual services. For LEAD teens (who have officially joined a LEAD group and follow LEAD's three commitments: Stay in school, don't do anything illegal, and actively pursue a life goal), their life goal often became “learn Spanish” if they were English speakers or “become a translator” if they had skills in both languages.

Nuestro Lugar/Our Place coordinator Elizabeth Sampedro is a junior at Eugene's Churchill High School. Sampedro already knew she liked dealing with challenges, and the teen center, she says, “was another challenge.”

Part of that challenge came from adults who doubted that teens—whom they associated with “street kids” or flighty privi-





Nuestro Lugar = Our Place

leged students—could follow through. Finally the city, thanks to the teens' impression on powerful downtown real estate interests, offered a space that needed work. Sampedro and the other teens rose to the occasion. "Finding out where we could get donated paint, going to all the donors, and giving presentations, that was the exciting part," she says. The teens, along with staff and some supportive adults, cleaned the space, carpeted it, painted it, and started adding furniture and computers.

In the summer of 2007 Nuestro Lugar/Our Place boasted walls covered in healthy messages, from posters that talked about avoiding drugs, reporting sexual abuse, and confronting racism to lists of ways to stay away from dangerous situations and give yourself healthy attention and love. The space was

often bustling with activity. Homework helpers, volunteers, and teachers collided with parents checking in on teens, teens speaking Spanish with the staff members, planning committee meetings, eating Entenmann's doughnuts, and writing poems. "Finally, we have a space where we can say we are welcome here; this is ours. We can get help that won't cost us anything," Sampedro explains.

What if teens are having trouble with the commitment to staying off of drugs and alcohol? Sampedro points out that the staff members are patient and always willing to help in a way that few adults would be. "I've seen other teens come up to the staff and say this is going on, and [the adults] put down their work, and say let's go talk about it. I had never seen that before."

With homework help, LEAD

group meetings, open computers (with guidelines about using social networking sites), and the goals of adding self-defense classes alongside other workshops about hip-hop, writing, or music, Nuestro Lugar/Our Place gives Eugene-area teens a place to go and, if they want, to lead others. "I thought you had to be 20 years old to organize a march, or talk to a congressperson," Sampedro says. But as a 16-year-old co-coordinator, she says, "I deal with grants, budget meetings, and a newsletter. It's opened a lot of doors for me."

And for others who want that door opened, who want teen centers in their own cities, she says, "You can do it. Look for your resources, for people who are going to help you out. Create good people skills, listen to people sincerely, and make good connections everywhere you go."

Snow Day Riding

A hot new sport

SNOWKITING is a hot new sport. Although it's cold, actually. Quite cold. While flying kites is normally a summer-only activity, snowkiting combines kite flying with skis or snowboards and snow and wind. How does it work? It's pretty simple. The rider, or "snowkiter," wearing either skis or a board, straps on a heavy-duty harness that is attached to a kite. The kite catches the wind, and the snowkiter

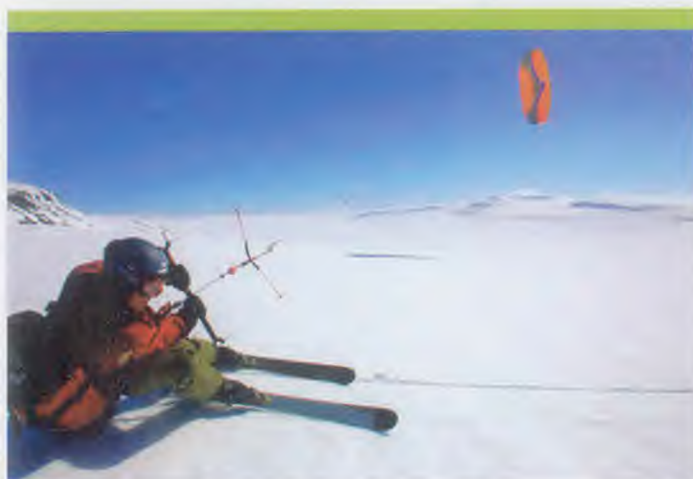
cruises over snow-covered areas. You might be picturing a gentle wind, delicately guiding the rider over flat land, but think again. Snowkiting can be, and often is, adrenaline-packed. While beginners often do go slowly as they learn how to maneuver their kites, catch the wind currents, and steady themselves on their skis or board, there is much more to snowkiting than this. Experienced riders can go more

than 50 miles per hour, depending on wind conditions.

