

GLOBAL EXPRESS



AN INTERACTIVE QUARTERLY FOR THOSE WHO CARE ABOUT THE FUTURE

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What's
your
poison?

ADDICTIONS

Chocolate Girls

Chocolate is essential to the production of Global Express. Despite our theme *Addictions: what's your poison?* we here in Oxford have failed to kick the habit. Hmm. Maybe it's because we've got so many arrivals to celebrate? Goretti Nguyen (former GE contact in Melbourne) has left Australia to spend 4 months in the UK addressing highschool students on two GE themes, *Moving out of your comfort zone* and *Which career path?* Co-editor Janet Gunning is back following her 9 month stint in Gaza, Palestine, to do an MA in Medieval Studies at York University. Christine Kenny, a highschool teacher from Buffalo, New York, has left the US to spend a year in Oxford doing the layout and design for GE. This is the best news we've had all year and makes up for the disappointment of losing Lisa Kesby who will shortly be returning to Australia. Many of you will have noticed the fruits of Lisa's design skills over the past 3 issues and this one is no exception. Hers is the present cover photo and you will see many more inside!

Several readers have suggested we publicise forthcoming themes. The next issue will be devoted to PASSION. We want to hear from people who are passionate about their life, career, calling, justice, human rights, family, life partner, music, whatever! This is a bid to re-discover the real and exciting meaning of passion as opposed to the cheap and often confusing way in which it is depicted in today's world. Deadline: Nov 6th. Get writing!

Laura Trevelyan, UK

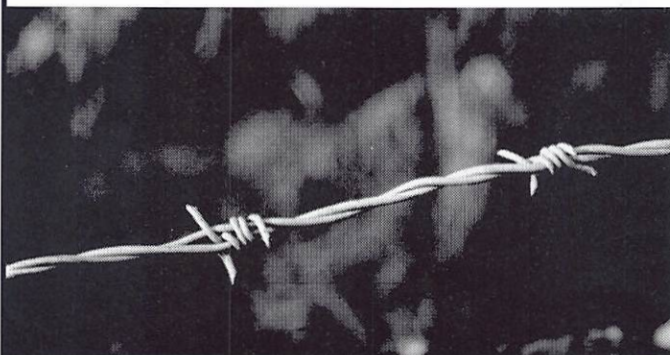


Photo: Lisa Kesby

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GLOBAL EXPRESS

seeks to:

- be an independent media service
- establish and support a global network
- be culturally inclusive
- respond to a rapidly changing world
- connect personal and global issues
- encourage personal integrity and responsible attitudes
- encourage people to act on creative inspiration

believing that:

- you matter
- you can make a difference
- goodness has an image problem and spirituality is marginalised
- sincere communication at every level is essential
- peace is possible if we face the causes of division and injustice in our own lives and communities
- time for reflection is essential to find direction

Why Global Express?

Global Express (GE) was started to link up young people who care about the future. Dissatisfied with what we were being offered by the media, we felt an alternative was needed.

Our aim is to inspire and encourage people to fulfil their potential. In GE you can question the way things are, and search for solutions. It is also a great opportunity to make contacts outside your 'comfort zone'.

Most of the GE team met through MRA (Moral Re-Armament), which is a world-wide network of people working for personal responsibility and conflict resolution. Ideals of integrity, unselfishness and love, together with a search for inspiration from a higher source are central to this way of life. MRA is a Non Government Organisation recognised by the United Nations. For more information visit: <http://www.mra.org.uk>

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Global Express goes to:

Africa: Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa; **Americas:** Brazil, Canada and USA; **Asia/Pacific:** Australia, Cambodia, Fiji, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand and Western Samoa; **Europe:** Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Russia, Scandinavia, Serbia, Switzerland, UK and Ukraine; **Middle East:** Lebanon and Palestine.

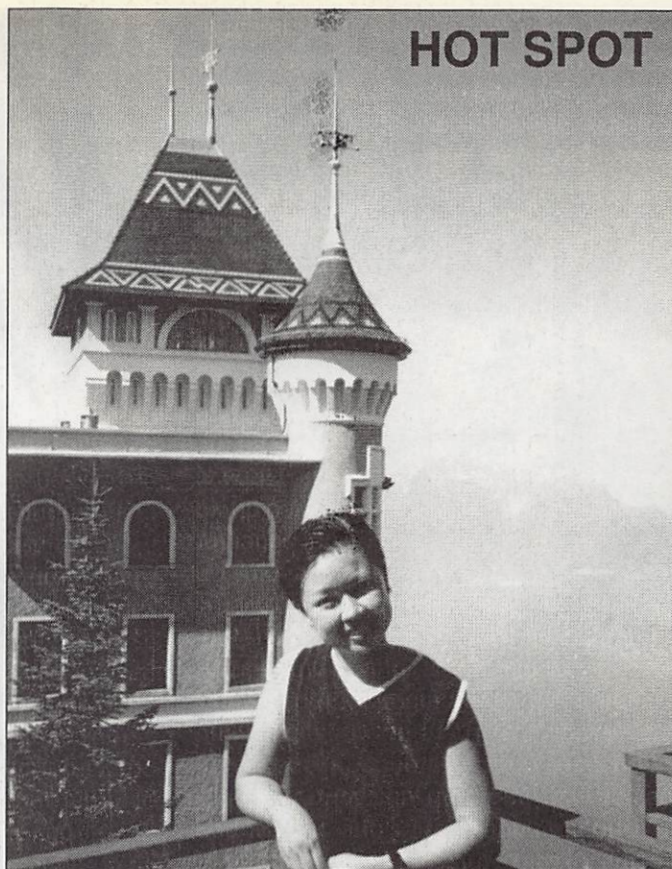
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Not all opinions in GE are shared by the editors!

HOT SPOT



Mountain House, Caux

I like *Global Express*. I also like GE - Glorious Experiences. This summer, I attended a Moral Re-Armament (MRA) conference held in Caux (pronounced Co), Switzerland. "Mountain House" is majestic and grand, standing high above Lake Geneva and Montreux. I learnt quickly that what is more talked about than talking itself is this "spirit of Caux". What peculiarity is this? With each day came further clues.

I listened to friends from Kenya, Ethiopia and Sudan express their "Vision for Africa" and I was immersed in their profound personal and collective pledge. I was deeply touched to be reminded of the wrongs and hurts endured by my fellow Australian Aborigines. One morning, in an open conversation on the Muslim communities in Europe, my "Western perceptions" were quashed.

My afternoons were typically a dilemma in disguise. A gathering of women as peacemakers or an Irish dancing workshop? A slide presentation of Nepal and Tibet, or information sharing on HIV? The appeal to my senses was in complete disorder.

This is a privileged and unforgettable insight into human pain and joy, struggles and triumphs and, above all, perseverance and commitment to one another. But if you cannot reach Caux, then *Global Express* will bring the world to you - all seasons of the year! *Global Express* is the co-ordination of a worldwide link-up of friends, the rich co-existence of ideas and thoughts and the co-work of those who care for today and tomorrow.

Goretti Nguyen, Vietnam/Australia



Photos and Artwork: Lisa Kesby

THE BONDAGE OF ADDICTION

When I was working in the casualty department of a large general hospital, a man was brought in suffering from severe abdominal pain. I asked him what happened. He replied that he had been hugged by a bear. This seemed highly unlikely in the middle of Birmingham. But he told me that he was a zoo-keeper. He was taking the bear by truck from London to Manchester zoo and he had stopped to feed it in Birmingham. When he opened the cage some children screamed, frightening the bear which turned on him and hugged him.

