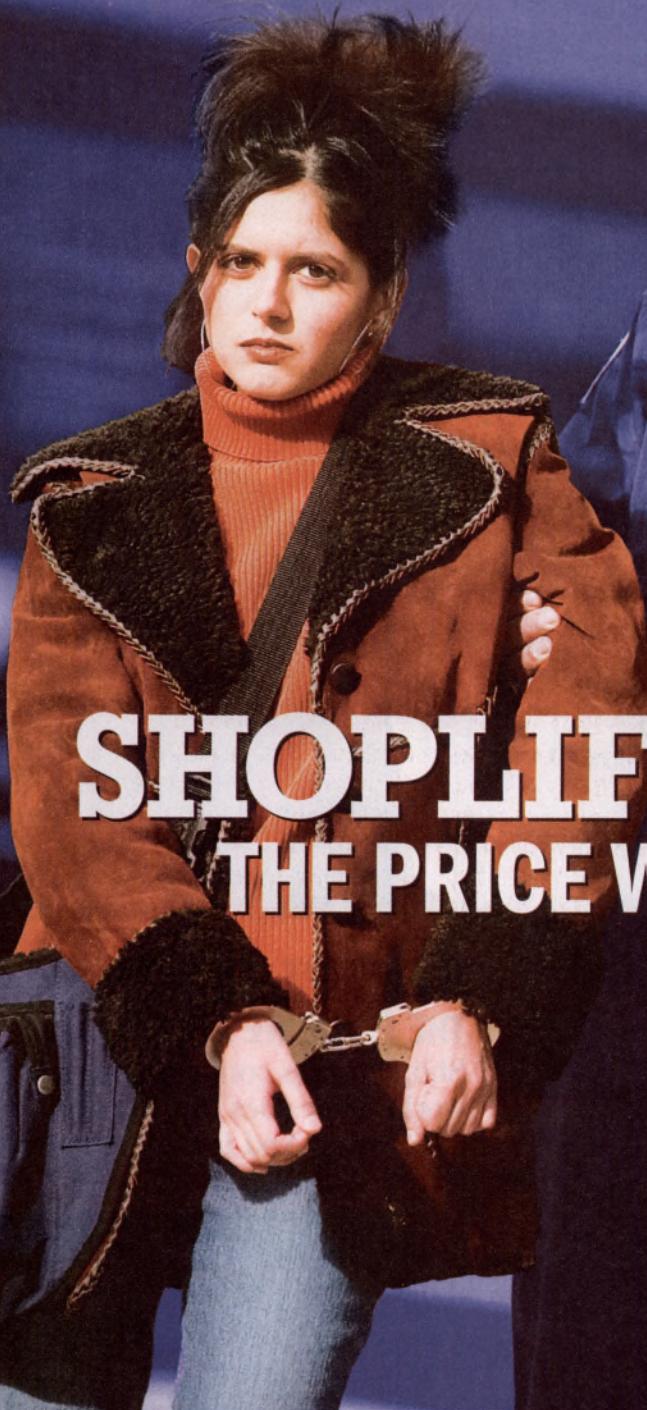


Awake!

JUNE 22, 2005



**SHOPLIFTING
THE PRICE WE ALL PAY**

Awake!

AVERAGE PRINTING 22,842,000
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You may feel surprised, pleased, or embarrassed at receiving such attention—but how will you respond?

A Virus That Should Concern Women 21

Each year, many thousands of women die from cervical cancer, which is a consequence of this virus. What is it, and how can women protect themselves?



SHOPLIFTING THE PRICE WE ALL PAY 3-10

Shoplifting is common around the world. How does this pervasive crime affect you? And is there a solution?

SHOPLIFTING HARMLESS THRILL OR SERIOUS CRIME?

PICTURE the following scenario. The front door of a department store opens, and through it enter two teenage girls dressed in style. They walk down an aisle to the cosmetics section. A uniformed security guard follows but stops when he is about 30 feet from them, assuming a stance with his arms behind his back. He watches the girls as they casually finger the lipsticks and mascara.

They glance at the guard, who is keeping his eyes on them. Emotion wells up inside them. One of the girls moves to the nail polish and picks up a couple of bottles. Her nose wrinkles as she pretends to evaluate two similar shades of red. She sets one bottle down and picks up another of a slightly darker hue.

The security guard lowers his gaze and turns to look in the opposite direction. As if on cue, the girls slip lipsticks and bottles of nail polish into their handbags. Their faces look calm, but their emotions are now boiling. They stay in the aisle for a few more minutes, one gazing at emery boards, while eyebrow pencils occupy the other's attention.

The two look at each other, exchange nods, and begin walking to the front of the store. The security guard steps aside, and they smile at him as they pass. Moving to the cell-phone accessories directly opposite the cashier, they

look at the display. Whispered comments about the leather cell-phone cases pass between them. Then they start toward the exit.

With each step, the fire inside them heats up and increases the pressure of fright and thrill. As the girls cross the threshold, they feel like screaming, but their lips remain closed. Once outside, an emotional rush paints their faces redder than any makeup could. The storm inside them dies down, and they sigh deeply with relief. The girls briskly stride off, but they cannot stop giggling. One thought fills their minds: 'We got away with it!'

The two girls are just imaginary, but the scenario we have described is only too real. Shoplifting occurs an estimated one million times each day in the United States alone, but it is a global problem. As we shall see, it causes tremendous harm. Most shoplifters, however, pay little heed to the devastation they cause. Even many who are able to pay prefer to steal. Why?





WHY DO PEOPLE SHOPLIFT?

"I don't regard it as stealing, I regard it as a badly needed reallocation of economic resources."—A CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIEST.

IF THERE is any truth to the legends, Robin Hood felt at liberty to steal. English folklore tells us that he robbed from the rich and gave to the poor. The clergyman quoted above also believes that poverty is a valid motive for stealing. He says of shoplifters: "I have every sympathy for them, in fact I think they are fully justified." He suggests that large stores should open their doors to the poor one day each year and allow them to take whatever is on the shelves without paying.

Many shoplifters, however, are driven by motives other than poverty. In Japan the police arrested two of their fellow officers for shoplifting. In the United States, a board member of a nonprofit food cooperative was caught stealing from the cooperative's store. Teenagers with money in their pockets frequently steal things they don't need. What drives such people to shoplift?

'It Feels Good'

Thrills. Fright. Power. Like the two girls in the preceding article, some who shoplift get a

big dose of these sensations, and the desire to drink from that emotional torrent keeps them stealing again and again. After stealing for the first time, one woman said: "I felt excited. I'd gotten away with it and it was thrilling!" About her feelings after stealing for some time, she later commented: "I was ashamed of myself—but also exhilarated. I felt really alive. Stealing and not getting caught gave me a tremendous sense of power."

A young man named Hector says that for months after he stopped shoplifting, he felt the urge to steal again.* "It followed me around like an addiction. I would be in a mall and see a radio in a store window and think, 'It would be so easy to take that thing. I could do it and never get caught.'"

Some who shoplift for the emotional rush do not want the items they steal. One Indian newspaper states: "Psychologists say the thrill of doing the forbidden is what drives these people. . . . Some even replace the stolen goods."

* Some names in this series have been changed.

Awake!®

THIS JOURNAL IS PUBLISHED for the enlightenment of the entire family. It shows how to cope with today's problems. It reports the news, tells about people in many lands, examines religion and science. But it does more. It probes beneath the surface and points to the real meaning behind current events, yet it always stays politically neutral and does not exalt one race above another. Most important, this magazine builds confidence in the Creator's promise of a peaceful and secure new world that is about to replace the present wicked, lawless system of things.

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KLEPTOMANIA

"Ever since I was a teenager," says Maria, "I've had problems with shoplifting. The urge became worse and worse until I was stealing up to \$500 of merchandise a day."

"It is not in my heart to steal, but the urge becomes very powerful. I really want to change." Because her impulse to steal is so difficult to control, Maria suspects that her problem is kleptomania.

The word "kleptomania" means "a persis-

tent neurotic impulse to steal esp[ecially] without economic motive." Not a simple addiction, it appears to spring from deep-seated emotional problems.

Some loosely call habitual thieves kleptomaniacs, but doctors believe that true kleptomania is rare. According to the American Psychiatric Association, less than 5 percent of those who shoplift suffer from that disorder. So prudence is in order before attributing the practice of shoplifting to kleptomania. There may be other reasons why a person steals.

Other Reasons

Depression affects tens of millions of people. At times, afflicted ones act out their depression through bad behavior—such as shoplifting.

The family of a 14-year-old girl was stable and well-off materially. Despite her advantages, a hopeless feeling hung over the teenager "like a cloud." "I couldn't get away from it," she said. She began using alcohol and drugs. Then one day she was caught shoplifting. Two attempts at suicide followed.

If a well-behaved youth suddenly begins shoplifting, parents might take emotional trouble into account. Dr. Richard MacKenzie, who specializes in adolescent health, said: "I believe that *any* kind of behavior that is unusual for your child should be thought of as possible depression until proven otherwise."

Some young people shoplift because of peer pressure—such theft may be the price of admission into a group of friends. Others may shoplift to dispel boredom. Professional shoplifters make their living by theft. Whatever the reason, thieves take millions of dollars in goods from stores every day. Someone has to pay the bill.

