Do you believe in God?

Plus!

Lots of great art & photos!

Issue 7 Spring/Summer 2005

FREE

Scratch

Attn. Men!

Meditate on this!

Attn. Men!

How to Shave

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DO YOU believe in GOD?

PLUS!

Lots of great art & photos!

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Some people ask if we are humans having a spiritual experience or are we spirits having a human experience. What do you think?

You can have a problem with substances-like drugs and alcohol without being an addict or an alcoholic.

Learning new skills like juggling and how to play a musical instrument keeps your brain in shape!
When most people think about the whole mind/body/soul package, they envision yoga-practicing, meditation, waking early and eating all-organic granola for breakfast. While this kind of routine helps keep some people centered in life, this kind of regime feels like torture to me. If this is what it means to take care of my mind, body and soul, then I was personally fine with letting all three fall into disrepair.

And then a thought hit me, maybe a healthy lifestyle doesn’t necessarily mean that you have to succumb to a certain diet, or a painful exercise routine. Personally, I feel truly happy with myself when I’m watching a movie, laying in bed, and eating ice cream. This is how I de-stress myself when I feel overloaded. This is how I calm down when I’m feeling angry, upset or shaken. This is how I get away from everything when I just simply need a vacation.

Personally, laying in bed well into the afternoon is healing. My favourite type of exercise is hacking with my friends. Keeping healthy, in the holistic sense of the word, means something different to everyone.

Throughout this issue of Scratch, you’ll be introduced to a broad range of self-care tactics, and your eyes will be opened to many forms of spirituality, and ways of looking at life. But, if these don’t seem to work for you, don’t be afraid to throw our ideas of what mind/body/soul is out the window, and invent it for yourself!

When I hear the reference mind, body, soul, I think holistic. There are many people who will deny that everything in our lives is connected, and intertwined; that each section of our life is affected by the last. The earth, the water, and the sky all co-exist and feed off of the other. As humans, to say that our body is detached from our mind or our soul is like saying the earth and the water don’t have a relationship at all. When we chose mind, body, soul as the topic of this issue, it was because we think that there is more to us than just bodies. We wanted you to think about yourself as a whole being. Pharmaceutical companies would like you to think all you are is symptoms, and with the right drugs you will be healed. We know that’s not true. Our lifestyle, what we do, say, eat, and see affects us, and has the power to make us healthy or unhealthy. Drugs may numb the pain, but they don’t fix you.

Understanding who you are and discovering what mind, body, soul means to you is, I think the first step to being a happy healthy human.
Open your mind to other religions
it’s heavenly!

By Nandi Brownstein, 17, Nelson

On the back of my toilet lie three holy texts: The Bible, The Koran, and The Bhagavad Gita. Through years of browsing through these knowledgeable texts I have come to discover that all three of these ancient books serve one overall purpose - to guide people to live harmoniously with god and with their fellow human beings. So how, I ask you, can these similar messages be so misconstrued that they cause people to fight and kill each other? I believe all fundamentalist religious groups need to re-think their own values and what exactly they’re fighting for.

Many religions around the world believe that their way is the only way and some feel that anyone who does not share their views is going to hell. Even if you do belong to a religious sect entitled to reach the pearly gates you are still excluding yourself from countless others religious groups that believe theirs is the only way, and since you can’t possibly belong to every religion, in the end, you will still be going to hell.

WE WEREN’T CLEAR!
Just to be clear about our politics quiz (SCRATCH Winter 2005), Glen Clark was not guilty of trading renos at his cottage for a casino license with a neighbour. Sorry about the fact-checking!

Art by Heather Oliver, 17, Elkford
I think that I was about 8 years old when I first realized that my dad was growing pot in our basement. I remember many of his friends coming over to our house, smoking up and heading into the basement to check on the plants. I was about 10 years old when I asked him what the plants were. He told me that they were tomato plants. Even at 10 years old, I could tell that he was lying. My mom was an avid gardener and I had helped her plant tomatoes in our backyard. I knew that he wasn’t telling the truth but I didn’t know what to do about it.

As I grew older, the pot plants stayed with us, even as we moved from house to house. When I was in grade 7, I showed the plants to some of my friends. They confirmed my suspicions and agreed that they were pot plants. I never showed the plants to anyone again and denied that they even existed.

As a teenager, I hated it when my dad smoked pot around my friends or was stoned when they came over. To my knowledge, none of my friend’s parents smoked pot and I was terrified that the police would find out and my dad would go to jail. I remember a girl in school whose father was sent to jail for dealing pot. I think that he sold much more than my dad did, but I was still worried that my dad would end up in jail too.