He then told me that he was fortunate to know that there is a nerve under the chin of a bear, very similar to the 'funny-bone' in humans, which if squeezed will cause the bear to let go. This is what happened, but not before he had sustained serious injury.

As I examined him I noticed an old scar on his abdomen. He told me that it was the result of a kick from a giraffe. We admitted him, gave him Pethidine to relieve the pain, and monitored his condition. After some hours we became suspicious. When he needed more Pethidine we gave him saline in its place. Within an hour he had disappeared.

That weekend a nurse came from a hospital thirty miles away to a staff party. 'We have just had the most interesting patient,' she began, 'he was hugged by a bear...'

addictions...

He was a Pethidine addict who managed with this story to gain not only his daily fix of Pethidine but free board and lodging as well. It was all, of course, a pack of lies, but a good experience for me for it was the first time I had come into contact with a drug addict. Since then I have listened to a number of stories, plausible and implausible but none so florid as this one.

Addiction is yet one more way in which self-gratification can lead to imprisonment of the body and the soul. There are many who go through life without coming into contact with serious addiction, but for many families, one or more of whose members are touched by it, it is a harrowing cause of deep suffering.

Addiction - in the form of alcoholism, smoking and drugs - is a problem which is common to both West and East alike. There are many who enjoy alcohol without becoming alcoholics. But the degradation of those who are so addicted is part of the terrible waste of potentially useful lives.

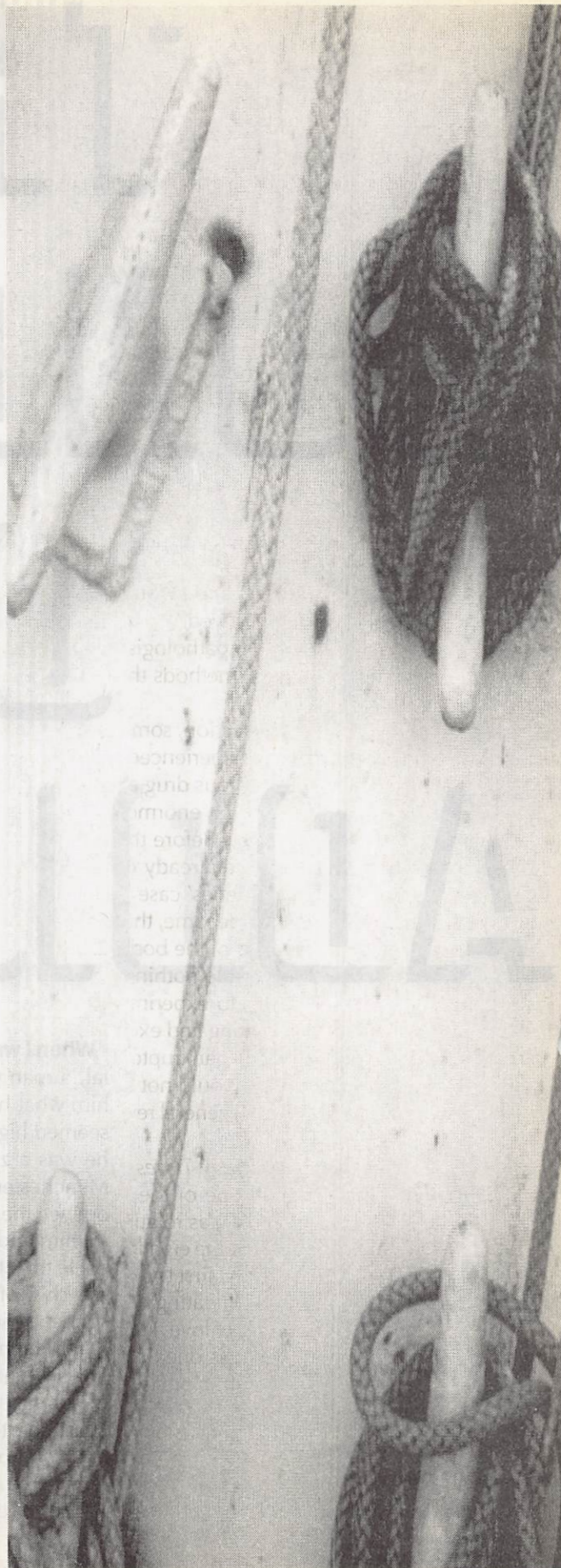
I had in the surgery a man who needed to talk. He had been an alcoholic but had succeeded in kicking the habit. Now his wife was afflicted in the same way but was denying it as so many alcoholics do. He was desperate. He recognised the signs 'I have been to hell and just managed to come back and I can't bear the thought of my wife going the same way.'

I talked, when at medical school, with someone who was senior to me and who always looked very tough and self-assured. He suddenly opened up and said, 'I am a lapsed Catholic and I drink too much.' A year or two later I had a card from him - he was serving in a mission hospital. It taught me never to judge from appearances and to recognise that people do not always stay the same.

Another fellow student was very fond of cigarettes. He became a professor of pathology. He told me recently that as a pathologist he had to teach students about the dangers of smoking, but he had reached the point where he could not complete his tutorials without lighting up. This convinced him that he had to stop which, with great difficulty, he did. But after some months he thought he could manage the occasional cigarette. After the first one an intense craving for nicotine returned and he had to go through the whole process of giving up again. Since then he has never touched another. 'I am like an alcoholic as far as cigarettes are concerned. I have to follow the same regime - "not one drop".'

His tutorials will have carried the statistics of smoking, the sad wastage of lives, the additional medical care required, the cost each year to the nation's coffers. There are some who still regard nicotine as a minor addiction. Yet many are severely hooked by it.

I had a patient who had developed severe arterial disease through smoking. He was in imminent danger of requiring his right arm to be amputated if he did not stop. But he seemed content to use his already damaged arm to lift cigarettes to his mouth rather than stop smoking, which he had decided he could not do. It is one of



the less acceptable facets of capitalism that smoking in the western world has peaked because of the recognition of the medical dangers - but not, sadly, among women in most European countries - the tobacco companies have begun to push for increased sales in the less developed countries of Africa and Asia.

In the surgery I have tried to help people with different habits, indulgences and addictions. I have noticed that similar points emerge from many people. There is denial as with the alcoholic, 'Doctor, you've got it wrong, this is not my problem.' There is self-deception, 'Oh yes, I could give it up any time I wanted to.' Then there is self-justification: 'I am afraid I have a very weak will.' This usually means a very strong will and the intention not to stop.

Then there is the 'try and' brigade: 'Doctor, I am going to try and stop.' This means, 'I know I should stop and I would like to but I am not prepared for the pain involved.'

Finally, there are those, like my pathologist friend, who say, 'I have decided.' Whatever methods they use, these people will succeed.

There are different levels of addiction, some psychological and some physical. They are experienced at their worst by those caught in the web of serious drug abuse.

This is a problem which has grown enormously in Western countries in the last 30 years. Before then it was uncommon here. That so many are already dependent on nicotine or alcohol weakens societies' case against drugs. The more permissive society has become, the further it has come from the Christian concept of the body 'as the temple of the Holy Spirit'; if people rule nothing out as being 'forbidden', they become ready to experiment in a fruitless and harmful search for meaning and excitement. Our vulnerability is a sign of our moral bankruptcy. Thirty years ago the Colombian drug barons would not have amassed such fortunes, because there was a general revulsion against drugs.