Caring parents seek to understand why a child shoplifts



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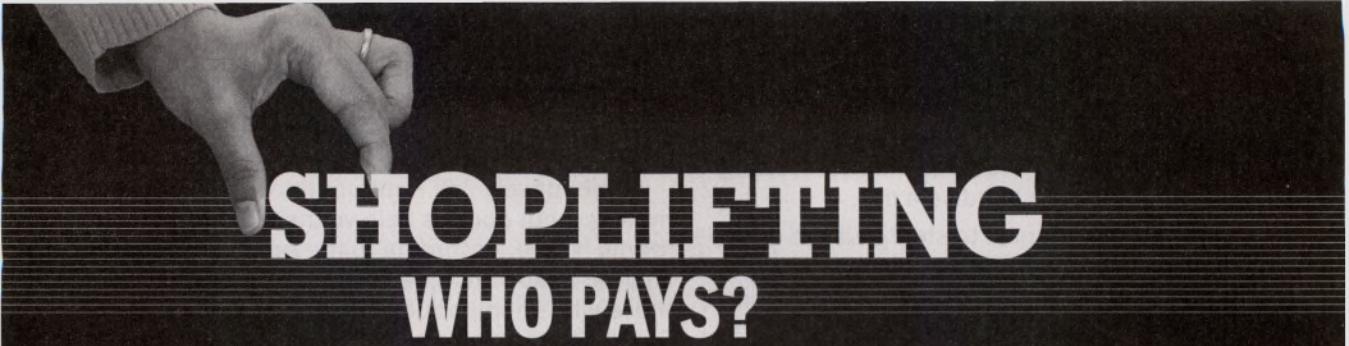
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SHOPLIFTING WHO PAYS?

IN Japan a store owner caught a young boy stealing and called the police. When the officers arrived, the young boy took off running. The police gave chase. As the boy was crossing a railroad track, he was struck by a train and killed.

Because of the publicity that ensued, some condemned the store owner for calling the police. He closed his business until the furor died down. After he reopened, shoplifters invaded once again. However, memories of his recent ordeal made him fearful of confronting the thieves. His store became known as an easy target. Before long, he had to close his store for good.

Granted, that case was more tragic than most, but it serves to illustrate an important truth. Shoplifting is very costly—in many ways and to many people. Let us take a closer look at the high price of this crime.

How the Stores Pay

Shoplifting costs the world's merchants many billions of dollars every year. Some people estimate that the losses in the United States alone exceed \$40 billion. How many businesses can afford to lose their share of such a sum? Many stores are overwhelmed. When thieves invade the aisles of a store, the work of a lifetime may be endangered.

"Together with competition, shoplifting is one more thing to worry about. I don't know how much longer we can stay in business," says Luke, a store owner in New York City. He cannot afford an electronic security system. Regarding the thieves, he says:

"Anybody could be doing it, even my good customers."

Some believe that Luke's problem is not serious. "These stores make a lot of money," they say, "so, what I take makes no difference." But are retail profits truly so great?

Stores in some places add 30, 40, or 50 percent to the price they pay for an item, but that percentage is not clear profit. The merchant uses the additional revenue to pay operating costs, such as rent, taxes, employee salaries and benefits, building maintenance, equipment repairs, insurance, electricity, water, heating fuel, telephone, and security systems. After expenses, his profit may be 2 or 3 percent. So when someone steals from a store, part of the merchant's livelihood goes out the door.

What About Petty Theft?

While in a store with his mother, a small boy goes by himself to where the sweets are located. There he opens a package and slides a candy bar into his pocket. Does such small-value shoplifting affect the store?

In its brochure *Curtailing Crime—Inside and Out*, the U.S. Small Business Administration says this: "Petty thievery may not seem like a major crime to the casual crook who pockets a ballpoint pen here, a pocket calculator there. But to the small business fighting for survival, it's murder." Because profit margins are so small, in order to recoup an annual shoplifting loss of \$1,000, a retailer must sell an additional 900 candy bars or 380 cans of soup *every day*. So the harm to a business is great if many little boys are stealing candy bars. Therein lies the problem.



Shoplifting puts businesses out of business

Tens of millions of people, young and old, rich and poor, from all races and backgrounds, are stealing from markets and stores. With what result? The U.S. National Crime Prevention Council reports that almost a third of all businesses in the United States are forced to close because of stealing. There is no doubt that businesses in other countries are under the same threat.

The Customer Pays

Prices go up when people steal from stores. Hence, in some areas consumers pay \$300 a year in higher prices because of shoplifting. This means that if you earn \$60 a day, you work the equivalent of one week each year to pay for what others steal. Can you afford that? To retired people subsisting on a pension or to a single mother struggling to support her family, losing a week's income in this way can be crushing. The costs do not end there.

An entire neighborhood may suffer when the shop on the corner closes. Shoplifting is reportedly what recently caused a drugstore in a close-knit American community to close its doors. To get their medications, many elderly and infirm residents now have to travel a mile and a half to another pharmacy. "Try that in a wheelchair," one official said.

The High Price Parents Pay

Bruce is a man of high moral standards who teaches his children to be honest. One day his daughter was caught stealing. "I was devastated," he says. "Imagine getting a phone call telling you that your daughter

has been caught shoplifting. We spent years raising our daughter to be a good person, and now this. We never thought that she would rebel in this way."

Bruce was consumed with worries about his daughter and her future. Further, he resigned his position as a volunteer religious teacher. "How could I look at the congregation from the platform? How could I, with a good conscience, instruct them about raising their children? I did not feel right." His daughter seems to have thought little of how her crime would affect him.

Everyone pays for shoplifting



How the Shoplifters Pay

When store managers caught shoplifters in times past, they often issued a stern warning and let the thief go. Today proprietors frequently have even first-time offenders arrested. The thieves then realize that their crime has serious consequences. A young woman named Natalie found this out for herself.

"The more I stole, the more confident I became," Natalie said. "I figured even if I got

caught, the lawyer and court fees would still cost less than if I had paid for all the killer clothes." Natalie was wrong.

She was caught stealing a dress, and the police took her away in handcuffs. At the police station, she was fingerprinted and locked in a cell with other criminals. There she spent hours waiting while her parents arranged to bail her out.

Natalie says this to anyone thinking of stealing: "Take my advice, and just buy the stupid dress or jeans." If you choose to steal, she says, "you'll regret it for a very long time."

A criminal record is cause for regret. To their chagrin, convicted shoplifters may find that their offense does not pass into oblivion but shows up to haunt them again and again, like a stain on a dress or a shirt. A shoplifter may have to declare his crime when seeking admittance to a university. He may have difficulties entering a profession, such as medicine, dentistry, or architecture. Companies may think twice about giving him a job. And these problems can arise even though he has paid the penalty imposed by the court and never steals again.

Shoplifting can be costly even if the offender is not convicted. Hector, mentioned earlier in this series, discovered that. "I always got away with it," he says. "I was never caught stealing." But he had a bill to pay. He says in reflection: "I think that young people should understand one thing: You reap what you sow. Even if the police never catch you, you will pay."

Shoplifting is not a victimless crime, and the things that shoplifters steal are not without price. Anyone who actively shoplifts does well to leave that practice completely. But how can a shoplifter find the strength to stop stealing for good? Will this crime ever be eradicated?



**Shoplifting
affects your
future**

PUTTING AN END TO SHOPLIFTING

"Reducing theft is not just your problem, it is a problem for the whole community; everyone benefits when theft is stopped." —EVERY RETAILER'S GUIDE TO LOSS PREVENTION."

SHOPLIFTING, like other bad practices, tends to influence a person's thinking, causing him to justify himself. So, just as a gardener pulls out weeds by their roots, those who want to stop shoplifting need to root out bad thinking. 'Make your mind over,' admonishes the Bible at Romans 12:2. And at 1 Peter 1:14, it exhorts: "Quit being fashioned according to the desires you formerly had." The following five points may help a shoplifter change his mind about stealing.*

Aids to Correct Thinking

■ First, shoplifting is against the law. Stealing may be common where he lives, and he may get away with it; but the shoplifter is still breaking the law.—Romans 13:1.

* Although the shoplifter is referred to in the male gender, the principles here apply equally to male and female shoplifters.

What happens when many break the law? According to the Bible, "law grows numb." (Habakkuk 1:3, 4) In other words, the beneficial restraint of the law diminishes, resulting in a breakdown in civil order. Every time someone shoplifts, he weakens the foundation of law-abiding society. When that happens, everyone suffers.

■ Second, shoplifting destroys trust. Such dishonesty erodes human relationships, making it hard for people to understand and deal fairly with one another.—Proverbs 16:28.

"My biggest sin of all is being too trusting." Thus spoke a clothing store owner after thieves forced her into bankruptcy. She once trusted her customers and employees not to steal from her. Now she feels that her confidence was misplaced.

Honesty promotes trust and friendly relations



One person may lie to another and cheapen his own standing with that one. But shoplifters throw a pall of suspicion over all who enter a store after them. They cast honest people in the role of potential thieves. Does anyone have a right to do that?

■ Third, the practice of shoplifting can lead to more serious crimes. In time, shoplifters may find themselves taking ever-greater risks.

—2 Timothy 3:13.

The Final End of Shoplifting

■ Fourth, and most important, one who shoplifts is at odds with Almighty God. His

Word tells the thief to “steal no more,” and it warns of judgment against those who defy Him. (Ephesians 4:28; Psalm 37:9, 17, 20) But Jehovah forgives thieves who change. They can find peace with God.—Proverbs 1:33.