My mom became a teacher when she was in her forties and I thought that it was very unfair of my dad to keep smoking and selling when getting caught might harm my mom’s career. When my middle sister was about 14 years old, she started smoking pot. Because my dad had so much in our house, she began to steal it from him. He caught her and was totally outraged that she would do such a thing. He started locking his bedroom door and created a “secret” hiding spot in the basement for the plants. I couldn’t get over the irony of him telling her that smoking pot was wrong when he had been doing it ever since he was a teenager.

I was not a perfect teenager but because of my Dad, I have never done any drugs, ever. My other sister has never done drugs either and neither of us intend to. I can’t be in a relationship with anyone who does drugs because of all the negative feelings that it brings up for me. When my husband occasionally smokes pot, I can’t deal with it. I worry that he will become an addict like my father, even though this is completely illogical. We have agreed upon a “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy as a way to get around my issues with drugs.

My dad still smokes pot every time I visit my parents and it makes me feel very uncomfortable. My husband and I plan on having kids in the next few years and I do not know what to tell them about their pot-smoking grandpa. I also have an aunt and uncle who were busted for selling pot a few years ago and could not come to my wedding. I have a small family and was very disappointed that they weren’t able to attend.

I do not want this to be a sob story about how bad drugs are – I just wanted to share my experiences about having family members who are heavily involved in smoking and selling pot. My parents went through some tough financial times when we were kids and I suspect that selling pot is what paid the bills during those years. Even if dealing drugs was how food got on the table, I still think that it was wrong. People say that smoking pot isn’t a big deal but I vehemently disagree. Marijuana is an illegal drug and people should not smoke it or sell it.
Herbert is sliding a cream-cheese coated piece of bacon into his mouth while boiling his cabbage soup and slurping a Slim-Fast Shake. Herbert is on a diet. He’s a creative man. He’s not about to listen to some old guy with letters behind his name in regards to the contents of his fridge. But he will listen to three of them.

Herbert is combining three fad diets: the no carb diet, the eat just cabbage soup diet, and the diet that has you buy and drink slimming shakes.

The No Carbohydrates (you know the one I mean)
Limit your consumption of broccoli and brussel sprouts, ban rice (3 billion Asian people are wrong?) and eat as much greasy meat and cheese you can consume without nausea.

The eat just cabbage soup diet
Cook a huge pot of cabbage vegetable soup. Eat all the things specified from Day 1 to Day 7, AND whenever you’re hungry, eat as much cabbage soup as you can stomach (you’ll probably get a sore jaw and a bad gas problem, before you get full).

The Drink this Diet Shake Diet
This diet tells you to eat vegetables, salads, and oh yeah, drink a brand of commercially-prepared slimming shakes, and sugar-free gelatin (that’s bone marrow, for anyone who didn’t go through a vegetarian phase).

I don’t have letters behind my name. I’ve got a love handle or two. But Herb: What are you thinking? My opinion is that we should all love the shape we come in, but if your shape is bringing you grief, read on….

Trisha’s Guide to Staying in Shape (the shape being ‘cylinder’ as opposed to ‘pear’)

Take the insurance off your car, and then walk around Nelson looking for a McDonald’s.

Attach yourself to the back bumper of a slow-moving vehicle (wear runners).

Sell every dish in your house.

Break into a serving career (think of each customer as a personal trainer).

Take up whistling. You’ll have something different to do with your mouth, and you’ll sound cool really cool.

Drink coffee and pop whenever you’re hungry and dance in your living room until the buzz wears off.

Vacuum the entire house every time you see a crumb (this will also encourage you to not eat all those evil carbs).

Spend lots of time with your special someone in a power outage.

Start a hobby farm in your backyard and promise to eat only freshly slaughtered chicken.

Have a baby. Little George on the hip is like free weight-training and labour is apparently a very good work-out.
Streeter
Do you believe in God?

By Bekah Hutchison, 18, Genelle

Sarah Fredericks, 15
Hell no. What kind of God will sit back and watch as we kill ourselves?

Shayla Stubbs, 16
I believe in God because that was the way I was brought up.

Kyra Slubowski, 17, Trail
I don’t believe in God, but I believe that there’s a higher power.

Jason Thomas, 18, Trail
I believe in God because He gave me the gift of music.

Fact
The new pope, Benedict XVI, says that Catholicism (being a Roman Catholic) is the only true path to salvation.

Christianity is currently the largest religion in the world. It is followed by about 33% of all people — a percentage that has remained stable for decades. If current trends continue, Islam will become the most popular world religion sometime in the mid-21st century.