Fiona Rafferty wrote in *The Sunday Times* about the amphetamine derivative 'Ecstasy', one of the nineties party drugs, which many have thought was relatively safe. It is to the nineties what cocaine was to the eighties. She quoted a 28-year old accountant. 'When I first took it in 1987 the feeling was amazing. It left you floating around in what appeared to be a wonderful world of love and peace. That's why it's so morally wrong, because one tiny pill can give you a feeling 1,000 times better than anything else in life.'

'Ecstasy in effect devalues everything from your achievements to your relationships, because all experience pales into insignificance after you've experienced the ultimate in bliss. I wasted an entire year of my life floating around in this wonderful world. I didn't notice at first that I was losing all my motivation and becoming paranoid. While

you're on it, everything seems so real and positive, yet it lets you down very slowly. You sort of blend back into reality and don't like reality anymore, because you think you've experienced a better reality.'

'It's advisable not to take it - not even once - because it doesn't stop at once. I know from experience that it can and does change your entire perspective, but not for the better.'

The drug problem will not go away. The amount of money to be made makes it a difficult problem to solve. The use of the law, the vigilance of the police and customs officials, and international cooperation are essential to safeguard the vulnerable. But they are not enough. Without a return to objective values, to the sacred which holds the abuse of the body to be an offence against God, those who are tempted will not have the

strength to resist. We can feel compassion for them because we know that we can all be tempted towards addiction of one form or another.

Drug-taking offers the smallest proof that the pursuit of liberty separated from morality leads not to greater liberty but to imprisonment.

But even with those who fall furthest it is essential to hold out the hope that cure is possible. I know someone whose life was almost destroyed by drugs. He was searching for meaning, had experimented with drugs, and become trapped. He did not find real meaning in drugs, only the end of his health and sanity. In his despair he prayed for deliverance to the God whom he had never known.

In spite of the fact that he was at the very bottom, he felt the presence of God and was enabled to stop taking drugs from that moment. His life has taken several years to put together again, to mend and to heal. But now he is well and free from his previous habits. He has found real meaning in the faith that has been revealed to him, and so the need for drugs has gone.

In the debate on inner freedom the important point is not to prove that some are free and some are imprisoned; it is to recognise that those who are imprisoned can become free.

John Lester, UK

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"Addiction is yet one more way in which self-gratification can lead to imprisonment of the body and the soul."



My name is Marie, I'm seventeen and three months ago I stopped smoking. From an early age I started to abuse this addictive and, at times, fatal substance. As it does for many others, smoking became part of my life without me really being aware of it.

Then one morning, I woke up and felt the harmful effects of smoking inside me: the taste of tobacco in my mouth, some difficulty in breathing, this sensation of being dirty and contaminated, this feeling of dependence resulting in an overriding need for a cigarette that I couldn't do without. I was enslaved by an addiction that would cause me nothing but harm.

From then on, I knew I had to stop smoking and think of my health which is more important than my cravings. Since giving up I feel I am living a better life physically as well as morally. Now I am 'free' from my addiction and don't miss it.

Despite the destructiveness of tobacco addiction, I have learnt something: smoking can become a reflex just like breathing. A cigarette is lit, smoked and thrown away finished. But for all those of you who are addicted, smoking is rooted inside your body and mind. I also know that in spite of this story and message of hope, the decision to give up smoking cannot be enforced from the outside; it has to come from within. Giving up, however, is not impossible. It 'only' takes conviction and convincing yourself you can do it!

Marie Chauveau, France

(translated by Gail Trevelyan)

Alcohol was always a big part of my family life. Whenever I saw my father he had a drink in his hand. Around the age of nine I started stealing spirits from the family drinks cabinet daily. I loved the burning sensation of Bundaberg Rum! My parents thought it best to introduce me to careful social drinking. After starting with small quantities of alcohol, my intake became larger and larger. My father had taught me how to deal with hangovers and how to keep out of trouble when drunk, so I felt it was all going well. I could stomach large amounts of alcohol which made me the envy of all my friends.

It was my cousin who taught me how to smoke dope when I was thirteen. I was able to buy dope, LSD and speed from older friends at school. We spent all our spare time together doing drugs and alcohol. This habit was becoming costly so I financed it by stealing cash and goods from school, family and church. By the time I was fifteen I had started injecting heroin and speed because the other drugs had become boring. I was pretty lost and totally removed from my family.

It was at this point that I became suicidal with the feeling of being trapped in my own cocoon. I attempted to inject oxygen into my blood, over-dosed on prescription drugs and tried hanging myself. I attempted suicide twelve times, four of which doctors said should have killed me.

My friends helped by selling me more drugs and teaching me how to take them, often daily before going into the school grounds. Of my group of sixteen friends in 1994, all had serious problems, like physi-

addictions...



Photos: Lisa Kesby

cal and mental abuse from their families, and all of us had a heavy drug dependency. We supported each other through difficult times by sharing drugs. There was no point individually drowning our sorrows, so collectively we often got stoned.

From this group of sixteen friends only four are still alive. All twelve deaths were drug related.

Late in 1996 I was dating a young medical student who was a practising Buddhist. I was heartbroken when she told me she would not continue the relationship because she could no longer cope with my life-destroying and destructive behaviour.

This girl was the only moral support I had, and losing her was one of the most painful things in my already painful life. It was only then that it dawned on me I was pushing away the people who loved me.

The next day I decided to give up the toxins I was on and clean up my life. I took myself to the doctor for the first time in four years and found out the extent of the damage I had done to my kidneys, lungs and stomach. He told me I had to give up alcohol, amphetamines, even caffeine, if I wanted to live any more than fifteen years.

Until then I had never discussed my lifestyle with my parents. The truth is I had not had a decent conversation with them for four years. Now I needed help, but my parents couldn't help me without knowing what I had been doing. I was scared to tell them because I knew they would feel let down and inadequate as parents. In fact, they reacted perfectly, supporting me through D-tox and helping

me look towards the future.

It took me two weeks to sweat the drugs out of my body, one week for my mind to catch up and then two months to get over the psychological addiction to everything. In the first three weeks I suffered cramps, nightmares, insomnia and disorientation. During this time my parents removed every dangerous object from my room. They supported me the whole time by being there, and helping while I had no idea what was going on around me. I then had to live without drugs and alcohol which meant reacting to problems differently and learning how to deal with life.

Yet there was still something missing. I had taken out the distractions but still felt empty. I was not happy or fulfilled. So I went shopping to find something honest that would replace the rubbish in my life. I bought books on many religions and philosophies. I settled on Buddhism as it was something that helped me live day by day. My ex-girlfriend had impressed me by her ability to deal with any level of problem that she encountered.

Religion gave me moral precepts and changed my thoughts about life. It showed me a way to live by. It is eight months since I took vows to refrain from taking life, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and taking intoxicants which lead to carelessness.

I've learnt to deal with my problems by taking time out everyday to reflect on the right moral choices I need to make. Only through this quiet time can I make choices that won't hurt other people or myself.

Still, life is not always easy though it is better than before. Nowadays when I think life is hard I just have to remember the years of darkness and pain. It helps to try and be there for other people and to be interested in their problems.

My father has been on a similar path to mine and found his answers through Christianity. A few months ago he apologised for his actions of abuse while under the influence of alcohol. The need to apologise came to him while he was having his quiet time. It was the best and most honest apology that I have ever received, and finally broke the last barrier between my father and myself. It healed the deep hate I had felt for him since I was knee-high to a grasshopper.