■ Fifth, shoplifting, like all other crimes, will soon be a thing of the past. When God’s Kingdom takes full control of the earth as promised in the Bible, humans will treat one another with integrity and honesty. This means relief from the high price of shoplifting.—Proverbs 2:21, 22; Micah 4:4.

LOW-COST AIDS TO PREVENTING THEFT

Some small businesses may not have the means to purchase expensive security systems. But this does not mean that they are helpless against shoplifters. Often, businesses can secure their merchandise by taking some simple steps.

In a publication they co-authored, detectives Michael Brough and Derek Brown emphasize the need to pay attention to the customers: “Watch everyone. . . . You and your salespeople are the main line of defense.” They suggest approaching someone suspected of shoplifting in this manner: “Have you found what you’re looking for? Please leave it at the cash register, and I will ring it in for you.” “May I wrap that for you?” “Is the sweater the right size for you?” “May I get you a basket?” The detectives say: “This lets legitimate



customers, as well as thieves, know that you have noticed them and are interested in them.”

Regarding orderliness, they say: “Keep displays fully stocked and neat. Constant attention to displays will keep you familiar with the merchandise, and the neater the display, the easier it will be to tell when something has been disturbed or removed.”
—*Every Retailer’s Guide to Loss Prevention*.

Investigator Russell Bintliff suggests: “Clear aisles and full shelves help employees observe customer activities. By walking along an aisle

where a suspicious person has been observed, an employee can determine what is missing and then, under the guise of checking stock, observe what is in the patron’s shopping cart or basket. . . . Shoplifters will know what is happening; honest customers will not even realize that the employee is watching them.” Regarding aisle layout, he says: “The layout should allow clear observation of customers by employees and [the store owner].”—*Crimeproofing Your Business—301 Low-Cost, No-Cost Ways to Protect Your Office, Store, or Business*.

COAL

By *Awake!* writer
in Australia

Black Rocks From a Dark Hole

BLACK—you don't know the meaning of the word until you've been down a mine shaft," yells my friend Bernie over the noise of machinery. Gazing at the yawning hole in front of me, I start to wonder if I really want to find out what Bernie means. Our destination is a coal seam buried a third of a mile beneath my feet.

We pass a column of miners trudging toward the showers. The men have broad shoulders and broad Australian accents. When they smile, their eyes and teeth seem almost luminous against their coal-dust blackened faces.

Soon we board the small train that takes us down to the coal face—the exposed surface of coal. The descent is so steep that the driver's seat is designed to swivel, hanging from the ceiling like a swing. Strapped to my side are a sparkproof battery, which powers my helmet lamp, and an emergency breathing device ominously called a self-rescuer. As the train inches down the slope, the sky behind us shrinks to a blue dot surrounded by black.

More With Less

The coal mine I am visiting is one of dozens in southeastern Australia. My guide, Bernie, is one of the 25,000 miners who extract eight thousand million dollars' [Australian] worth of coal from Australian mines each year. Globally, there are ten million coal miners working either underground down

dark shafts or on the surface in vast opencut mines. But their numbers are dwindling. The United Kingdom saw the number of union coal miners plummet from 1.2 million in 1978 to about 13,000 workers by the turn of the century. In the United States, the number fell from 705,000 miners in 1924 to fewer than 82,000. China reduced its coal work force by 870,000 in a recent five-year period.

The declining number of miners, however, does not mean there is less demand for coal. In fact, it is forecast that the demand will rise by 11 percent in industrialized countries by the year 2020, while China and India are expected to build a combined total of over 750 new coal-fired power stations during the same period. The reduction in personnel is largely a result of new technology, which enables companies to produce more coal with less labor. The massive machine that Bernie is about to show me is one example of this superior technology.

In Our Next Issue

- How to Find a Job—And Keep It
- Jantar Mantar—An Observatory Without Telescopes
- Should You Fear Armageddon?

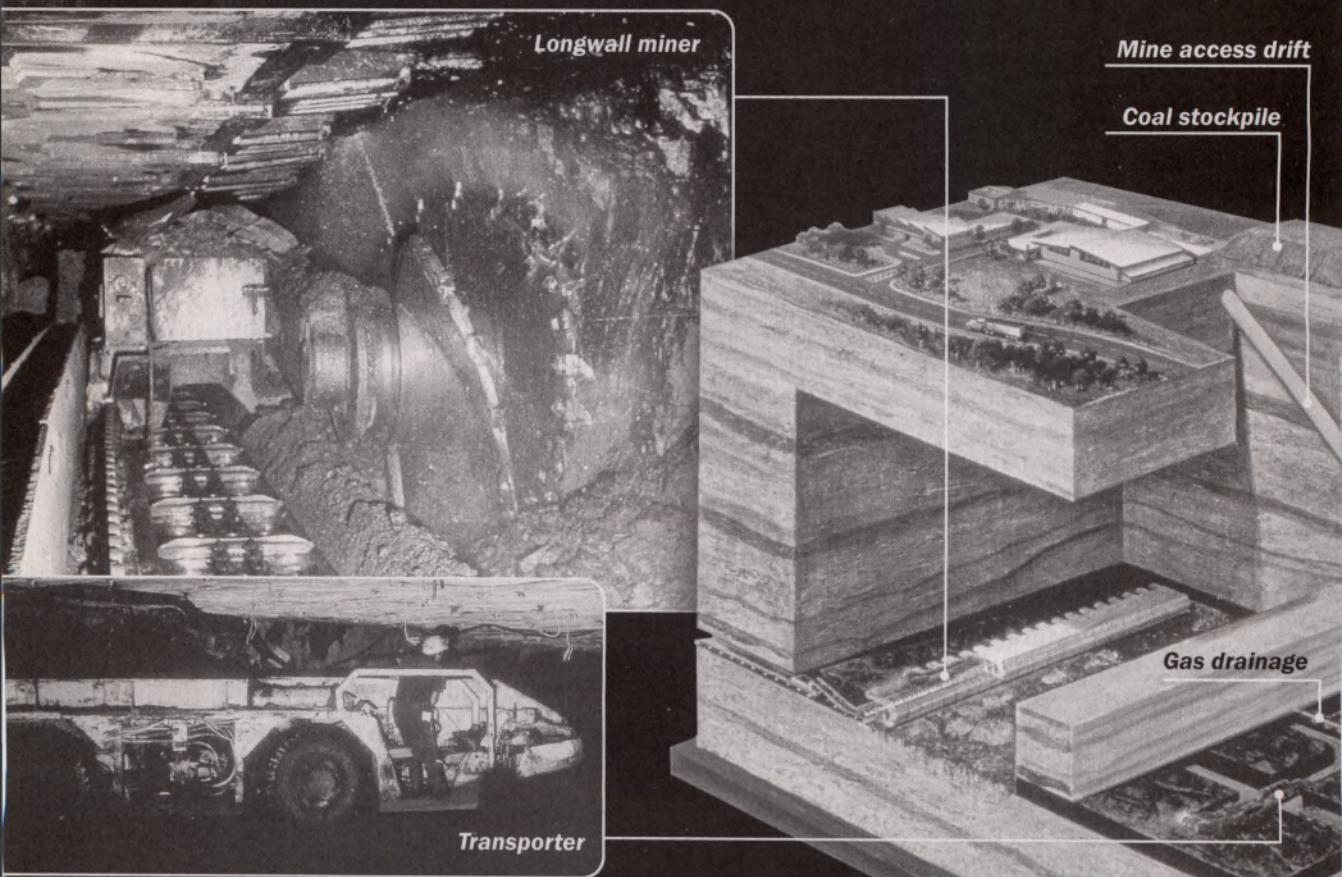
Down the Dark Shaft

"This is pit bottom," Bernie says as we squeeze ourselves out of the train. "All the tunnels in the mine lead off from here." Fluorescent lights line the low ceiling. Rows of small logs, wedged between floor and roof, support narrow crossbeams. Thousands of bolts stud the ceiling. These expansion bolts are rammed seven feet into the roof and lock the overhead rock in place to prevent cave-ins.

I am surprised to see that the walls are, not black, but white. "The walls are coated with

powdered limestone," Bernie explains. "The limestone reduces the risk of an explosion caused by methane gas and coal dust. An accidental spark can ignite the methane. In turn, the methane, like a detonator, can set off a larger explosion in the airborne coal dust. About 70 cubic feet of methane a minute is pumped out of this mine and is used to produce electrical energy for the mine." To avoid the possibility of sparks igniting any leaking gases, I had to leave my camera, my tape recorder, and even my battery-powered watch on the surface.

Underground Coal Mine



Down inside one of the multitude of tunnel entrances that branch off from pit bottom, we find a squat, yet powerful, diesel transporter. To the roar of its motor, we lurch off into one of the tunnels. Lights rapidly fade behind us, and I find my helmet lamp reflecting off a ceiling that flashes past just inches above my head. As we speed past numerous side tunnels, I catch glimpses of other helmet lamps flickering like fireflies in the blackness. In a tunnel parallel to ours, a three-mile-long conveyor belt hauls its load of coal from the coal face.