The New Age is a movement of individuals with some new age beliefs and regular religious affiliation. Surveys of US adults indicate that many hold at least some new age beliefs:

- **8%** believe in astrology as a method of foretelling the future
- **7%** believe that crystals are a source of healing or energizing power
- **9%** believe that Tarot Cards are a reliable base for life decisions
- **1 in 4** believe in a non-traditional concept of the nature of God which is often associated with New Age thinking:
  - **11%** believe that God is “a state of higher consciousness that a person may reach”
  - **8%** define God as “the total realization of personal, human potential”
  - **3%** believe that each person is God.

Source [www.religioustolerance.org](http://www.religioustolerance.org)
Art by Katerina D’amours, 27, Gray Creek

Art by Josh Zak, 17, Nelson

Art by John Dell, 19, Cranbrook
Have you ever wanted to be able to meditate? Overwhelmed by the many different kinds to choose from? Taoism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, even Quakerism all employ different kinds of meditation. However, the basic idea of meditation is non-denominational. It is simply being still in body, mind, and spirit.

First things first: Make sure you give yourself at least twenty minutes. Use a timer if you have one so you don’t watch the clock. Also, turn off the TV, phone, radio, and fluorescent lights. You may also want to set up an inspirational object to look at—a candle, mandala, icon etc.

1. Find a comfortable position:
   It could be cross-legged on the floor or on a chair with your feet flat on the ground. There is no magic position. Basically, you want to be comfortable so you don’t shift around. Put your hands on your thighs, palm down and keep your spine straight.

2. Focus on breathing:
   Think slow and steady. Breathe through your nostrils and pay attention to the way the air flows through you. Take deep belly breaths, and focus on your abdomen expanding and contracting.

3. Quiet your mind:
   You’ll find your mind does not want to relax. You’ll think of everything from grocery lists to commercial jingles to the last argument you had with your mom. This is the tricky part of meditation. Just recognize whatever thoughts happen and then let them go.

Ways to refocus your mind:
1. bring your attention back to steady breathing
2. focus on your stomach rising and falling
3. concentrate on an object—candle or mandala
4. visualize something sacred: Jesus, Buddha, a star

And that’s it! Once you’ve mastered the art of stillness, you can energize your body, mind and spirit. It gets easier with practice, no matter what your religion or spirituality. So, keep practicing!

Fact
Deep breathing can help calm you down and relieve stress. Try it. Take 10 slow, deep breaths right now!

You experience colours, tastes, and sounds more intensely and you experience life more consciously when you meditate.

The most common reason why people start to meditate is that they want to feel fitter, happier and more energetic.

By Genelle Schmunk, 24, Nelson

Art by Vanessa Ooms, 18, Elkford

Source: www.abc-of-meditation.com
Spirituality

There comes a time in one’s life when things are
difficult. It is in these times that we strive to make
sense of things, find a deeper meaning, or seek a higher
power. Maybe you were raised with a sense of
spirituality that doesn’t work for you anymore. Or
maybe you were born without spirituality and it’s time
to dig deeper. Either way, here’s a brief description of
some spiritual/religious doctrines.

**Christianity:** A monotheistic (belief in
only one god) system of
beliefs and practices, based on the bible and
the belief in Jesus as the savior and son of God.
Christians believe in the concepts of heaven and hell,
the after-life, and being forgiven for sins. They live
their lives based on the Ten Commandments and
during Lent, they give Alms to the poor.

**Judaism:** A monotheistic religion
originating from Abraham, and
based on the Hebrew Scriptures, the Talmud,
and the Torah. The Jews don’t believe that Jesus was the
son of God, but that he was a great prophet.

**Islam:** A monotheistic religion based on the
 teachings of Mohammed as preserved
in the Koran and the Sunna. Like Christianity, Islam
encompasses groups with wide-ranging interpretations
and applications of Muhammad’s teachings. Islam
literally means submission to Allah. A person who
believes in Islam is a Muslim and they live life based
on the Five Pillars (the belief in Allah and Mohammed
as prophet, giving alms to the poor, praying five times a
day, going on one pilgrimage to Mecca in their
lifetime, and fasting during their holy month).

**Buddhism:** A religion based on the teachings of Siddhartha Guatama, the
Buddha (or enlightened one) who lived at the
foot of the Himalayas in luxury. He rejected his
wealthy upbringing, and became a wandering
“ascetic”, a person who suffers severe physical
hardships for religious reasons. He eventually chose the
middle path to enlightenment. Buddhists believe in
controlling their feelings and desires to attain
enlightenment. They also believe in reincarnation,
though enlightenment can allow a person to escape
the cycles of birth, death, and rebirth.