I have made the changes in my life with God's help. The challenges I have faced over the past year would have been too difficult to overcome with my own strength. This new strength comes from my quiet time - everything from apologising to workmates through to clubbing and partying with friends. My strength comes from silence.

Lachlan Walters, Australia

If we take a close look at ourselves we find that we are all addicted to something or someone, although some of us are addicted to more harmful things than others.



People tend to be reluctant to use the word addict. I am certainly a culprit of this which is why my addiction became so harmful. I believe that if we are aware of our addiction and are prepared to admit to it we are half way there to ridding ourselves of it, if that is what we choose. I have many addictions, one of which is delicious foods. I am on what you call a "see food diet", meaning I see food and I eat it. This can be upsetting to my figure but I assure you I have it well under control, so it's a non-damaging addiction. My other addiction by contrast is far more damaging both mentally and physically. It is one that I fight with daily to control - the battle of alcohol addiction.

Seven months ago I was a very different girl; I was unhappy, mixed up with a crowd of people who really did not care about my wellbeing at all. My relationship with my parents was far from OK and life had no purpose, and very little meaning. As for values, what were they? I was on a dead-end road with no goals or ambitions. The only thing I did know how to do well was to drink away the problem. In fact, I was becoming an expert at drinking away days, weeks, months and eventually years.

Alcohol was not only used as a means of socialising, it became my crutch. It propped me up and gave me a lease of life that was lacking. Spiritually I was dead but alcohol kept me going. I was slowly becoming an addict. People would ask me not to drink so much. When they questioned the quantities I was consuming I would defensively tell them to stop nagging. I was fine. Denial was the final definition of my addiction. I reached a stage



what's your poison?

addictions...

where I was not capable of socialising without alcohol. I couldn't cope without it. If difficulties crossed my path I'd have a drink and hope they'd go away, but they didn't. As well as a dreadful hangover I would also wake up to yesterday's problems and the day before's and the day before's. You see I couldn't drink them away. They would always be there waiting for me, waiting for me to wake up to myself. My addiction had completely taken over. Unlike my delicious food diet I had no control over this addiction, it was my dependant. It had created a dysfunctional, insecure, unconfident young lady, who was upsetting her parents and the people who loved her. I had to reach a state of total self-disgust and despair to face the realisation that there had to be something better than this.

Freeing myself of this soul-destroying addiction is no easy ride but it is one of great personal growth and self-satisfaction. It has opened many doors to wonderful and meaningful friendships. There are days that I find hard and feel the temptation to find answers at the bottom of a glass. But it is then that I ask myself the question, 'Natalie do you want to be an addict forever?', and the answer is always NO. So now I live without leaning on my false crutch and feel a whole lot better for it. I feel as though I have finally slowed down and have stopped running from life. I have let life catch up with me, and have faced the problems I was running from. I feel free to identify with my mistakes rather than be afraid of them. My addiction was never the answer to my problems - it was more than likely the cause of them.

Natalie Porter, UK

I've never asked myself if I have an addiction, and if someone had asked me I would have said no because I hardly drink, I don't use drugs and I don't smoke. But chatting with a friend I realise that I do have addictions and lots of them. In fact we all do, big and small.

I have discovered that I am addicted to work. I have to be doing something all the time. I can't seem to enjoy a nice view, stare at the ceiling or sit in a chair and relax. Furthermore, I'm forever trying to do two or more things at once.

Recently I took time out from my usual hotel work and study and realised the importance of silence and being still.

I now believe that whilst it's good to work hard, it's crucial to make space each day to recharge one's energies.

Graciana Garcia Iribarne, Argentina

It was on a day on which I toured one of the houses for auction in an expensive new estate that I realised how empty I was inside. There was no furniture within the walls of that house, no pictures, no pot-plants. And all the houses surrounding it were the same.

I don't think it's easy making our way, as young people, through today's world. The increasing incidence of addiction - to tobacco, alcohol, drugs, exercise, or whatever - is evidence that things are difficult. These types of addiction are often, I believe, attempts to fill an emptiness, a craving for spiritual nourishment. They are a means of injecting some kind of ritual into an otherwise chaotic life; an outward indicator of the stresses and expectations of today's world.

In a stimulating book, entitled *Edge of the Sacred*, David Tacey talks of alcohol and drugs as 'one of the few forms of shared social ritual we still have left today' in the Western world. Many families rarely share meals together, let alone set aside time to talk. Tacey maintains that we long for some sort of "ecstatic experience", something that gives meaning to life. Since we have lost a sense of spirituality, or moral vision, we resort to drugs, alcohol, and countless other addictions, in an attempt to regain this meaning or at least to release us from the rational boundaries of the everyday.

Addictions such as alcohol, drugs, work, even sex, shopping, or travelling, allow us to move outside of ourselves. As humans, we need to get outside ourselves, to be freed from our egos - this is part of spirituality. But we become addicted to unsatisfactory methods of escape precisely because they are unsatisfactory. These things are not necessarily bad; in fact, some of them can be a pleasurable and important part of a balanced life. But addiction to them, when they are invested with inappropriate spiritual longings which they can never furnish, is destructive. We never feel fulfilled by drugs, for example, and so we go back and back for more in the hope that, one day, we will be.

For this reason, addiction can only be "cured" by a change in spirit. It is very difficult to break away from familiar rituals when our individual, or cultural, esteem is low. The challenge is to understand why we have be-

Addict

1. to cause (someone or oneself) to become dependent (on something, esp. a narcotic drug).
2. a person who is addicted, esp. to narcotic drugs.
3. a person devoted to something: a jazz addict.

Photo:
Elisabeth
Peters





come addicted, for only then can we begin to do something about it.

We expect, or at least hope, to gain ecstatic experience from elements of our material world: political ideologies, human relationships... But, too often, we are disappointed, and we substitute our harmful addictions in an effort to find release, to escape from the bonds of rationality. Empty emotionally, we sense that there must be more to life (for, otherwise, what would be the point?) so we seek it in whatever ways we can. However, spirituality is not often an option put forward by contemporary sources - the media, advertising, society at large. So, although our souls are crying out for nourishment, we don't know how to feed them.

Some practical ideas which I have, and continue to find helpful in overcoming addiction...

- **Talk to people** who've overcome similar addictions - they are living proof that what may seem an overwhelming problem can be beaten.

- **Write down some short-term goals.** This forces us to take stock of our situation, which is important because when we are addicted, we often have only very vague goals, or none at all. A person who is addicted is likely to lose sight of what it is that they're doing. Consciously planning out what we want and are going to do, can make breaking the addiction easier.

- **Think of something you've always wanted to do, or been interested in, and spend time doing it, rather than engaging in your addiction.** Remember, it must be something you genuinely enjoy!

No one can force us to end an addiction; it must be our own choice. But as we break away, we are increasingly able to see the possibilities open to us, rather than the dead ends of addiction, and breaking away becomes easier. We realise the opportunities for truly "ecstatic" experiences!

I would love to hear of the experiences of others regarding addiction, of whatever kind. Please send stories/ideas to The Editors.

Nicci Long, Australia

BEHIND THE FACADES

THE FAMILIES OF ALCOHOLICS

Are you usually insecure? Do you lie when it should be easy to tell the truth? Do you judge yourself without mercy? Are you either responsible to the extreme or completely irresponsible? Do you get stuck in a particular pattern of behaviour without seriously considering alternatives or consequences?