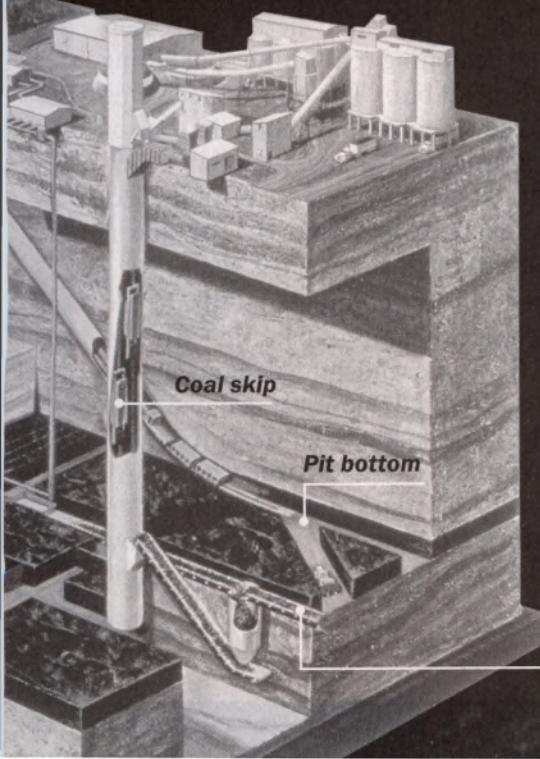


Coal's Future —A Hot Issue

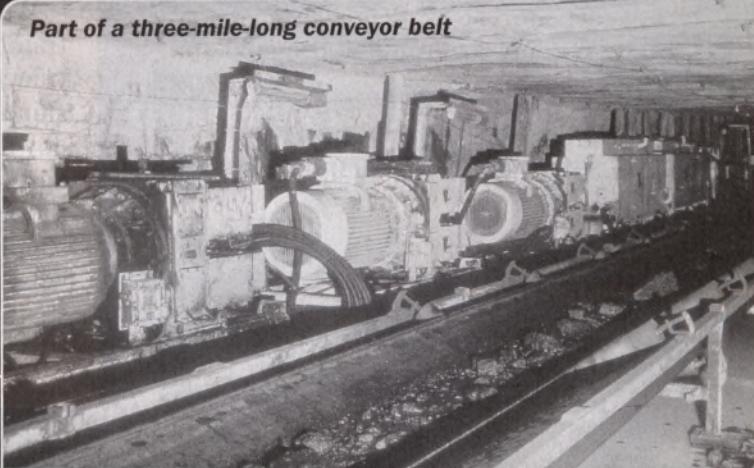
■ **Coal and Pollution:** "Smoke and small particles from burning coal cause more than 50 000 premature deaths and 400 000 new cases of chronic bronchitis a year in 11 of [China's] large cities," states a United Nations Environment Programme report. The Worldwatch Institute blames over one and a half million deaths a year globally on pollution from coal. The technology to remove much of this pollution is available but is considered too expensive for many power-starved countries to purchase.

■ **Coal and Climate Change:** The burning of coal already produces over two thousand million tons of carbon dioxide gas each year. And coal is forecast to remain the second-largest source of carbon emissions, at about 34 percent in 2020. Many see these statistics as cause for alarm.

"Hastening coal's decline is imperative if climate change is to be slowed in the next century," says Seth Dunn, associate researcher at the Worldwatch Institute.



Part of a three-mile-long conveyor belt



The Longwall Mining Machine

Arriving at the coal face and peering through a mist of water vapor and coal dust, I see three figures clad in suits, hoods, and masks. These men work as a team to control the 900-foot-wide machine known as a long-wall miner. Two rotating drums, each of them seven feet in diameter, slowly travel across the coal face for the full width of the machine. These drums are armed with metal spikes that chew two feet into the coal face as they pass across it. The machine is equipped with

a conveyor belt that whisks the coal down a side tunnel, where the chunks are crushed to uniform size and dumped onto the main conveyor.

The rock ceiling is prevented from caving in by a row of thick hydraulic legs that support large steel plates over the operators' heads. After the drums with metal spikes travel the width of the machine, the whole contraption—the drums, the hydraulic legs, and the steel-plated roof—slides itself forward two feet. When the machine slides forward, it leaves behind an unsupported ceiling of rock. This ceiling stays briefly suspended. Then, boom!—it crashes down with a bone-jarring thud. "We mine a thousand tons of coal an hour this way," shouts Bernie. "Once a quadrant of coal is removed, the machine is pulled apart and moved to the next sector."

Hooked on Coal

- Over 70 percent of the steel produced worldwide is processed by coal-burning blast furnaces. In addition, the makers of bricks, tiles, cement, plastics, dyes, and explosives use chemicals derived from coal.
- By far the biggest consumer of coal, however, is the power industry. Australia generates 84 percent of its electric energy from coal-fired power plants. In China, South Africa, and Denmark, approximately three quarters of the electricity is generated from coal. The United States relies on coal for over half of its electric power. Worldwide, more than a third of the electricity produced comes from coal.
- To put it another way, if you own an electric stove, you consume approximately half a ton of coal a year. Two tons of coal will power your electric water heater for the same period, and your electric refrigerator will devour a further half ton annually.
- Scientists estimate that one million million tons of coal remain in the earth's "cellar"—enough to last hundreds of years at the present rate of consumption.

Daylight, at Last!

Bernie and I return to our transporter and travel back along three miles of bumpy tunnels before stopping at a large cavern. A vertical shaft, about 30 feet in diameter, connects this cavern to the surface. "The main conveyor belt dumps its load here," yells Bernie over the deafening roar of the coal falling into a large metal bin. "The bin you see being filled is called a coal skip. It holds 18 tons of coal." As Bernie is speaking, the newly filled bin rockets skyward, pulled by a cable. Seconds later a second bin drops from the hole in the ceiling, and the loading starts again.

With the tour now complete, we board the train, which slowly hauls us back up to the entrance of the mine and into delightful sunshine—or so I hoped. However, we had been down in the mine so long that the sun had set and the moonless sky had turned black. Although it is a very dark night, I now understand Bernie's comment—"You don't know what black is until you've been down a mine shaft."



Have You Tasted the Bouncing Berry?

By Awake! writer in Canada

THE farmer spreads sulfur on the ground, making the soil more acidic. In autumn, as the crop ripens, he floods the fields. After the harvest, he deliberately drops the fruit to see if it bounces.

Has the farmer gone mad? On the contrary, his seemingly destructive actions ensure that his produce is of the highest possible quality. Cranberries are his crop. Would you like to know more about these hardy berries?

Berries From a Bog

When Europeans first arrived on the northeast coast of North America, a trading commodity the native inhabitants offered was a red berry with a refreshing, tart flavor. The Pequot Indians, who lived in the area now known as Cape Cod, called the fruit *i-bimi*, or "bitter fruit." The Pilgrims called it the cranberry, possibly because the stem and flower of the plant resemble the neck and head of a crane.

Additionally, the berry was a favorite of the local flocks of cranes, and this may also be the reason for the name. At any rate, the name was soon shortened to cranberry.



Cranberry blossoms

Courtesy Charles Armstrong, Cranberry Professional, Univ. of Maine Cooperative Extension, USA

Indians gathered cranberries from low-lying peat bogs. The damp, decaying vegetation in these bogs made the soil unusually acidic, discouraging the growth of most plants. Cranberries, though, thrive in such soils. The low-growing, strawberrylike vines flourished from as far south as modern-day Virginia to as far north as Canada.

In 1680, Mahlon Stacy, a settler in New Jersey, described the berries to his brother living in England. He wrote: "The cranberries, much like cherries for color and bigness, may be kept until fruit comes in again. An excellent sauce is made of them for venison, turkeys and other great fowl and they are better to make tarts than either gooseberries or cherries. We have them bro[ugh]t to our homes by the Indians in great plenty."

Food, Medicine, and Preservative in One

The Native Americans utilized the cranberry's natural preserving qualities. They made a food called pemmican, which was a

mixture of dried meat or fish ground together with cranberries.

The mass was shaped into cakes and dried in the sun. During the long winter months, the cakes

provided a balanced meal of proteins and vitamins. The berry preserves well because it is loaded with pectin. It is also rich in vitamin C. Thus, in years gone by, scurvy-prone sailors bought barrels of cranberries to take with them on long voyages.

The Indians also used the cranberry as medicine, mixing it with cornmeal and placing it on wounds to inhibit blood poisoning. Recent medical studies indicate that drinking cranberry juice may prevent some urinary tract infections by stopping the offending bacteria from adhering to the tract walls.

Why Called the Bouncing Berry?

If you cut a ripe cranberry in half, you will notice four air sacs inside. These bladders prove useful to commercial cranberry growers in two ways. First, instead of laboriously picking the berries by hand, growers can flood the fields, mechanically agitate the vines—causing the

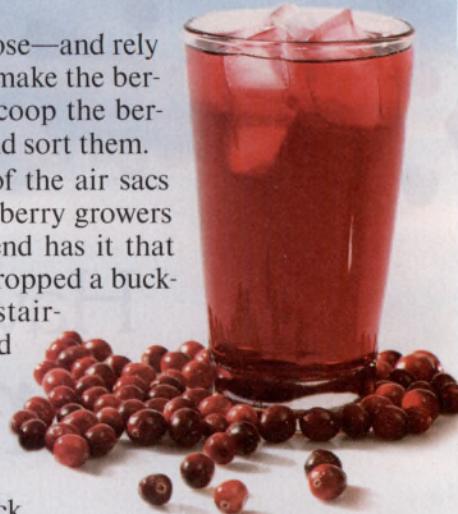
ripe berries to break loose—and rely on the little air sacs to make the berries float.* They then scoop the berries from the surface and sort them.