**Humanism:** A philosophy that focuses on
human thoughts, values and
actions. Humanists believe that humans are essentially
good and can prove themselves with reason and action.
No deity is acknowledged.

**Sufism:** A Persian mystical religion based on
Islam. A Sufi believes that it is possible
to experience closeness to God while one is still
alive, as opposed to after they are dead like other
Muslims. To a Sufi there is separation
between all of Being, the Creator, and His creations.

**Wicca:** An earth religion based on ancient
(even prehistoric) paganism. It is a
relatively new reconstruction loosely based on
old religion and early witchcraft. Wiccans believe that
everything is part of a delicate balance of light and
dark, good and evil, day and night, and male and
female. They also believe that the Goddess and the
God are both creators and destroyers. They believe in
an individual’s power and personal path, as long as it
harms no one else. There is no bible and no one
prophet.

**Hinduism:** The dominant religion of the
Indian subcontinent, and the
third largest religion after Christianity and
Islam. 3000 years ago the religion was formed based on
the Vedas. Hindus believe in a spiritual force called
Brahman, and the cycles of birth, death, and rebirth.
Yoga is often used to attain oneness with the divine.
The caste system was traditionally part of Hinduism as
well (a division of society by class and occupation)
though this system is dissolving in modern times.

**Atheism:** The belief that there is no god or
gods.

If you have a religion or
spiritual belief that you
adhere to, and you don’t
see it here, post a
message on the
discussion board at
www.scratchonline.ca.
Your truth is out
there…..

By Trisha Elliott,
27, Nelson

Disclaimer: This
research was done for
SCRATCH. We’ve tried
to ensure it’s accurate
but if we’ve missed
something or got it
wrong, let us know.
Male grooming: somewhat of a paradox, right? Historically, hair care and personal grooming has been mostly a woman’s thing. With men just making sure their hair is short enough to not be confused for a girl from behind.

However, there is a new breed of male nowadays. One that may be as obsessed with his image as your average blonde hotel heiress. I’m talking about the “Metrosexual.” Now there are varying degrees of self-obsession, from checking every mirror to make sure your hair is just right, to even shaving your legs or armpits. Believe me I’ve heard it all; half my friends are actors, the other half are athletes. Sometimes the jocks are even worse than the actors. Friends of mine have shaved their armpits because they think it will “make them sweat less.”

Personally, I’ve also found myself guilty of Metrosexual behavior. I’ve had my eyebrows threaded, and I regularly get spray tanned and even waxed. For those of you unfamiliar with eyebrow threading, brace yourselves, it’s pretty brutal. It involves getting the hair of your eyebrows ripped out by what is essentially dental floss. Often making you bleed. It hurts even more than it sounds, especially if you have strong roots like I do. And if you don’t know what spray tanning is, it’s pretty much just getting sprayed by a sugary brown spray that temporarily dyes your skin. If you get it done right it looks like you just spent a month in Hawaii. The spray reacts with your dead skin cells to make them appear tanned and wears off as you shed your skin cells in about a week or two. I recommend wearing underwear that isn’t white when you’re getting sprayed, you can probably figure out why.

Recently, I discovered how expensive caring about your appearance can be after shelling out $110 for getting my hair highlighted in the Metrotown Mall in Burnaby. My advice: if you want highlights, don’t go to the mall.
The new heightened awareness of male grooming doesn't stop at head and body hair. Some guys may even go as far as adding cover-up makeup to conceal pimples, rashes, bruises, or even hickeys. Personally, I believe we should draw the line somewhere. From my experiences, and I've had a few if you know what I'm saying, most girls tend to like guys with a little body hair but not too much (I said “most girls,” there are the occasional girls that like really hairy guys or totally bald ones). Lose the back hair, and shave your face from time to time, but keep the underarm hair (however I encourage a little occasional trimming of the hedges) and please stay away from the arm and leg hair, it's there for a reason. Last but not least, leave the makeup in your sister’s drawer. Aside from that, show that you care about your appearance and people will take notice. Look good, smell good, and you’ll feel good.

One thing every guy needs to know is how to shave without getting razor burn. Razor burn hurts and it can make you look bad. It is also a sign that a guy does not know how to take care of himself, and girls know it.

Let’s admit it, the reason we shave, put gel in our hair, and try to dress like we know what we’re doing is mostly to impress girls, right? Well, why blow it by showing up for a date with itchy red bumps all over your neck, or wherever you plan on shaving. Not only does it not look good but it can make you feel unsure of yourself, and we all know that lack of confidence is death when it comes to impressing girls. Now here is the simple way to avoid razor burn when you’re mowing the face.