More extreme riders take their gear up on ski slopes and then fly down the hill.

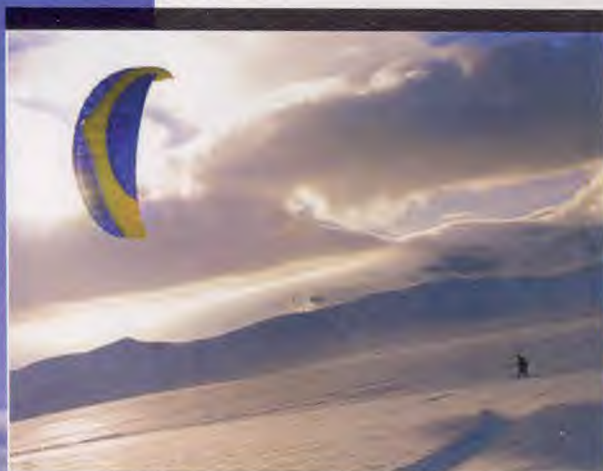
Literally. If the wind is strong, riders can make use of it to power themselves down mountain slopes, lifting off the mountain and into the air for huge jumps, twists, and turns. The air you can catch snowkiting makes the height you can master on the halfpipe look sort of wimpy. Of course, this type of snowkiting should be attempted only after hours, and weeks, and months of practice. Other snowkiters prefer to stay on the ground, using their kites to actually bring them places. Kite touring is a process of covering a lot of ground fairly quickly by snowkiting. Covering 50 miles a day is possible, depending on your weight, experience, and the size of your kite.

Meredith Powlison, an



the Wind

By Joy Choquette



18-year-old from Vermont, starting snowkiting about a year ago. "It was something I had always wanted to do," says Meredith. "As an avid sailor and skier, snowkiting seemed like a really fun and fast combination of the two." Meredith began with instruction from Stormboarding, a company based in Vermont, which occasionally offers free lessons to get people hooked. And hooked Meredith is.

"The best part of snowkiting is simply that it's a lot of fun. It's not super-difficult to learn what to do on the snow . . ." And the hardest part? "The most difficult part is learning how to control your kite," Meredith says.

"There's a lot to think about when you're snowkiting." The kite itself can be a little pricey. However, kites come in all sizes and many different price ranges. Typically the smaller the kite, the slower you will go. Beginners are encouraged to use a small training kite. This helps them get the feel of snowkiting, and also how the kite responds to the wind currents. Trainer kites measure from one and a half to three

wait around in line; any large, open frozen space will do. Lakes or very large ponds are great places to snowkite. Always make absolutely sure that the body of water is extremely frozen, though.

What types of skills should someone interested in snowkiting have? Do you have to be a black diamond skier, or have practiced windsailing from the age of 5? "A good attitude is definitely important," says Meredith. "I don't think there are any actual prerequisites for snowkiting . . . previous experience in sports related to snowkiting is helpful. That said, really anyone can snowkite if they want to."

Abram Weinberg another 18-year-old Vermonter, feels that while both ski and snowboard skills can help someone interested in the sport, they aren't essential. "It could get frustrating trying to learn how to ski and how to snowkite at the same time . . . if you don't ski or snowboard, you have two more awesome sports to try out." Abram took his first snowkiting lessons earlier this winter. "Ever since I watched a snowkiting video online, I had wanted to try it." Abram describes snowkiting as "exciting" and plans on purchasing his own kite soon and increasing his skills. "I want to become comfortable and confident with the kite. I also plan to learn how to jump, because it just looks like so much fun!"