The second benefit of the air sacs was discovered by cranberry growers in the late 1800's. Legend has it that a grower accidentally dropped a bucket of berries down a staircase and was astounded to notice that the best berries bounced all the way to the bottom of the stairs, whereas the soft or rotten fruit stuck

to the treads. The air sacs in the prime-quality berries allowed them to bounce like pumped-up tires. The inferior fruit behaved like flat tires.

In 1881 the first machines appeared that took advantage of the berry's ability to bounce. Today, separating machines still use that same method, bouncing sound berries over a barrier and collecting them for sale as whole fruit. The soft ones drop through the machine and are used for juice or jellies.

* The practice of flooding the cranberry bogs at harvesttime has fostered the misconception that the berries grow underwater.



A Uniquely North American Berry?

Traditionally, cranberries are part of the meal eaten on Thanksgiving Day, which is held on the fourth Thursday of November in the United States and on the second Monday of October in Canada. According to legend, in 1621, Indians brought cranberries along when they attended the first Thanksgiving, a three-day festival of feasting and recreation sponsored by the governor of Plymouth Colony, William Bradford. Since the berry is steeped in tradition and cranberries are one of the few native North American species that are grown commercially, many think the fruit is unique to this continent.

However, the small-fruited cranberry (*V. oxyccoccus*) grows not only in North America but also in Asia and

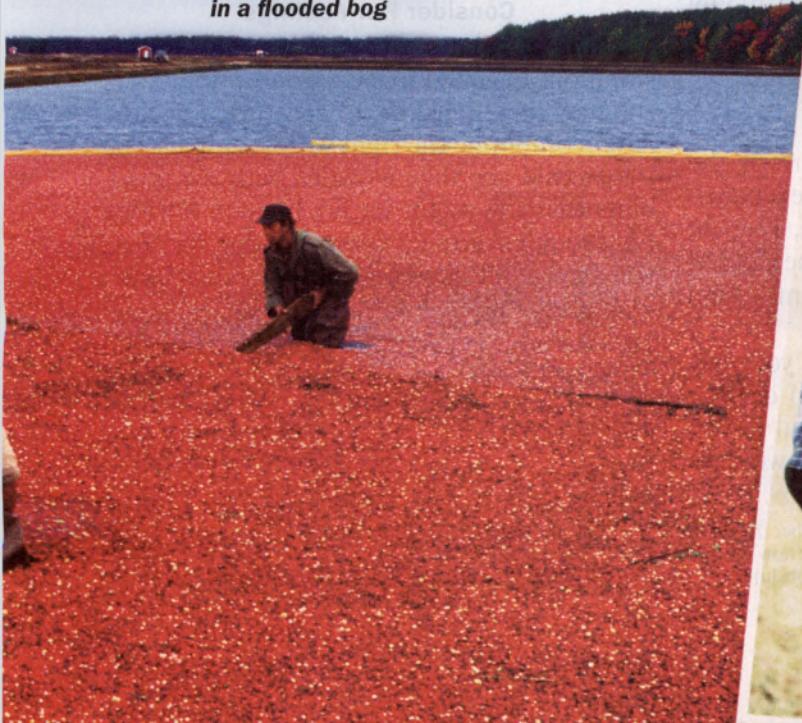
northern and central Europe. The berry's contribution to cuisine is not unique to North America. The *Encyclopædia Britannica* states: "Cranberry sauce and jelly have come to be thought of as uniquely American, but the Scandinavians hold in high esteem their native lingonberry (*V. vitis-idaea*), the berry of which is similar to, but spicier than, the American cranberry [*V. macrocarpon*]."

Inset photos: Courtesy of Ocean Spray Cranberries, Inc.

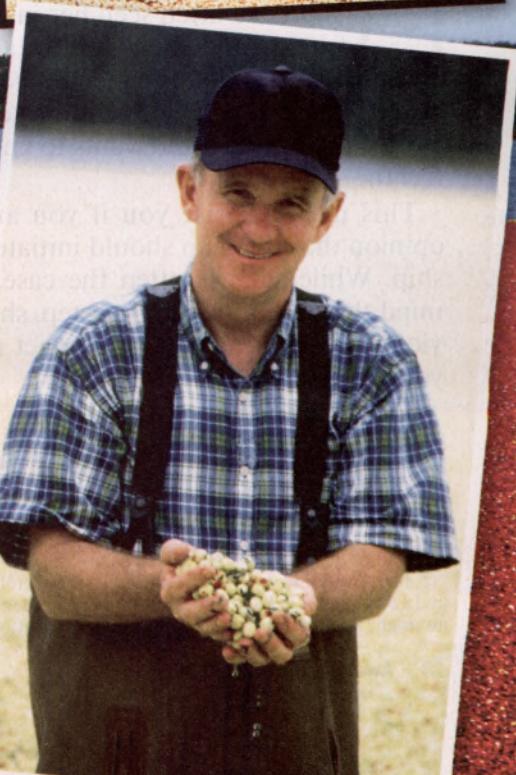
▲ Keith Weller / Agricultural Research Service, USDA

In specially prepared bogs across the northeastern and northwestern United States and in Canada, farmers produce more than 550 million pounds of cranberries in a single year. If you have never tasted this tart berry, why not try it? The fruit is bursting with vitamins and minerals, and it is full of antioxidants that may help protect you against heart disease and cancer. They could even put some bounce into your step.

Cranberry harvesting
in a flooded bog



White cranberry
harvesting



Young People Ask . . .

How Should I Treat a Girl Who Shows Interest in Me?

"Susan took the first step, and I had no problem with that. It was a good deal for me."—James.*

"If a man is not honest in his dealings with women, it can have catastrophic results."

—Roberto.



RECENTLY a young woman said that she wanted to ask you something. You have often seen her in groups of friends, and she is fun to talk to and do things with. What she mentioned, though, has left you stunned. She is interested in a romantic relationship and wants to know if you feel the same way.

This may surprise you if you are of the opinion that the man should initiate a courtship. While such is often the case, keep in mind that in taking the first step, she did not violate Bible principles.[#] That fact may help you respond properly.

After thinking about the matter, you may conclude that you are too young to date or that right now the girl doesn't appeal to you in that way. You may also feel guilty, wonder-

ing if you somehow gave her the wrong impression. What should you do? First, you will want to take her feelings into account.

Consider Her Feelings

Think of what a girl goes through in this situation. Eager to make a good impression, she may have rehearsed her words for days. After combining the right words with just the right smile, she then wrestled with the possibility that you might say no. Finally, working up enough courage, she overcame her nervousness and told you what was in her heart.

Why did she put herself in that challenging situation? Perhaps she has a crush on you. Then again, she may admire your fine qualities in a way few people do. So her words likely included an unspoken compliment that you do not receive every day.

These points are included here, not to sway your decision, but to remind you to be kind. Says a young woman named Julie: "Even if he

* Names in this article have been changed.

[#] The "Young People Ask" articles in the October 22, 2004, and December 22, 2004, issues of *Awake!* consider how a woman might approach a man about a romantic relationship.

does not have feelings for her, the man should feel flattered that someone noticed him. So, instead of just saying no, he should at least be nice and let her down easy." Let us assume for the moment that you intend to do just that—"let her down easy," or find a gentle way to say no.

What if you have turned her down in the past? You may now be tempted to tell her off abruptly. Fight that temptation. Proverbs 12:18 says: "There exists the one speaking thoughtlessly as with the stabs of a sword, but the tongue of the wise ones is a healing." How do you speak with "the tongue of the wise ones"?

You might simply thank her for expressing her feelings and for holding you in such high regard. Apologize for even unconsciously giving her a wrong impression. Clearly but kindly tell her that you do not share her feelings. If she does not grasp your reply and you need to speak more firmly, you should still avoid a harsh tone and cutting words. You are dealing with her tender feelings, so be patient. Were the roles reversed, you would appreciate her letting you down gently, wouldn't you?

She may insist, however, that you purposefully misled her. She may cite certain actions that gave rise to her feelings. 'Remember

when you gave me that flower?' she may say, or 'How about what you told me as we walked together last month?' Now you have to make a serious self-examination.

Face the Truth

Explorers of old often viewed the lands they discovered as objects of conquest and exploitation, and today some men view women that way. They enjoy romantic relationships but do not want the responsibility of marriage. Without committing themselves, they try to charm women by playing on their feelings. Such a man gains a woman's affection through deception. A Christian elder comments: "Some young men seem to go from one girl to another. It is not fair to play with a woman's emotions like that." Where does such selfishness lead?

"Just like someone mad that is shooting fiery missiles, arrows and death, so is the man that has tricked his fellowman and has said: 'Was I not having fun?'" (Proverbs 26:18, 19) When a man pursues a relationship with a woman for selfish reasons, she will eventually see his true motives. Then his deception could cut her to the heart, as the following shows.

One young man sought a romantic relationship with a woman but had no desire to marry her. He took her out to good restaurants, and they went to parties together. He enjoyed



If you are not really interested, be careful that you do not send the wrong signals

her company, and she enjoyed his attention, believing that he was courting her. When she found out that his interest was merely social, she was deeply hurt.

If even unintentionally you have given a wrong impression to the young woman who has just approached you, what should you do? Being defensive and trying to justify yourself will only make her bitter. Consider this Bible principle: "He that is covering over his transgressions will not succeed, but he that is confessing and leaving them will be shown mercy." (Proverbs 28:13) So be truthful. Acknowledge your responsibility in any misunderstanding. And if you deliberately took advantage of her feelings, admit that you made a big mistake. Sincerely apologize.