HeyGuys!

Step One: Wash your face with warm water prior to shaving to open the pores.

Step Two: Make sure everywhere you plan on shaving is covered with shaving cream.

Step Three: Never use an old razor blade. Five uses is about the maximum for a single blade. The Gillette Mach 3 is an awesome razor.

Step Four: Rinse all excess shaving cream with cold water to close your pores.

Step Five: Finish by using a moisturizing cream or aftershave lotion to ensure razor burn stays away. I recommend Nivea Cream moisturizing lotion.

It's really simple. There's no excuse for being a dirty bum with razor burn. Just because you care about the way you look doesn't make you a girly man.

In 2003, there was a 48 percent increase (compared to 2002) in the number of plastic surgeries done on people 18 years and younger.

With the dangers of cosmetic surgery aside, experts are worried about the way teenagers are viewing their bodies.

While women are still more likely to have cosmetic surgery procedures, cosmetic surgery for men is on the rise – 14% of all cosmetic surgeries done in the US are on men.

The five most popular types of cosmetic surgery for men are (in descending order): nose reshaping, eyelid surgery, liposuction, hair transplantation, and breast reduction.

These stats are from an American source. Expect similar trends in Canada.

Source: www.aboardcertifiedplasticsurgeonresource.com
Tucked away at the end of a winding road in Kootenay Bay, lies the place of worship for many Kootenay yogis.

The Yasodhara Ashram was founded in the early 1960’s by Swami Sivananda Radha, who passed the presidency down to Swami Radhananda (radha meaning cosmic love, and nanda means bliss). The Ashram offers spiritual and practical guidance through a wide range of yoga-based courses and retreats. In exchange, guests are asked to abstain from drugs, alcohol, and sex. A trip to an ashram is a way to bring yoga from the mat, into your core, and into your daily life.

I was lucky enough to be welcomed into the Ashram to interview Swami Radhananda. If you can’t make it to Kootenay Bay anytime soon, you can start your spiritual quest on this page.

**How would you describe your role at this ashram?**

“I’m the president of the ashram. There are three other swamis that live here doing personal work. We study ourselves and the teachings. You make a commitment to that. We [the swamis] became teachers of the teachings.”

**Are most guests at the ashram looking for the physical benefits of yoga or for inner peace?**

“They find peace. The youth have drugs and sex on the outside. They don’t need that pressure here; they can just focus on themselves, what’s inside and what they know.”

**How does a yoga student move from developing their bodies to developing their minds?**

“Dreams. I write down my dreams. My voice will tell me what to do from that same place that knows. Keep a dream journal. When I started my dreams were sometimes scary, but as I connected to them they became lighter and brighter.”

**What if you have a lot of bad dreams?**

“They want to get your attention. It’s like listening to a good friend. If you ignore your friend, they will call all the time.”

**Is it accurate to compare an ashram and swami to a church and priest?**

“Here you will find a group of people with the same ideas, travel companions on the path of yoga. Here you are accepted, treated with respect, and allowed to be emotional. If you have a question you are given guidance.”

**Can enlightenment just happen to you, or is it all about the work?**

“We are vibrations. We don’t understand how our minds work. We’re fortunate to have a human body but people don’t seem to understand that. Self-realization leads to enlightenment.”

**Why is detachment considered a good thing in eastern philosophy? Can we still love our families as yogis, and feel attached to them?**

“If I hadn’t made the commitment to yoga, I’d still be in my little family circle. I wanted to open it and let my children make their own decisions. I was attached to them being a certain way. You can’t be attached to making people do what you want [them to]. [Detachment] frees me to go deeper. I haven’t given my family up. I let things go so they could come back.”

**Are you happier now than when you were younger?**

“I just turned 64. I’m much happier and peaceful now than when I was younger. If you keep learning, the wisdom comes through.”

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If you are between the ages of 18 and 28, you can qualify for the Youth Program at the ashram. This program is a two-week spiritual study of yourself, and it’s FREE if you qualify, check it out at www.yasodhara.org. Be prepared for karma yoga (chores), hatha yoga, and reflection classes. Also be prepared to go home, further along your spiritual path.
Daniel and I face each other, the length of one green tatami mat between us. His bare foot slides across the green cloth in front of him, making a wide triangle between his feet and his outstretched fingers and snapping out his white Aikido uniform. We are standing in an exact mirror image, holding a perfect line between our fingertips. We are both breathing heavily and Daniel breaks out in a grin, silver braces appearing suddenly out of his hawkish face. He pulls his neatly tied cloth belt tight around his waist.