What would these snowkiters say to others who are thinking of trying out the sport? "I would say definitely try it," says Meredith. "Sometimes fast adrenaline sports like snowkiting seem kind of intimidating, but they are really not. You practice kite handling, then you get on skis, and then you start to go fast. You are always in control." Abram agrees. "Go for it! There is no way to tell if you like the sport or not until you get out and try it. The videos of professional snowkiters make it look absolutely insane. The truth is that it is only as intense as you want it to be."

In winter it's often so easy to stay inside where it's warm, but there are tons of benefits to getting outside and getting some physical activity. Besides the increase in energy because of the fresh air and movement, you will also learn new skills. Learning

square meters. Large kites, especially those used in more extreme snowkiting, can be up to 20 or more square meters.

One of the best things about snowkiting is that after the cost of the kite, the rest is free. You don't have to pay a lift ticket, or

new things and increasing your coordination will help to increase your self-esteem. Plus, it just sounds cool. When someone asks what you did over the weekend, do you want to tell them you sat around on the couch, or flew over the ice and snow powered by a huge kite?

Snowkiting.com, an online reference for beginners and experienced riders, does offer a caution to potential snowkiters, however. "Warning! Flying a trainer kite for the first time is highly addictive. You'll be hooked and will want to take the next step."



Kitty Hawk Kites offers a large selection of instructional snowkiting DVDs on their Web site, www.4kiteboarding.com/kitsurvid.html.

WHAT'S UP WITH THAT?



Rachel Bishop
Curt VanderWaal



I just went to a movie theater last night, and they were selling beer and wine. Some of the guys who were drinking got kind of obnoxious during the movie. Is it legal to sell alcohol at a theater?

—April, age 15

We had never heard of this before, April, but we did some checking and there are now 400 theaters around the country that sell alcoholic beverages in theaters, up from only 14 theaters in 1997. It's legal as long as they don't sell to minors, but that's only one of several possible problems. Other problems include drunken behavior in the theater (pretty annoying, as you found out), having adults older than age 21 sneak alcohol to their friends, and driving back home while intoxicated. Several communities have fought against giving liquor licenses to theaters in their communities, and they won. We suggest that you fight back too—get some friends together to write letters to your local newspaper, complain to your city government, or get your parents to protest the situation. Sometimes a little social protest can go a long way!

400 theaters around the country sell alcoholic beverages

Sometimes when I listen to the radio I hear songs such as "Rehab," by Amy Winehouse, that make drugs and alcohol seem kind of funny and cool. When they screw up, they just go into a rehab program, right?

—Danielle, age 16

Perhaps some of them do, Danielle, but a lot of others never recover. You never hear those stories because they often destroy their singing careers in the process. Those who do go into expensive rehab programs sometimes go for the wrong reasons, such as trying to get away from the television cameras and tabloids who love to watch their slow-motion crash-and-burn. When they aren't serious about getting their lives together, it's an almost certain guarantee that they won't be successful in staying away from the drugs or alcohol. On the other hand, those who are really serious about breaking the addiction will do whatever it takes to put their lives back together, including putting their recovery ahead of their success. When that happens, success often follows.

My mom smokes, but I don't. Should I be worried about the smoke in the house and car?

—Carlos, age 17

82 percent of parents who smoke, admitted smoking around their children.

Yes, you should, Carlos. Even though you don't smoke, if you live in a house with someone who does, your health is in much greater danger than someone who lives in a house without a smoker. One recent study found that 82 percent of parents who smoke admitted smoking around their children. Another study found that nicotine levels in the air were 17 times higher in the homes of smokers than nonsmokers. That puts the nonsmokers in the house at much greater risk of getting cancer, developing lung problems and allergies, and starting to smoke themselves. Try getting your mom to work with her doctor on stopping her addiction—there are some new prescription medications that help with cravings. Support for quitting, including free coaching, a free quit plan, free educational materials, and referrals to resources near you can be found by calling 1-800-QUIT-NOW.

Just One Pill



I looked at the little pill in my hand. It wasn't very big, so how could something so small hurt me?