Do not expect, however, that your apology is the end of the matter. The young woman may be angry with you for some time. You may have to explain your actions to her parents. And you may face other consequences. Galatians 6:7 states: "Whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap." But by apologizing and doing what you can to right the wrong, you will help her to go on with her life. And this experience will teach you to 'safe-guard your lips against speaking deception' in all matters of life, including those involving members of the opposite sex.—Psalm 34:13.

Think Seriously Before You Answer

But what if you would really like to know the girl better? If that is the case, you should realize that dating and romance are not just ways to have a good time. The powerful feelings that a dating couple develop for each other point them to a commitment in marriage. After they marry, those feelings help to bond them together as husband and wife. How might this knowledge affect you now?

After thinking about this young lady, you may realize that she is attractive in a number of ways. She has opened the door, and you would like to keep it open. But instead of

charging headlong into courtship, take steps now to protect the two of you from grievous pain later on.

At some point you may want to consult with a few mature individuals who know her. Suggest that she do the same with some who know you. Each of you should ask those mature ones what they consider to be the good qualities as well as the weaknesses of the other person. You might also ask Christian elders for their comments. It is good to know whether the person you are interested in romantically is well regarded in the Christian congregation.

But you may say, 'Why should other people get so involved in my private life?' The truth is that even in such a personal matter as romance, getting the thinking of other people is wise. In fact, it is Scriptural, for Proverbs 15:22 states: "In the multitude of counselors there is accomplishment." The adults with whom you speak will not make a decision for you. But "the counsel of the soul" that they offer may reveal aspects of the other person, and yourself, that you do not see. —Proverbs 27:9.

James, quoted at the outset, did this. Although he had been living on his own, he talked with his parents about Susan. Then the two of them exchanged the names of other mature ones who could offer comments on their prospects as a couple. After hearing good reports about each other, James and Susan began dating to see if marriage was a possibility for them. If you follow a similar course before your emotions become too involved, you will feel much more secure in the decision you finally make.

Above all, pray to Jehovah. Since dating is a step toward marriage, ask God to help you see if a relationship with the young woman might lead to that goal. More important, ask God to help both of you to make decisions that will bring you closer to him. For both of you, that is where true happiness lies.

A Virus That Should Concern Women

AFTER a year and a half of marriage, Cristina* had her first gynecologic exam, including a Pap smear. The gynecologist found something that worried her and recommended that Cristina undergo a procedure called a colposcopy. The doctor found a lesion on the cervix and performed a biopsy, which is the removal of a sample of the damaged tissue for diagnosis.

"Two weeks later," comments Cristina, "the doctor had my husband and me come in for the results. She told us that the lesion was due to an infection with human papillomavirus and that it was in an advanced stage. She explained the risk of the infection becoming cervical cancer and the need to begin treatment immediately."

"Upon hearing the diagnosis, I began to cry. It was a shock to both my husband and me. A small surgery was scheduled for the following day. That afternoon I felt very sad and worried. I asked myself, 'Why me?'"

Having read that the virus is sexually transmitted, Cristina could not understand how she had been infected. Both she and her husband have always respected the Bible's high moral principles.

* The name has been changed.

A Common Infection

The fact is, millions of women in the world are infected with human papillomavirus (HPV)—considered the most common sexually transmitted disease in the world. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), this infection is the primary risk factor in the development of cervical cancer.*

* The cervix, or neck of the uterus, is the lower, narrow part between the vagina and the uterus, or womb, of a woman.



Many hundreds of thousands of cases of HPV are diagnosed in the world annually, and each year many thousands of women die from cervical cancer, which is a consequence of the infection. HPV is a major cause of death from cancer in women in developing countries. Worldwide, cervical cancer is the second most common type of uterine cancer. No wonder WHO calls HPV "a global public health problem"! What else should we know about this virus?

Human papillomavirus is responsible for warts in both men and women, including genital warts, called condyloma acuminata. These are generally benign, or noncancerous. Although there are over a hundred types of HPV, only a few can be carcinogenic, that is, cancerous. It is only the persistent infection with certain types of HPV that causes cervical cancer. On the other hand, most HPV infections disappear spontaneously, being overcome by the body's immune system.

Risk Factors

Principally at risk are women who are sexually active early in life, who have multiple male sexual partners, or who are having intercourse with a male partner who has had multiple sexual partners. It is often a man with no outward symptoms who transmits the HPV infection to his mate.

However, in some cases women who lead morally clean lives or perhaps have never en-

Measures Women Wisely Take

Women should have regular Pap smears, they should not use tobacco, and they should eat a healthful diet. Such a diet would be rich in vegetables, fruit, and cereals. Some studies have suggested that consumption of carotenes, vitamins A, C, and E, and folic acid may reduce the risk of cervical cancer.

gaged in sexual relations contract the infection. For example, some recent studies indicate that the virus can be transmitted at birth from a mother to her child or that a person may be infected by a source other than the mother. The disease can become evident even many years after the person has been infected.

How to Determine Infection

If you are a woman, you may be asking yourself, 'How can I know if I am infected with HPV?' This is an important question because the disease generally does not cause symptoms. Thus, as in Cristina's case mentioned at the outset, the fundamental step is to have a cytological exam of the cervix, called a Pap smear, or Papanicolaou smear.*

To do the test, a clinician uses a scraper or a brush to take a small sample of the cells of the cervix and sends the cells to a laboratory. The test can reveal if there is infection, inflammation, or abnormal cells. It is reported that Pap smears have reduced cervical cancer mortality and morbidity rates.

WHO claims: "Early detection of precancerous lesions through cytological screening has been and, most probably, will remain for quite some time the mainstay for global control of the disease." If the results of this test are unsatisfactory, a colposcopy is done using an apparatus with a magnifying lens to observe the affected area. By this means it can be determined if there is a lesion. If there is, a biopsy is taken, and treatment is started.

Nowadays, even more sophisticated laboratory tests can be done. These determine with much greater certainty the presence of disease.

Treatment and Prevention

There are several treatments that can control HPV infection. Specialists use topical treatments. Some of these destroy the cells

* Named after the Greek physician George N. Papanicolaou, who designed the method of staining smears of the cells for observation.

Dr. George Papanicolaou, who developed the Pap smear

containing the virus, and others stimulate the immune system. Additional techniques involve removing the damaged or infected area using electrosurgery, laser surgery, or cryosurgery. Yet, rather than having to deal with treatment, how much better it would be if the infection could be avoided. How can that be done?

A couple of years ago, a symposium was held in Mexico City on the subject "Cervical Cancer and HPV in the New Millennium." Dr. V. Cecil Wright, the Canadian guest lecturer and expert on HPV, advised: "Do not have intercourse until you are married." Dr. Alex Ferenczy, a professor of pathology at McGill University in Montreal, Canada, likewise said: "To prevent cervical cancer . . . , mutual monogamy must be championed."

So people who have lived in harmony with the moral principles of the Bible are less likely to suffer the cancer-related form of HPV infection. This is because the Bible condemns sexual relations outside of marriage, encourages faithfulness between marriage mates, and exhorts Christians to marry only someone who follows these same principles.

—1 Corinthians 7:39; Hebrews 13:4.

Still, education is essential, since HPV infection can usually be prevented. Moreover, even when the infection appears and advances, it can be treated successfully. In fact, WHO recognizes: "If cervical cancer is de-



tected in an initial asymptomatic stage it is nearly always curable."

In addition to moral education, it is important for women to become informed about the disease and to understand the importance of having such tests as the Pap smear done regularly.* If a problem is detected, a woman can get medical care. Regarding having a proper attitude toward such care, Dr. Montserrat Flores, a specialist in colposcopy, notes: "If a woman knows the magnitude of her problem, she can avoid going to two dangerous extremes: one, not assigning proper importance to the disease and not following through with medical care, which can result in cancer, and the other, becoming a victim of cancer phobia and submitting to unnecessary surgical procedures."

Science continues to seek more effective and economical methods of detecting HPV. Additionally, vaccines are being developed both to prevent this infection and to treat it.

Although the results of Cristina's last exam were satisfactory, she still goes for a colposcopy every six months. After having learned much about her illness, she concludes: "Even if we carry HPV, there is much we can do to keep ourselves healthy."

* According to the National Cancer Institute of the United States, these tests should begin at the age of 18 or the start of sexual activity.

A Deadly Virus

Human papillomavirus (HPV), considered the most common sexually transmitted disease in the world, is a major cause of cervical cancer in developing countries. Worldwide, cervical cancer is the second most common type of uterine cancer.



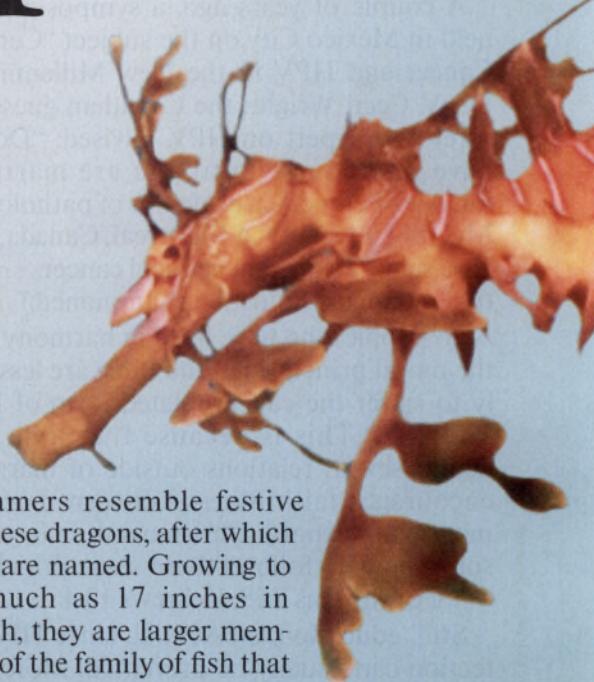
When Dragons Disappear

"WHEN I had approached to within three feet, the dragon's behavior changed abruptly," relates David Hall in *Ocean Realm* magazine. "It stopped feeding and turned away, melting into the nearby kelp and presenting me with a very professional disappearing act." He marveled: "This animal had serious camouflage." In that encounter, Hall was privileged to witness one of nature's most impressive examples of underwater camouflage—Australia's leafy sea dragon.