Most of us recognise the character traits described above in ourselves or others. For some people, however, these types of behaviour take complete control and inhibit their normal growth to maturity. To answer these and other questions may help them to identify what they have tried to hide. They may discover how much they have been affected by the alcoholic in their family.

Behind respectable facades alcoholics try to cope with their addiction.

Denial is the key word. For years

they pretend that they drink when they like and can stop when they choose. Then the facade cracks. The alcohol proves to be the master and the drinker the slave. If the alcoholic faces facts, there is a good chance of recovery. Denial is also the key word for the family trying to cope with the alcoholic. It is painful to admit that someone you love is addicted to the bottle and that the craving for alcohol is stronger than their love for those closest to them. The family develops patterns of thought and behaviour to protect the alcoholic and themselves from the tough truth.

Nothing is normal in the family of an alcoholic. One day father is loving and caring to his children. The next day he is a brute who flares into violent tempers and hits them for no reason at all. The children become thoroughly confused. Some do not want to bring friends home for fear of finding mother or father drunk on the sofa. The alcoholic may become free of his addiction. Great relief may fill those closest to him. However, "the addiction" of the family may not come to an end. It is not easy

to say good-bye to attitudes and emotional reactions, which for years have been a *must* in order to survive. The addiction leaves deep wounds in the emotional life of the family. The whole purpose of life for the wife or husband of an alcoholic may have become to cushion their children and be both father and mother. He or she may have tried to be a fortress of stability in the storms of alcoholism. Suddenly that reason for living is gone. But the bitter memories, heartaches and anger stay on.

I sit discussing these matters in a paradise of a place, on a small farm by a lake in Norway, some 80 kilometres east of Oslo. No troubles seem able to reach you there. Yet the lifestory and experiences of Tore Halfstad, a warm-hearted man in his fifties, bring the suffering of millions so close. He was an engineer and consultant on the export of ship equipment. He is now a therapist and counsellor for alcoholics and drug addicts and their families. He gives courses at different institutions, rehabilitation centres and to health and social workers who assist addicts and their families. He has himself been a slave of alcohol and rebuilt his life from the ruins of its devastating effects.

'Many people build castles in the air. That is quite natural. They know they are not real. Alcoholics, however, are the only ones who move in and settle in their imaginary castles,' says Tore. He tells of several years of denial and addiction, of going in and out of an institution for detoxication and treatment before finally going into an institution concentrating on group therapy and the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. The emphasis is on helping the addicts face the consequences of their alcoholism. This method has a success rate of 50%. 'I went for the treatment because I was faced with the threat of being thrown out of the flat I rented. I would have been on the streets. Normally alcoholics only admit their need for help when some terrible consequence of their habit is made starkly real to them.'

"What is the cure which breaks the chains?"

Tore recalls something that became a turning point for him. As part of the therapy the patients were asked to write down their lifestory and the consequences of their drinking. They were asked why this and that happened and why they acted the way they did. 'The therapist, who was a very sensitive person, said to me: "It makes sense what you have written, but you do not seem to feel the consequences of what you have done. You distance yourself from it all." I was then asked to write it all up on the blackboard in front of the rest of the group present. I had to go to the back of the room and read it out aloud. That was tough.'

Tore explains how the treatment of alcoholism traditionally has focused on the alcoholic himself. Yet others in the family need as much help. They develop roles which degrade their human dignity. It is not just a question of assisting the family to help the alcoholic, but for the other family members to become free from their own addictive behaviour. 'An alcoholic is a specialist at manipulating his surroundings as part of his refusal to face the truth about himself. This rubs onto the rest of the family. Everyone is woven into a web of lies and denial.'

The family of an alcoholic often has a "hero", a child who is very capable and who achieves success in spite of the adverse conditions. The pride of the family, they take on adult responsibilities

too early. Behind the facade he or she hardly dares to show their real feelings. The scapegoat of the family is the "rebel" whom everyone can blame. Drawing attention to themselves and away from the real problems by creating trouble at home and school, the rebel easily gets into criminal activities and the misuse of drugs or alcohol. They seek desperately for someone to love and be loved by. Then there is the "clown" who eases the tensions and conflicts of the family with humour and fun. This person is often hyperactive and immature - an attention seeker who has difficulties concentrating. Finally there is "the forgotten child", who tries to make themselves invisible. To the relief of others in the family, this child is no reason for worry. Often a nice, kind-hearted child to show off to visitors, the forgotten child is shy and withdrawn, isolating themselves in an imaginary world.

These roles may exist to some extent in any family. However, in a family of an alcoholic they are developed to extremes. Common to all these roles are pain, shame, sorrow, and often fear and guilt, behind their facades. The other common factor is that once they break out of their roles and begin on a road

of healing, some of their weaknesses may turn into strengths. For example, the wife of an alcoholic may from her own painful experience learn empathy with

others and be a good counsellor - secure, calm and independent.

What is the cure which breaks the chains? The therapy of the courses which Tore and other counsellors run, emphasises openness. There is no beating around the bush. Problems are talked about in a direct and sensitive way. When problems are pulled out of the darkness of denial they lose their power. The participants can start recognising the roles they are playing. They learn practical steps to break out of the vicious circle. They meet, trust and learn to appreciate who they are. They can begin on the road of healing from the consequences of having lived with an alcoholic. Some may find the courage to confront the alcoholic with the consequences of his/her living, and so perhaps become the key for them to face the truth and begin walking the path towards liberation.

Bjørn Ole Austad, Norway/Malta

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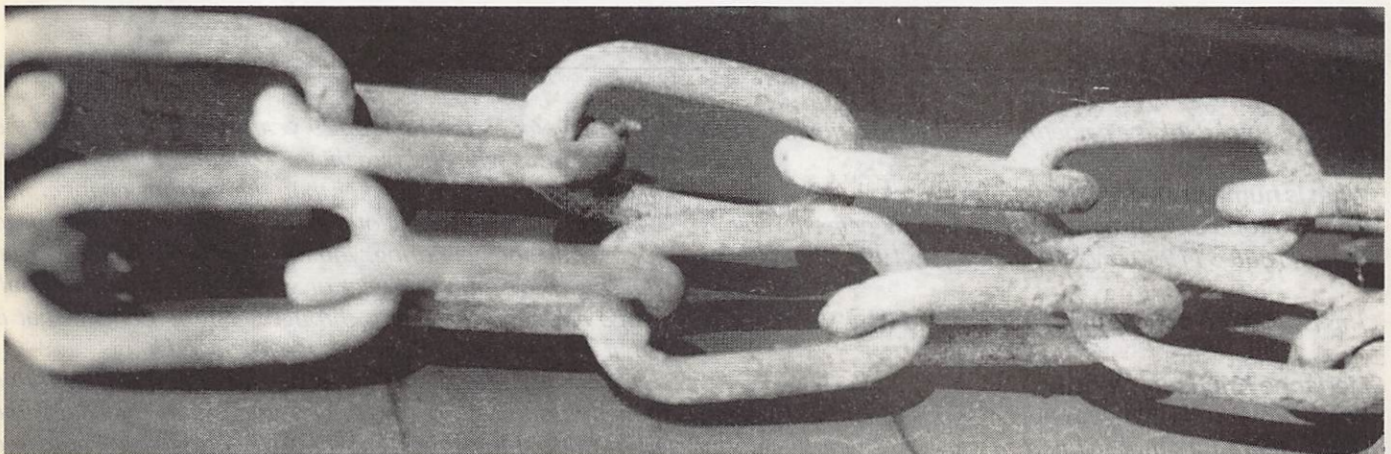


Photo: Lisa Kesby



"Journalism on a regional scale has these amazing side-effects... It's the most rewarding kind of journalism there is because I know I'm doing something for the community."