"Go on, Rachel, take it," my friend Ashley said. "What are you, scared or something? Like one little pill can hurt? I do it all the time. It's fun."

I looked at Ashley. Her parents were downstairs watching TV. She'd just quietly gone into their bathroom and sneaked another pain pill. Her folks didn't have a clue. Ashley told me she'd been doing this for months.

I thought about my mom. She was in jail for selling drugs again.

Then I looked at Ashley. Well, maybe she was right. Ashley said everyone was doing it, and besides, it

was only one little pill.

As I swallowed the pill in a gulp of soda, Ashley grinned.

"That wasn't so hard, was it?" she asked.

Somehow that pill didn't feel right going down. Grandma made me take a vitamin every day. I knew vitamins were good for me. I also knew this pill wasn't.

I couldn't tell much difference in the next few hours. I felt a little light-headed and

By Anne Baker
Illustration: Terry Crews

worker showed up, and that night we ended up staying with some family we didn't know.

It was awful, until our grandparents made arrangements for us to live with them. They adopted my sis and me when I was 5 and she was 7. They'd been our parents ever since.

Then Megan ran away when she was 15, my age now. It broke Grandpa's heart. It hurt me, too. Megan left a note saying she wanted to find our real mom, who was out of jail at the time.

Even though we'd seen our mom off and on, always with Grandpa or Grandma present, it wasn't as if we really knew her anymore. She did tell us, though: "Don't be like me. You don't want to end up in jail. Do what your grandparents say."

dizzy, but it wasn't really a great feeling. Ashley took two pills at once, and she looked kind of out of it to me. Then Sarah came over, and Ashley sneaked two more pills for her. I figured out Sarah had been doing this with Ashley for quite a while.

"I think I might have to be careful," Ashley said. "Last night Mom asked Dad if he'd taken some of her pills because the bottle didn't look as full as she remembered."

"No sweat," Sarah said. "My grandma used to take these pills, and there's an old bottle at our house. I doubt my mom will even miss it if I take the bottle."

Ashley and Sarah both grinned. They thought this was lots of fun, just way cool. I liked to be cool too, and these were my friends. But somehow I didn't feel cool.

As I walked home I thought about what I'd done, and the pill I'd swallowed, some kind of prescription pain reliever. I knew Grandma and Grandpa wouldn't approve.

I loved my grandparents. Sometimes they seemed a little out of touch with today's kids, but they had rescued me and my sister, Megan, when our mom went back to jail for dealing again. I was only 4 at the time, but I remembered the police coming to the house and taking Mom away. A social

All these thoughts were in my mind as I walked in the front door. Grandma and Grandpa were in the kitchen talking quietly, but stopped when they realized I was there. I was sure they were talking about Megan, who'd called a few days before.

For two years we hadn't heard from Megan, and then she called with no notice. She told me she'd been using drugs. She was hooked now, she said, and so she wouldn't come back home. My grandparents cried. So did I.

My mom called that night, and Grandpa let me talk to her. Mom asked how I was doing, and I told her, "Fine." I didn't tell her about going to Ashley's house.

"Don't be like me," she told me again. Mom always said that now. "I made too many mistakes in my life. I hope you learn from them, and do what your grandparents say."

All evening I kept thinking about that one little pill. Probably that was how Mom got started. Then I thought about how wonderful my grandparents were to me.

I thought about other friends, too, friends like Emily, who would never do drugs. I made my decision right then. I called Ashley and told her I'd decided I couldn't come over anymore. She wanted to know why, so I just told her that I'd made an important decision.

Then I called Em and asked her if she wanted to come over and study for our science test together.



Ashley
said
everyone was
doing it,
and besides,
it was only
one little
pill.



By Mary Rahn
Photos provided by the author

INTERVIEW WITH **Ashley Schoenfeld**



When Ashley Schoenfeld's father was stricken with the neurodegenerative disease ALS (commonly known as Lou Gehrig's disease), it pained her to watch him no longer be able to paint, something he truly loved. So, in an extraordinary act of compassion, this 14-year-old high school freshman asked if she could help him paint. Together they formed GAS Art (Gerald and Ashley

Schoenfeld Art) and began selling their paintings in galleries to raise money for medical research. Their story has inspired and touched many around the globe, especially those with loved ones suffering from terminal illnesses.