Leafy sea dragons are slow moving and rely heavily on camouflage to avoid hungry predator fish. Their yellow-green body striping and bizarre array of leafy appendages allow them to blend almost invisibly into their sea grass surroundings. They even swim in a rhythmic, rocking motion, perfectly mimicking the movement of drifting seaweed.

This sophisticated camouflage allows them to sneak up on their favorite food, tiny mysid shrimps. "Their deception is so good that the shrimps don't see them as a threat," says one observer. The sea dragon simply gobbles up shrimps as it swims along, quickly sucking them into its long snout and swallowing them whole. These brief hunting expeditions are punctuated with long periods—up to three days in length—when the sea dragon is content to remain stationary, catching any prey that passes by.

Leafy sea dragons can be found only in the shallow waters along Australia's southern coastline. Their serpentine bodies and leafy



streamers resemble festive Chinese dragons, after which they are named. Growing to as much as 17 inches in length, they are larger members of the family of fish that includes sea horses.

When it comes to giving birth, male and female sea dragons swap roles. Yes, the male becomes pregnant and delivers the babies! As spring approaches, the prospective father develops a blood-rich brood patch of about 120 small pits, or egg cups, along his tail. The female sea dragon then transfers her bright-pink eggs to this brood patch, embedding each egg into its own individual cup. Four to six weeks later, the three-quarters-of-an-inch-long baby sea dragons are born, each one a tiny replica of its parents.

Truly, these delightful creatures are yet another example of Jehovah God's creative genius and artistry!—Psalm 104:24, 25.



▼ A pregnant male leafy sea dragon carrying eggs;
inset shows close-up of the brood patch

Camouflaged leafy
sea dragon; inset
highlights the animal



All photos except brood patch: Michael
Morris-ImmersedImagery@scubadiving.com



DETERMINED TO Achieve My Goal

AS TOLD BY
MARTHA CHÁVEZ SERNA

MY WORRIED parents took me to a doctor, who prescribed vitamins. She said that the seizure was due to keeping late hours. A couple of months later, I suffered another convulsion, and then, a third. We consulted another doctor, who thought that I had a nervous condition and gave me tranquilizers.

However, the seizures became more and more frequent. I would lose consciousness and fall and hurt myself. I sometimes bit my tongue and the inside of my mouth. On regaining consciousness, I had terrible headaches and nausea. My whole body was in pain, and I was frequently unable to recall what happened prior to the seizure. To recover, I often needed a day or two of bed rest. Even so, I believed that this problem was temporary—that soon I would be all right.

Effect on My Goals

When I was much younger, my family began studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses. Our teachers were two special pioneers, or full-time ministers who devote a great many hours each month to teaching Bible truths to others. I could see that the ministry of those pioneers gave them joy. As I spoke to my teacher and schoolmates about Bible promises, I began to feel that joy too.

Shortly, many of my family became Jehovah's Witnesses. How I enjoyed preaching the good news! By age seven, I had set a goal of

One day when I was 16 years old, I lost consciousness while working at home. When I came to, I was in bed. Confused, with an intense headache, I could neither see nor hear for several minutes. I was frightened. What had happened to me?

also becoming a special pioneer. At 16, I took a large step toward that goal when I was baptized. Then the seizures began.

Pioneer Service

Despite my physical problems, I still felt that I could become a full-time minister of Jehovah's Witnesses. But since I was having up to two seizures a week, some in the congregation thought that I should not take on such a heavy responsibility. I felt sad and discouraged. In time, however, a married couple serving at the branch facilities of Jehovah's Witnesses in Mexico came to our congregation. They learned of my desire to be a pioneer and gave me much encouragement. They convinced me that my illness need not stop me from pioneering.

So, on September 1, 1988, I received my appointment as a regular pioneer in my hometown of San Andrés Chiautla, Mexico. I spent many hours each month preaching the good news. When I could not preach publicly because of a seizure, I wrote letters on Scriptural topics to people in the area and thus gave them written encouragement to study the Bible.

*About 7 years of age (above);
about 16, shortly after
I was baptized*



My Condition Diagnosed

At this time my parents, at great financial sacrifice, took me to a neurologist. This doctor diagnosed my condition as epilepsy. Thanks to the treatment I then received, my illness stayed under control for some four years. Meanwhile, I was able to attend the Pioneer Service School, where I received encouragement that increased my desire to serve where there was a greater need for evangelizers.

My parents knew how much I wanted to expand my service. Since my illness was more or less under control, they allowed me to go to Zitácuaro, in Michoacán State, some 125 miles from home. Associating with other pioneers in that assignment helped me to treasure the full-time service even more.

After two years in Zitácuaro, however, the seizures returned. I went back to my parents' home, frustrated and sad and in need of medical attention. I went to a neurologist who determined that the treatment I was using was damaging my liver. I began looking for alternatives, since we could no longer pay for consultations with the specialist. My condition was getting worse, and I had to quit pioneering. Every seizure was a setback. But when I read the Psalms and turned to Jehovah in prayer, I felt his comfort and strength.
—Psalm 94:17-19.

My Goal Realized

During my worst phase, I had two seizures a day. Then I reached a turning point. A doctor gave me a specific treatment for epilepsy, and I began to feel better for longer periods of time. So on September 1, 1995, I again took up the pioneer service. My health remained stable, so after two years without a single epileptic seizure, I applied to serve as a special pioneer. That would mean spending even more time in the ministry and going to serve wherever I was needed. Imagine how I felt when I received my appointment! I reached the goal that I had set as a child.

On April 1, 2001, I began my new assignment, at a settlement in the sierra of Hidalgo State. Now I am serving in a small town in Guanajuato State. I have to be very careful about taking my medication and getting sufficient rest. I am careful with my diet, especially when it comes to fats, caffeine, and canned foods. I also try to avoid strong emotions, such as anger or excessive worry. But this strict routine has brought me benefits. During my service as a special pioneer, I have suffered only one seizure.

Since I am single and without family responsibilities, I am delighted to continue serving as a special pioneer. I find comfort in knowing that 'Jehovah is not unrighteous so as to forget our work and the love we show for his name.' How loving he is, for he does not demand what we cannot give him! Accepting that truth has helped me balance my thinking, for if poor health forced me to stop pioneering again, I know that Jehovah would still be pleased with my whole-souled service.
—Hebrews 6:10; Colossians 3:23.

Without a doubt, sharing my faith with others every day strengthens me. It also keeps uppermost in my mind the blessings God has in store for the future. The Bible promise is that in the new world, there will be no sickness, "neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things [will] have passed away."—Revelation 21:3, 4; Isaiah 33:24; 2 Peter 3:13.

Preaching with a friend



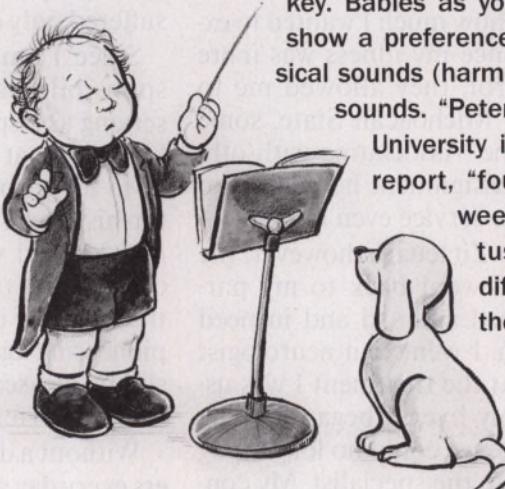
Watching the World

The Black Sea Is Recovering

The Black Sea now has more dolphins, crabs, and shrimps—creatures that do not usually live in polluted waters—than in the past, states *Demokratichna Ukraina*, a Ukrainian newspaper. Even the Odessa harbor, which is usually considered the most polluted part of the Black Sea, again has a widespread sea horse population. “Ecosystems in the Black and Azov seas are slowly but surely recovering after a long-term sickness,” said Borys Aleksandrov, director of the Odessa branch of the South Seas Biology Institute. Why the recovery? “With the fall of Communism,” notes *Science News*, “economic strains in Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, Romania, and Bulgaria sharply reduced agricultural spending on fertilizer. Therefore, nitrate runoff into the Black Sea plummeted in the 1990s.” While the reduced use of fertilizers has benefited the Black Sea, “economic collapse or reduced farming is a poor strategy for controlling dead [sea] zones,” says *Science News*. Laurence Mee, a professor of marine and coastal policy at the University of Plymouth, England, suggests another solution. He says: “We should learn to be a little more clever about how

Babies Have Musical Sense

“Even before babies have acquired language, they exhibit a marked capacity for reacting to music,” says the journal *Scientific American*. According to the report, babies are able to detect differences in musical tones and changes in both the tempo and the rhythm of the music. They are also able to recognize a melody even when it is played in a different key. Babies as young as two months show a preference for consonant musical sounds (harmony) over discordant sounds. “Peter Hepper of Queen’s University in Belfast,” says the report, “found that about two weeks before birth, fetuses recognized the difference between the theme music of [a popular] TV show, heard daily by their mothers for weeks, and a novel song.”



we do our agriculture, so that we limit the runoff of those nutrients.”