FAX-THINK-LINK

The Fax-Think-Link is a gathering of ideas and opinions. Next issue we look at:

What is humanity's greatest strength?

Contact gloalex@mraoxon.demon.co.uk or fax the editors at +44-1865-311950, by 6th November, 1998.

This issue: Who do you most admire and why?

Marianne Knudsen, Norway

There are few people who haven't got something I admire them for. But if I had to choose, I would say my parents. I feel lucky to have parents I can look up to.

They have been married for 29 years and that is one of the main reasons why I admire them. Looking around, it seems like couples divorce quicker than the seasons change. It's as if partners were like clothes - when they have been used for a while and get boring, you look for someone new. That doesn't show much respect or willingness to take a challenge and work problems through. To my benefit, that is what my parents fortunately have managed.

One of their greatest qualities is not being afraid of trying new things. They are very open-minded and want to get the most out of their time. For instance, I was very impressed when Dad bought a pair of roller-blades because he thought

Rotterdam is the greatest city on earth. This is, however, only recognised by the people who live here. Others may tell you London or New York are far more fabulous, that Paris or Berlin are lots cooler, some even claim Amsterdam is better. Feel free to believe all of those people. We, here, know better.

Rotterdam is, on a worldwide scale, no more than a medium-sized town. But with the biggest sea-port in the world within its boundaries, it does have the heartbeat, the feel, and, admittedly, the problems of a true metropolis.

From the beating heart of this city I talk to it. Week-day mornings between 6 and 9 I present the breakfast news on the regional radio station: Radio Rijnmond. Three hours of local, national and international news, but also music and traffic-information, which goes out to an audience of about 250,000. This makes it the best rated radio programme in the Greater Rotterdam area at that time of the day.

The fact that most people tune into us is for a large part due to the attention we give to local and regional events. We're close to our audience and their everyday lives. We are easy to reach, by phone, fax, e-mail, or for people who drop by. They don't get fobbed off with a PR-person. We don't have a PR-department for contact with the audience because we believe *all of us* are part of the PR. Anybody who wants to talk to me (or any of my colleagues) because they believe I've made a mistake, or because they want me to look into something, gets to talk to me. There's no escaping and I believe there shouldn't be. My audience listens to me, why shouldn't I listen to them?

People feel they own us. And technically they do, because we are a foundation which has representatives of churches, unions etc, on its board, though

most people don't know this. And they don't have to. They *feel* they own us, which is enough. This also means that we're not just a broadcasting organisation. Part of the job, in practice, is that at times we're also directory enquiries, the tourist information or social workers. Because almost everybody knows *our* phone number by heart; every other number they would have to look up.

Elderly people phone up in the middle of the night because they're lonely, they can't sleep and they haven't had a real conversation with anybody for months. So you spend half an hour on the phone listening to a complete stranger. And some of these strangers keep phoning back, or if they're still physically capable, start visiting and become friends.

Journalism on a regional scale has these amazing side-effects, all of which they never tell you about in journalism school, all of which you don't have in national radio. It's the most rewarding kind of journalism there is because I know I'm doing something for the community I'm in. Not just by reporting on it but also by helping people in their struggle with an unhelpful and sometimes corrupt government.

And by registering important events or moving stories we're also part of the writing of this city's history.

Our challenge for the next century is to reach the newcomers in the area. Our audience is still predominantly white, but with 130 different nationalities in the city, and nearly half the population being of foreign origin in 25 years' time, we will have to successfully reach out to those new groups. To remain the best-rated station in the region and to give those who are relatively new that particular Rotterdam-feeling: That this *is* the greatest city on earth.

Geert-Willem Overdijkink, The Netherlands

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it looked so cool and wanted to try it!
My parents want to make people feel welcome and they are very good at arranging social gatherings of all sorts. Their philosophy, which I have adopted too, is to look for the opportunities and not the limits. This quality fills me with admiration. Life is too short to sit and wait for something exciting to happen, and my parents know that.

Christine Kenny, USA

One of the people I most admire is C.S. Lewis, the great author and teacher. He had a deep understanding of both human nature and spiritual concepts, and a rare ability to

explain these concepts to others. It seems to me that he sincerely tried to lead a good and Christian life, and he set an example that all laymen could follow. His writings have certainly made a difference in my life!

Jennifer L. Padua, The Philippines

I have always looked up to people who care, and share themselves unselfishly - especially those who are lovers of peace. When I saw the face of Mother Teresa in a newspaper some ten years ago and learned about her missionary life, I was moved with deep affection and respect for her. She never fretted about her daily life of service to the

LOVE,

May I try out a theory on you? (How well I know the roll of my wife's eyes sky-wards when I preface the announcement of my latest earth-shattering discovery with such words... Fortunately I cannot see yours, so I will press on.) I have been thinking about the process of finding a mate. It is tricky territory to venture into, as everyone has their own ideas and experience about it; also, because everyone is different and no one should be tempted to think that another's path might work for them. Nevertheless, now firmly ensconced in the settee of middle age (when the broadening of the mind and the narrowing of the waist go into reverse), I have been drawing some conclusions from my necessarily limited experience, in the hope that there might be someone else out there to whom it may be of interest.

I sometimes think that it was much simpler in the days of Jane Austen, or in countries where there is an accepted way of going about it. In 'the West' the old customs have broken down, but we haven't necessarily found satisfactory new ways.

In retrospect, from my early teens when I first noticed how

interesting the daughter of my music teacher was, I seemed to fall in and out of love with quite a succession of girls. (There was even a period when I thought I was in love with two at the same time.) After a time, I began to mistrust my affections as a basis for a long-term relationship - if I could

fall out of love that easily, what if I embarked on a relationship and then fell out of love? I began to glimpse that beneath the emotion, there had to be a deeper sense of rightness on which to build a marriage.

One significant moment was when I woke up one morning with the sense that I was ready to take on someone else. At that time I was particularly interested in a young woman who was working in the same theatre company as me. We worked together for three years, touring with a play, but at no point did I feel it was right to let on to her what I felt - it seemed quite a large stone to throw into

someone else's pool until I was really sure. As sound technician, she was in charge of the mixing desk, and controlled everything which I as musical director produced (not a way of getting to know one's future partner that I would