Listen: How did you first begin helping your dad with his art-work?

Ashley: It was Father's Day 2007. My father had just lost the ability to use his hands, and was feeling extremely sad that he could not paint anymore. He had no creative outlet. When I asked if I could be his "hands," he told me it was the best Father's Day gift he'd ever received. This warmed my heart, as I knew I had given him something to look forward to. Besides spending time together, we now exchange ideas, and he is passing down his artistic knowledge and passion to me.

Listen: What are some lessons you have learned?

Ashley: I am learning a lot about painting! Also, my dad and I have learned to be patient with each other, especially now that he is having difficulty talking—I know what he is thinking and feeling just by scanning his facial expressions, his eye movement, and his smile. He is the most important thing in my life, and time is precious. This experience has taught me that if love and respect are part of the mix, when working with someone else, incredible results can be seen!

Listen: Do you have advice for other young people reaching for their dreams?

Ashley: At our age, some dreams seem far away, and we neglect to identify strategies to achieve them. In my case, my father's disease gave both of us the opportunity to



achieve his dream, which has also become my dream. I may have to put on hold some of my immediate dreams, such as taking a vacation to Italy next summer. It does not mean my dreams are unachievable; I just choose what is more important to me today. Never, ever give up your dreams, and at the same time be willing to help others achieve their dreams too.

Listen: What is your favorite part about helping others?

Ashley: My favorite part is the feeling you get afterward. It is so simple to make a difference in another person's life. My father's days are full of hope now; he looks forward to creating new pieces, and he plans for the future. We also have received so much help from our church, community, schoolteachers, friends, and family. Being on the receiving end of all this love is amazing and humbling. The more love you give, the more love comes back to you.



Giving Means Living

Halfway through her junior year in high school Kara was really enjoying herself. After all, she had good grades, and a bunch of friends, and her college opportunities were looking bright. Every day Kara met up with her friends and walked to school. Many mornings she would pass the same shy young man, but took very little notice.

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One particular morning Kara noticed the young man carrying a giant stack of books as he walked toward the campus exit. As he was passing Kara, he tripped, and his books were scattered everywhere. Kara's friends found it pretty funny and laughed.

However, Kara stopped to help him collect his books. She began asking questions and discovered that his name was Stephen and that he was a junior as well. Kara asked Stephen where his first period class was, and he replied with hesitation. She offered to help him carry his many books to class. Although confused, Stephen agreed.

For the remainder of the school year, Kara and Stephen would say hi to each other, sometimes walk to class together, and even hang out after school. Stephen started to smile more often, and his confidence slowly grew. He also began to make more friends. He was finally enjoying school.

By the middle of his senior year Stephen was elected vice president of the ASB club. On the last day of school he delivered the year's graduation speech. His fellow students didn't know what was in store for them.

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He thanked teachers, faculty, and friends, but dedicated his speech to Kara for saving his life. The day he

met Kara, Stephen explained, he was on his way home to end his life, but first wanted to clear his locker so his mother wouldn't have to. He described how Kara gave him a new reason to live, and how she helped build his self-esteem. She was the reason Stephen was still alive. Tears rolled down Kara's cheeks as she tried to comprehend the impact that she had had on Stephen's life.

We ask you, When it's time to give someone a gift, what's on the top of your gift list? One of the greatest gifts we can give someone else

is our attention and consideration. Some time alone; time together; time uninterrupted. When a year passes, ask yourself, "What will be remembered?" What can you do that will have a lasting positive impact on someone's life?

People can feel and remember a generous act of kindness for a lifetime. Rarely do material things have the same impact. Try investing in memories. The best gifts you can give someone are not necessarily those measured by price tags, appearance, scarcity, or media hype.

You may be one person in the world, but you may be the world to one person.



The Next step

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