Daniel's belt is purple. My own is white; showing my few extra years of experience in Aikido. To us, there is no difference. Daniel has learned so quickly that I am no longer teaching him. We are learning together.

Outside of class, Daniel and I both wear thin chains around our necks. Before each class we carefully take them off and lay them with our clothes. On his is strung a simple silver cross. On mine is a silver five-pointed star inside a circle. When we walk onto the mats, however, it is the one time when we lay down our chains. That is how we met.

I'll admit that when Daniel and I began to talk about our religions, I was probably more worried about him than he was about me. He had grown up in a Christian family, and was confident of my beliefs. I, on the other hand, was a comparative newcomer to Wicca. In his eyes, I was a mysterious and unpredictable heathen. In my eyes, he was a potential minefield of unknown prejudice and extremism.

And yet, we were on the mats, and so we talked. The answers began to come out.

No, he didn't think that the biblical description of witchcraft applied to Wicca, and therefore I was safe from any particular moral persecution.

No, I had nothing to do with sacrifices, demons, or combinations of the two.

Yes, Christians really could be sensible, open people.

Yes, Wiccans really could be sane, normal people.

And so, despite the walls between us, we talked. Despite all the Christians who speak against my kind, he didn't mind getting to know me. Despite all the fear and mistrust of my kind, I learned to trust him.

I give a slight nod, and he returns it. In two sudden steps I fly towards him, hand rising in a fluid strike to his head. Perfectly timed, his wrist meets mine and I feel my momentum diverted in a spiral around him. With a flick of his hand and a turn of his foot he has caught my balance and in perfect unison we slide in a half circle. For one moment we are suspended on a knife-edge of gravity, momentum and centrifugal force, and then it is over and I fly through the air, but for every moment we are as one.
Taking care of your mind, body and spirit, means different things to each of us. When you live in the Columbia Basin, you have tons of choices. You can get a natural high and a adrenalin rush just about anytime.

Send us photos of you and your friends doing cool, healthy stuff outdoors. We’ve got the kicking backcountry and outdoors so let’s see you in it! If we publish your photos we’ll pay you! Post your high-resolution images at www.scratchonline.ca. Follow the links to submit your stuff.
your mind and SPIRIT FREE
What do you do to take care of your mind, body and spirit? Hit the SCRATCH discussion boards @ www.scratchonline.ca and share your tips for good living.

**TOP 10 Things that Intrigue your mind, body & soul**

By Caleigh Moffat, 18, Elkford

1. Baking cookies
2. Blankets right out of the dryer
3. Hugs; giving and receiving
4. Holding the door for a stranger
5. Dancing in the rain
6. Randomly breaking out into a happy song like "You are my sunshine!"
7. Taking a walk in the woods
8. Star gazing
9. Doing something special for someone on an ordinary day
10. Calling a friend you haven’t talked to in a long time just to see how they are doing.
Good health is like an ex-boyfriend, you don’t know what you had until it’s gone. Tired of popping a pill with a name you can’t pronounce every time you’re sick? Welcome to the growing world of alternative therapies. This is just a brief intro to the alternatives out there.

**Acupuncture:** An ancient Chinese medical practice that is based on the concept of Qi (pronounced Chi). According to the practice, Qi (or vital energy) travels along pathways in the body called meridians. There are acupuncture points along these meridians, and certain combinations of these points correspond to certain physiological systems. The points are stimulated with fine needles to open the energy flow along these meridians, these energy blockages are believed to cause many health problems. An example of conditions acupuncture is used to treat: sports injuries.

**Fasting:** Giving up or strictly restricting food intake to balance toxicity from food and drug ingestion. During this process the organs are allowed to rest and toxins are cleared from the blood and lymphatic systems. Liquids (mainly water) and herbal teas are allowed. An example of a condition fasting is used to treat: allergies.

**Ayurveda:** An ancient Indian system dating back to the Vedas belief’s that disease is caused from living out of harmony with the environment. This system focuses on diet and lifestyle through the use of herbs, aromas, color, gems, meditation and yoga to establish harmony in our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual nature. An example of conditions Ayurveda is used to treat: depression.

**Homeopathy:** A principle that believes “like cures like.” Substances causing specific symptoms in a healthy person can cure these symptoms in someone who is sick, so these remedies (through plant, mineral, and animal extracts) are given in minute doses. An example of a condition homeopathy is used to treat: asthma.

**Hypnotherapy:** The use of hypnosis and suggestion as psychotherapy and to treat chronic pain. An example of a condition hypnotherapy is used to treat: Irritable Bowel Syndrome.