Irrigated With Sewage

“One tenth of all economically useful plants worldwide are cultivated with waste water,” reports *Der Standard*, an Austrian newspaper. Crops as diverse as tomatoes and coconuts are grown this way. “The wastewater is mostly untreated, flowing directly from megacities into the irrigation system,” says the paper. Citing as an authority, Chris Scott, of the International Water Management

Institute in Sri Lanka, the paper explains: “In many areas close to the rapidly growing megacities, this is the only way to get around water shortages.” On about 50 million acres of farmland earth wide, farmers have few alternatives—sewage not only provides free fertilizer but is often the only water available or affordable, the reports say.

Trafficking in Humans

“People trafficking has become the third biggest source of income for international crime syndicates behind

drugs and arms, raking in an estimated 6 billion to 9 billion dollars per year," reports the international edition of *The Miami Herald*. At a recent press conference in Mexico City, John Miller, the director of the U.S. State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, told reporters that some 17,500 people a year were trafficked into the United States, one third of these coming either from or through Mexico. "I am not talking about illegal immigration, but men, women and children who are forced or coerced by persons to be

in slavelike conditions," said Miller. He called human trafficking for sexual exploitation and forced labor "one of the premier human rights issues of the 21st century."

The Sun and Pregnant Moms

"A study of vitamin D levels in pregnant women has found an alarming number are dangerously deficient, posing a risk to their unborn babies," reports the *Sun-Herald* newspaper of Australia. Babies deficient in vitamin D can develop bowed legs, suffer fits, and may develop the bone disease known as rickets. A study of

1,000 pregnant women, conducted at St. George Hospital in Sydney, found that "one in 10 fair-skinned women, and one in five dark-skinned women were deficient in vitamin D." The solution to this problem seems simple. Humans produce about 90 percent of their vitamin D requirement by exposing their skin to mild sunshine. "Most women [need] only about 10 minutes of sunshine a day or about one hour a week to get adequate levels of vitamin D," says the paper.

Athletic Woman Syndrome

Women who regularly do excessively hard physical workouts could be at risk of developing osteoporosis, eating disorders, and amenorrhea—the interruption of the menstrual cycle, reported the Brazilian newspaper *Folha*. Turíbio Leite de Barros Neto, coordinator of the Center of Physical and Sports Medicine at the University of São Paulo, said: "Ideally, a woman should have 10 percent more body fat than a man. In other words, she should not have less than 15 percent body fat." If a woman has less fat than that amount, her body may have difficulty producing the hormones needed to regulate her monthly cycle and she could limit the calcium she accumulates in her bones, leading to osteoporosis, said *Folha*.

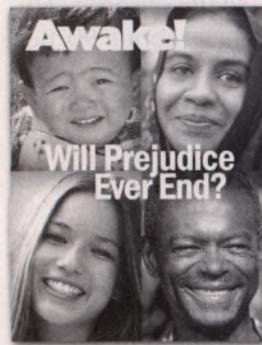
Car Peace and Safety

"Occupants of a car should avoid quarreling at all costs," warns Germany's technical supervision association TÜV, as reported by the *Berliner Morgenpost* newspaper. "The driver unconsciously becomes more aggressive in his driving, thereby increasing the risk of an accident." A "crisis situation" arising in a car can rapidly deteriorate, notes the article, especially since the confines of the car leave no place to retreat. Therefore, it is recommended that car occupants avoid touchy subjects that can lead to arguments. All those in the car do well to consider themselves members of a team with a common goal. The article advises: "Before starting off, it should be established how the front passenger can help with navigating, tuning the radio, or handling difficult situations."



From Our Readers

Prejudice Thank you for the series “Will Prejudice Ever End?” (September 8, 2004) As I read it, I realized that I myself am somewhat prejudiced. It’s ironic because I often feel angry at those who are prejudiced.



I know that this magazine will help me.

M. U., United States

Even though I live far from my native country, I do not feel that I am a victim of prejudice. But this series helped me to empathize with those who are. We are grateful that Jehovah will soon put an end to this problem!

T. G., Norway

I compliment you on your intention to awaken people to the problem of prejudice. However, I think you succumbed to your own discrimination on pages 8 and 9. There you describe two Jewish passersby who were not inclined to help an injured person. Why do you single out the Jews?

H. H., United States

“Awake!” responds: It was the Jewish man Jesus who told the story about the neighborly Samaritan. In Jesus’ day, many Jews were prejudiced against Samaritans. So by showing that a person of another race could be a good neighbor to a Jew, Jesus was teaching his Jewish listeners a very valuable lesson.

Mental Disorders Thank you for the article “When Someone You Love Has a Mental Disorder.” (September 8, 2004) My mother has suffered with a mental disorder for years. Now I understand that I should encourage her to ask for help and that there is nothing shameful about doing this.

M. P., Ukraine

I am only 16, but I’ve been suffering from depression for years. Many thanks for writing such a helpful article to guide me through difficult times. I surely won’t be the only one to benefit.

K. J., Germany

Keep such articles coming! They help us all to recognize the need to be more patient and loving and to get the help we need. How we long to live in God’s new world, free from such a devastating illness!

K. F., United States

Youths I am 15 years of age, and I too have often spoken with teachers and classmates about my faith. What the article “Youths Who Speak Up for Their Faith” (September 8, 2004) states is true—witnessing at school truly serves as a protection. Keep writing such great articles!

R. B., Germany

Paradise I enjoyed the article “A Pocket of Paradise.” (September 8, 2004) I had not heard of half the animals mentioned! From now on I will try to read every issue of Awake!

W. C., France

Thanks so much for this article. I don’t often get out of the village where I live, but through the pages of Awake! I get to “travel” regularly. The beauty of Jehovah’s creation keeps us in awe and makes us aware of his great love.

D. H., United States

Something Better I was deeply moved by the life story of Charles Sinutko as told in the article “Something Better Than Fame.” (August 22, 2004) Brother Sinutko gave up his career and left fame and wealth to serve Jehovah. He and his wife were content with simple living conditions. Their strong faith moved me to tears and stimulated my trust in Jehovah. I was encouraged to exert myself vigorously in the ministry. Thank you for this encouraging life story.

I. B., Poland



“Almost Designed”?

Have you ever looked at the night sky through a telescope? Many who have can tell you that they still remember the first time they found themselves looking at the planet Saturn. It is almost a startling sight. Against a backdrop of endless black dusted with countless glittering stars, there hangs a luminous orb wreathed with flat, elegant rings!

What are these rings? Back in 1610, when the astronomer Galileo first looked at Saturn through his handmade telescope, the view was so fuzzy that Saturn looked like a planet with ears—a central orb flanked by two smaller ones. As telescopes improved over the years, astronomers saw the rings more clearly, but they still argued over the composition of the rings. Many asserted that the rings were rigid, solid disks. Not until 1895 did astronomers have convincing proof that the rings were composed of many particles of rock and ice.

The book *The Far Planets* notes: “Saturn’s rings, a set of ribbons fashioned from uncountable icy fragments, rank among the chief wonders of the Solar System. The gleaming halo is enormous, extending 250,000 miles from an inner edge just above the

planet’s atmosphere to an outer rim almost too wispy to discern. It is also astonishingly thin, less than a hundred feet on average.” In June 2004, when the Cassini-Huygens spacecraft reached Saturn and sent back data and pictures, scientists began learning even more about the complexity of these hundreds of rings.

An article in *Smithsonian* magazine recently stated: “Saturn looks almost *designed*—an object as perfect as mathematics.” We can sympathize with the writer’s sentiments, but we can only wonder about the inclusion of the word “almost.” In truth, this lovely celestial body is but one of countless others that fit the inspired description penned thousands of years ago: “The heavens are declaring the glory of God; and of the work of his hands the expanse is telling.”—Psalm 19:1.



IT PROMPTED A DESIRE FOR A BIBLE

When Russia was under rule by Communist dictators, reading the Bible was discouraged. However, in recent years millions of Bibles have been distributed in that country. A letter received by the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia reveals a reason for the revival of interest in the Bible. Sergei, a husband and father in Volgograd—a large city that was for decades named Stalingrad, after Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin—explains:

"Recently people from your society came to my home. They politely asked me if I believed in God. I said that every person, at least to some extent, believes in God. When I said I had a wife and a son, one of the visitors reached into his bag and pulled out the book *The Secret of Family Happiness* and gave it to me."

Sergei eventually began to read the book.

"I really enjoyed it," he relates. "It is obvious that the book was written by intelligent, dedicated people. Generally I am skeptical of religious societies, but I think you are honest people. At the end of the book, I found your address." So Sergei wrote to that address and asked for a copy of the Bible.

The principles for enjoying family happiness outlined in the *Family Happiness* book are based on Bible teachings. Among the book's instructive chapters are "Train Your Child From Infancy," "Protect Your Family From Destructive Influences," and "Maintain Peace in Your Household."