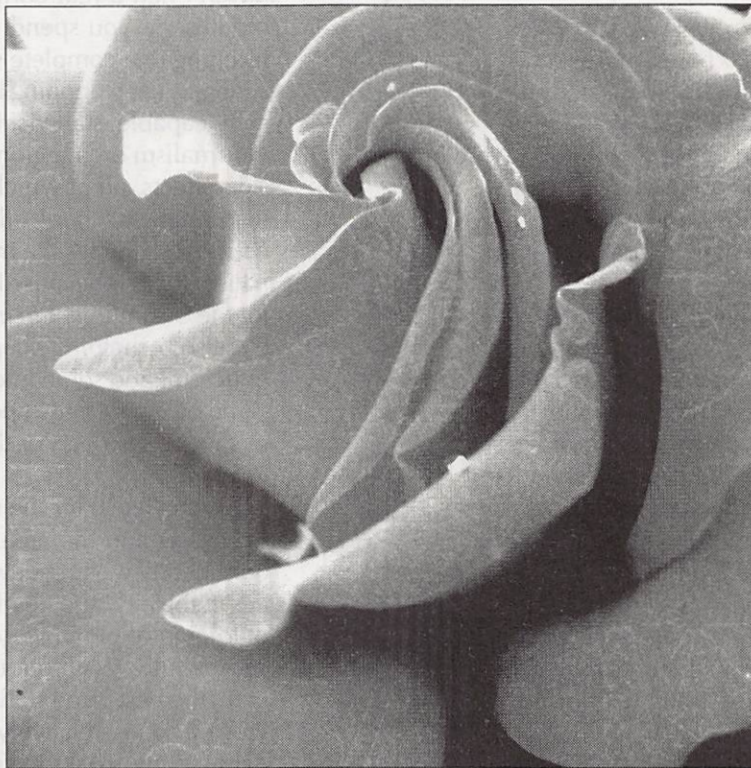


Photo: Lisa Kesby

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poorest of the poor in Calcutta, or even cared to notice how others criticised her works of love and charity. Instead, she offered everything to God with love. You could see her caring for the sick and dying, clothing the naked, feeding the hungry and thirsty, and loving the unloved, oppressed and ostracised unconditionally. She was truly a living saint.

In my country, the Philippines, we have had a number of heroes from the time of the Spanish, Japanese and American occupation and colonisation. But I greatly admire one of my country's contemporary heroes - Sen. Benigno "Ninoy" S.

Aquino Jr. He was assassinated 15 years ago as he courageously went back to Manila and faced his un-

certain fate. Ninoy's death rekindled the flame of heroism and freedom in the hearts of my fellow Filipinos which ousted the Dictator through the historic and bloodless People Power Revolution in 1986.

I also admire a lot of ordinary people. Their ordinariness and simplicity (living a peaceful, happy, decent and contented life) continuously helps me shape a path for myself.

Karin Peters, UK/Sweden

It is hard to say who I most admire but if I had to choose, it would be my former church youth leader. He had good control of things and people, but most of all he made learn-

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recommend). We saw some of the worst sides of each other, as well as the best.

The tour ended and we both found ourselves in London. It was not until a year later that I felt that if I had been in love with her for four years, I might dare to believe it would last. When I finally got round to asking her, I discovered that she had been thinking about me - but only during the previous six months. If I had approached her at any time before that, I would not have been well received. This gave us both a rather deep sense that God had been working in us independently to draw us to the same point.

Thinking about the process of falling in and out of love, I wonder if this is the way by which we discover the kind of person we could spend a lifetime with. "Falling in love" means there is enough in the other to attract you. But if the attraction wanes, it probably means that you are discovering other less desirable aspects of the other's personality. This process is a more or less unconscious education of our judgement about who we might be able spend a lifetime with.

I feel fortunate that, whether through caution or wisdom (probably the former), I did not get too deeply involved with any of the girls for whom I had (what turned out to be)

fleeting affections. I have a feeling that some relationships break down because a couple become too intimate before they have individually got to the end of this process. Then the break-up causes heartache, and often some hardening of the heart to protect against it happening again.

I value my years of singleness - though I am conscious that may be as much because they came to an end. Though everything in me desired female companionship, I feel that

not entering prematurely into an intimate relationship gave me space to discover who I was and my path in life. And the sense that the relationship between my wife and myself was given, rather than engineered by either of us, has been a rock that we have clung to when the difficult times came (the subject of another article).

These experiences have helped me to appreciate that the ancient truths of faith are in fact the values, tried and tested over centuries, on which durable relationships can be built. They may be derided today, but they have lasted rather longer than those currently in fashion which have yet to prove their worth.

Well, perhaps in another decade or two's time, I might write something about married life...

Peter Riddell , UK

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ing about God enjoyable. He understood if you didn't and was happy to explain it again. He was like a friend to me. I didn't feel strange asking or telling him things, and he was always ready to listen. I'm not saying he was a god - just a great friend and leader.

Lisa Kesby, Australia/UK

The answer to this question for me, without a doubt, is my dad.

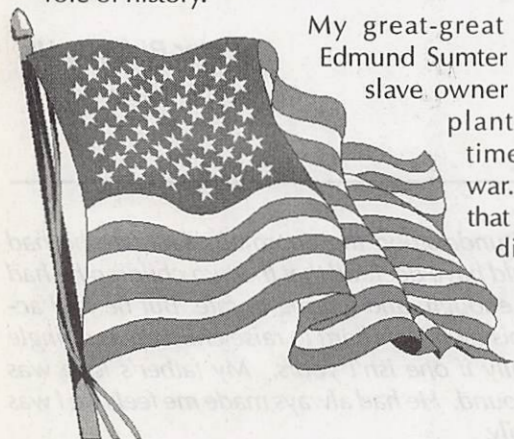
When I was 11 years old, my aunt took me into her room, sat me down on the bed and explained that my 'dad' wasn't my biological father. The news was devastating.

At that point I understood the enormous sacrifice he had made. He could have decided that the two children he had fathered were enough, and left me to fate. But he had accepted me as his own. It is hard to raise children as a single parent especially if one isn't yours. My father's love was enough to go round. He had always made me feel like I was part of his family.

Because of his unconditional love, I have never considered anyone else to be my father, and have never felt the longing to look elsewhere. I believe it is not the act of fathering a child that makes you a parent, it is the care and love you give that child.

facing the past

For the past five years I have attended the University of Virginia. It is located in the city of Charlottesville, right in the centre of the state. Charlottesville is a beautiful city, nestled in the mountains and steeped in American history with President Jefferson's home and the University he founded. But Charlottesville is a very stratified city with very rich and very poor and not much in the middle except us, the university students. And, as in other US cities, this division is not only economic, it is also racial with African Americans predominately comprising the lower class. I was surprised by such a sharp division in the city, but what surprised me more was what I found on the University campus. Here was a place where some of the top young minds in the country gathered. A group formed by a generation that had grown up after the civil rights movement. We were supposed to be the enlightened generation, who realised the colour of one's skin was not our defining feature. Yet here black and white self-segregated into separate housing, separate social organisations and even, in one instance, a separate bus stop known as the BBS or Black Bus Stop. The more I paid attention, the more I realised how unusual it was to see integrated groups. Over the next years I tried to integrate myself personally into the black community. I attended Black Student Alliance Meeting, went to the BBS, approached individuals in my classes and joined an interracial bible study. It was not an easy task. Suffice to say, it wasn't open arms I was running to. Over time I found myself becoming resentful to the hostility and suspicion I encountered. I wasn't a racist, or at least didn't consider myself one. I hadn't owned slaves, why was I the bad guy! I didn't understand how I was part of the problem. I hadn't taken into account the role of history.