**Chiropractic:** A form of body-work that uses manipulation of the spine to remove blocks in the transmission of nerve impulses from the brain to the rest of the body. An example of conditions chiropractic is used to treat: back pain.

**Naturopathic Medicine:** A discipline that draws from a variety of traditional healing systems to look at the patient in a holistic way. A naturopathic physician will avoid surgery and non-natural medicinal agents, and will follow these principles: help nature heal, do no harm, find the underlying cause, treat the whole person, encourage prevention, recognize wellness and act as a teacher. An example of a condition naturopathic medicine is used to treat: improvement of memory.
An escalating problem:

- Youth suicide (15-24 years-old) has risen over 200% in the last two decades.

Some of the factors:

- Not only are more youth ‘trying’ suicide, but now, ‘accidental’ deaths from high-risk activities (like street racing, cliff jumping, and drug abuse) are being ruled as suicide in many provinces and states.
- Life is becoming increasingly more unpredictable (due to wars, changing economy, and other confusing life situations), and many youth don’t have the right skills to cope- to help themselves deal with the stress and confusion that comes with this unpredictability.

Who’s at risk:

- Three times as many females attempt suicide (compared to males); however, three times as many males are successful, often because males choose more lethal and immediate means of killing themselves.
- Two to three times as many GLBTQ (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning) youth attempt suicide as heterosexual youth. Suicide is the leading cause of death among GLBTQ youth and they make up 30% of all youth suicides.

Don’t be fooled:

- Talking about suicide makes people more likely to try it. FALSE!
- Talking about suicide:
  - Allows youth to gain useful knowledge, insight and resources to help themselves and those around them make smarter choices in their lives.
  - Allows youth to express their feelings and concerns about the issue, and can lead to the creation of a support network, helping to prevent it from happening.

Some risky factors:

- Having three or more of the following characteristics can indicate that someone is at risk for suicide (but doesn’t always):
  1. A psychological disorder (schizophrenia, bulimia, anorexia, depression)
  2. A history of suicidal behavior (talking about it, thinking about it, attempting it)
  3. Substance abuse (doing drugs, alcohol)
  4. Experiencing a recent or significant loss (a death, divorce or someone moving away)
  5. Experiencing early parental loss (at a young age - from death, divorce or someone moving away)
  6. A family history of suicide
  7. Experiencing parental abuse or neglect (emotional, physical, sexual abuse, being ignored)
  8. Exposure to suicide attempts of others (a friend, family member, peer)
  9. Having a sense of hopelessness
  10. Experiencing a loss of love
  11. Having poor problem solving skills or low self-esteem
  12. Having easy access to drugs or firearms

Risk Characteristics

Someone who:

- Is an under/overachiever
- Has a violent family life
- Has poor communication skills
- Feels worthless
- Has issues with anger
- Feels lonely or isolated
- Is depressed or has a history of depression

Behavioral changes:

- Mood swings - going from happy to angry very quickly; or going from anger to tears in an instant.
- Withdrawal from family, friends, social outings, and school participation.
- Apathy - “I don’t care,” “It doesn’t matter.”
- Changes in eating or sleeping patterns
- Giving away prized possessions
- Changes in school attendance - usually cutting classes or stopping going altogether
- A decrease in academic performance or concentration - grades go from ‘B’ to ‘D’, or someone who ‘zones out’ in class, or sometimes falls asleep.

The community said…:

- A survey was done in the West Kootenay area with 20 people who had lost one or more family members or friends (under the age of 25) to suicide. The purpose of the survey was to see how they were affected by the suicide(s). Here are the results:
  - 40% lost more than one person to suicide
  - 90% felt extreme guilt, grief and anger because of the situation(s)
  - 30% were diagnosed with some form of depression 3-5 months after the suicide(s) took place
  - 55% worried about losing someone else in their
circle of family/friends because of the suicide(s) that took place

- 50% reported having varied degrees of suicidal thoughts (“I wish it was me that died” “I feel like dying” “I hate my life, I wish it were over”) 1-4 weeks (or more) after the suicide(s)
- 55% of those who sought counseling/professional help for their depression/traumatic experience(s) reported having happier, improved quality of life because of it
- 70% said that talking to friends and family about how they were feeling, and having a strong network of support helped them get through the situation

Places to get help:

- If you think that you or someone you know is having problems with depression, self-harm, or suicide, here are some internet sites, phone numbers or places you can go to talk to someone to find out more information or get some help:
  - www.metanoia.org/suicide/
  - This is a website that gives information about suicide and things you can do to get help for yourself or others. It is easy to read, and is completely anonymous.
  - www.mentalhelp.net/poc/center_index.php?id=9
  - This is a page that has information on suicide and self-harm. It gives statistics, facts, and links to other resources.
  - www.suicideprevention.ca
  - This website is for the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention. It has news and information, resources, and helpful links to other sites.
  - 1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433)
  - This is a (free) phone number you can call that is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Your call will be connected to a certified crisis center nearest to where you are calling.