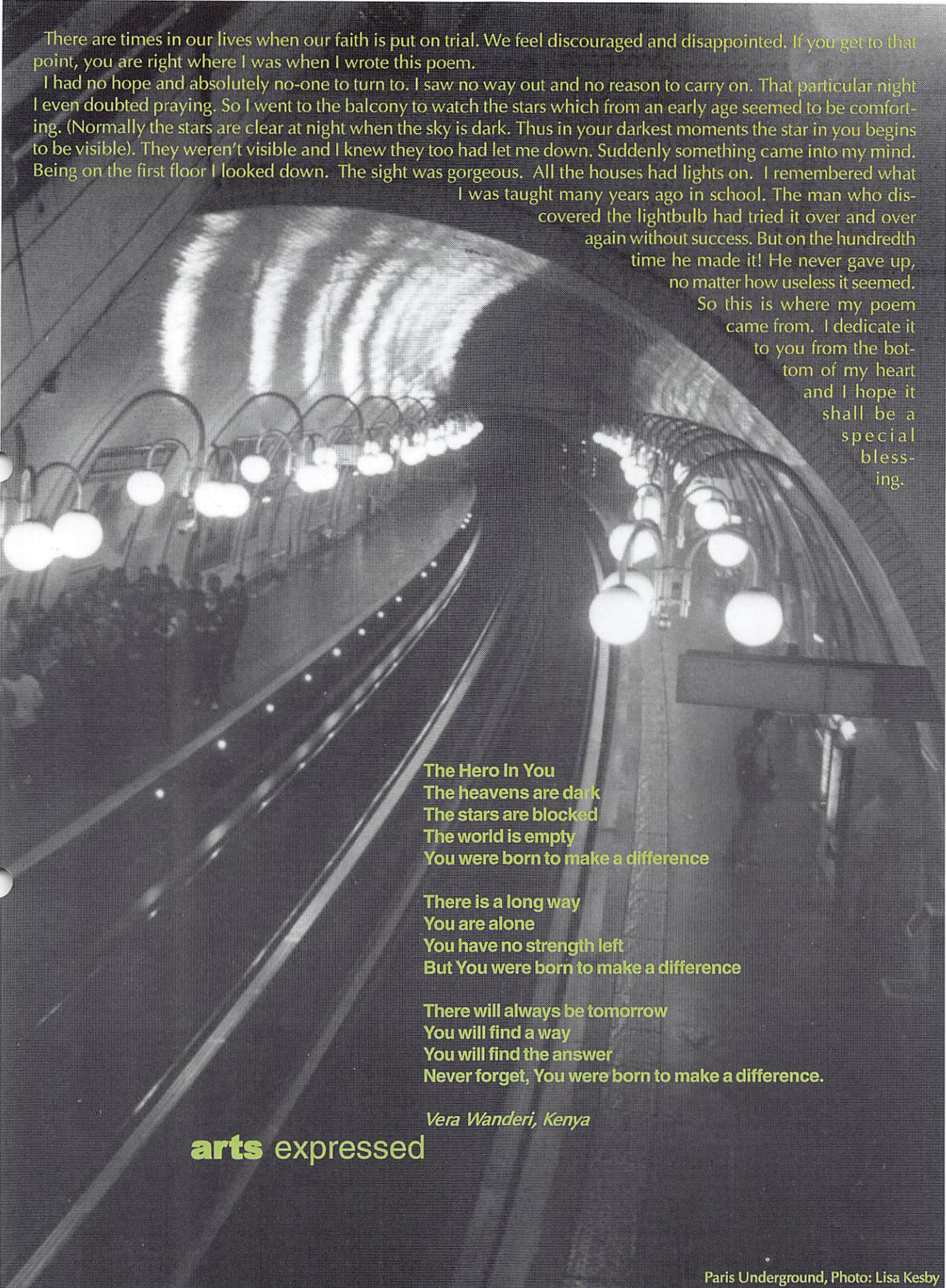
My great-great grandfather, Edmund Sumter Ruffin, was a slave owner on a Virginia plantation at the time of the civil war. He believed that slaves were indispensable to the plantation economy and

was willing to fight to preserve the southern culture he so loved. In fact, it was he that fired the first shot on Fort Sumter. He was a true southerner who believed in the inherent rights of the white race, and when it became clear the south had lost and slaves were freed, he wrapped himself in a confederate flag and shot himself. Men like my great-great grandfather contributed to the creation of a society where it was a privilege to be white. Still today, over a hundred years later, I live with that privilege. A privilege I have always taken for granted. As a white American, I have never had to fight against oppression, to live in a certain community, to go to school or to get a job. The colour of my skin, if anything, made my life easier. This lack of recognition or acknowledgement on my part, was in many ways an unspoken acceptance of the separate societies that have been established. Though I personally had never been a slave owner, I had to recognise that this past was a part of me and that it had had a major impact on my life.

Over the next 12 months I will be travelling throughout South East Asia, Australia and Europe. As I prepare to launch into this adventure, I am becoming increasingly aware of the fact that I, as a young American, carry with me the legacy of my country's past. Each person I meet will have formed opinions of Americans, of me, based on their knowledge of my country's deeds. They may hear I'm from the States and have images of a racist or just a very privileged person. Some may see me as a representative of the "global police" as the media have dubbed us. US history is full of events in which we involved ourselves in the affairs of other nations. Be it positive or negative, this legacy has left its mark on the world. And though I have not been directly involved in these decisions and events, I live in a society that accepts and often prospers from these encounters. Thus, I must acknowledge the effects being American has had on my development.

The past keeps bubbling up around you, whether it be your nation's past or something from your own personal experience. Everything that happens shapes who you are, either directly or indirectly. It is part of your identity. The challenge is to learn how to face who you are, and to acknowledge your part, no matter how big or small. The past doesn't disappear, but in facing it you can use it as a tool to discover more about yourself and the world you are part of.

Catherine Ruffin, USA



There are times in our lives when our faith is put on trial. We feel discouraged and disappointed. If you get to that point, you are right where I was when I wrote this poem.

I had no hope and absolutely no-one to turn to. I saw no way out and no reason to carry on. That particular night I even doubted praying. So I went to the balcony to watch the stars which from an early age seemed to be comforting. (Normally the stars are clear at night when the sky is dark. Thus in your darkest moments the star in you begins to be visible). They weren't visible and I knew they too had let me down. Suddenly something came into my mind. Being on the first floor I looked down. The sight was gorgeous. All the houses had lights on. I remembered what

I was taught many years ago in school. The man who discovered the lightbulb had tried it over and over again without success. But on the hundredth

time he made it! He never gave up, no matter how useless it seemed.

So this is where my poem came from. I dedicate it to you from the bottom of my heart and I hope it shall be a special blessing.

The Hero In You
The heavens are dark
The stars are blocked
The world is empty
You were born to make a difference

There is a long way
You are alone
You have no strength left
But You were born to make a difference

There will always be tomorrow
You will find a way
You will find the answer
Never forget, You were born to make a difference.

Vera Wanderi, Kenya

arts expressed

Diplomacy is the art of fishing tranquilly
in troubled waters. - J. Christopher Herold

Things are not as bad as they seem.
They are worse. - Bill Press

In simplicity there is strength. - Zoe Petterson

Don't talk unless you can improve
the silence. - Vermont Proverb

The best things in life are not things.

To err is human, but when the eraser wears out
ahead of the pencil, you're overdoing it.
- J. Jenkins

A professor - one who talks
in someone else's sleep.
- Bergen Evans

I quote others only
to better express myself.
- Michel de Montaigne

Scattered Thoughts

An atheist is a person with no
invisible means of support.
- John Buchan/Lord Tweedsmuir

Two things stand like stone -
Kindness in another's trouble
Courage in one's own.

There are some days when
I think I'm going to die from
an overdose of satisfaction.
- Salvador Dali

I can resist everything except
temptation. - Oscar Wilde

The mass of men lead lives of quiet
desperation. - Henry David Thoreau

"Kia Kaha"
(Stand tall, be strong)
- Maori saying