Kid’s Help Phone 1-800-668-6868

- Another (free) phone number that you can call 24/7 if you need someone to talk to. If you are uncomfortable phoning the help line, you can also visit their website:
  - www.kidshelp.sympatico.ca/en/
  - This site explains what the Kids Help Phone is, why it’s there and what to expect when you call. You can also go to their Library for more information. There is also the option of talking online with one of their counselors, or posting questions on their message boards.

Nelson Community Services Centre
701 Front Street; Nelson, BC; V1L 4B8
Phone: (250) 352-3504

- This is a local service center that you can call or visit to find professional people in your area you can talk to.

Life can get tough. There are external and internal pressures that we all go through and sometimes our friends can’t seem to be there for us in the way that we need. Wouldn’t it be fabulous if you could have an unbiased person who could help you sort out your thoughts and feelings, without being worried that you were draining them?

That’s where a good therapist comes in. A therapist/counselor can help you sort out everything from a mild case of the blues, to schizophrenia, anxiety disorders and bipolar disorder. There is help out there.

In Nelson, you can access free counseling at the Nelson Community Services Centre (across from the Netidea building) and at Nelson Mental Health and Addictions (Kootenay Place, 333 Victoria St.). Confidentiality is guaranteed. You can even make a confidential call to find out how you can help a friend.

If you live in another part of the Columbia basin, you can find contact information for free counseling at www.interiorhealth.ca. Click on ‘Health Services’ and then ‘Mental Health’. Here you can also find great information on coping with different mental illnesses, defining them, and dealing with loved ones who have a mental illness.

You can also call the toll-free regional crisis line at 1-800-515-6999.

If you are willing to pay for counseling services, there are a variety of other options in the Yellow Pages.

What can you expect from your first counseling appointment? You will go through an assessment process that will involve personal questions. Beyond that, each therapist’s approach will be different. Look for someone that makes you feel comfortable. It’s all confidential. If at first you don’t succeed, try try again.
By Brett Mattson, 19. Warfield

In this dark, turbulent world there is too much violence and not enough peace. In this cold and indifferent world, those living in freedom are misled into believing that the other five billion nine-million nine-hundred ninety-nine thousand nine hundred ninety-nine people living on this Earth experiences the same basic rights and opportunities that they take for granted.

Canadians especially live in unbridled freedom but are apathetic to injustices transpiring outside our realm. It appears that we as Canadians leave the global policing up to more distressed and high-minded nations, particularly The United States and Great Britain. These two Sovereign nations valiantly and justly liberated Iraq, a shackled land of impoverished people, weapons of mass destruction, and second largest petroleum reserves in the world. They paid no mind to the outdated United Nations, which believes nations have the right to govern themselves and the need for a unanimous vote in the UN Security Council before declaring Liberation. Canada must strive to the heights of heroism that these noble countries have reached. We must dive into the cold stream of consciousness and awake from the golden slumber of ignorant bliss. The rights and freedoms handed down to us by our forefathers means that in good conscience we cannot hoard our liberty, like a squirrel hiding his freedom nuts in the tree of pain for the frigid winter of discontent. We must share and force our correct way of life on those who are oppressed.

No country has fallen further from grace than the Netherlands. Once a proud, respectable European nation, it has degenerated into a society of decadent excess and anarchy. Only in a primitive cesspool could one find Cafés legally selling narcotics and encounter legions of prostitutes roaming the countryside turning tricks for petty cash. A corrupt dictatorship posing as a constitutional monarchy is to blame for the downward spiral as they mask themselves with synthetic liberty and false justice. Only a country with moral superiority like Canada can forcefully repress the primitive primal urges that apparently all humans experience, freeing the Dutch of their own savagery.

Why has the responsibility of liberation fallen on the broad shoulders of The Great White North? Because Canada freed our clogged brothers and sisters from Nazi occupation during the Second World War, it is our duty to aid this nation that took a wrong turn on the winding road of self-improvement and self-determination. Similarly, the United States aided Iraq during the Iran-Iraq wars, when Iraq fought Islamic fundamentalism. Iraq also lost its way when it nationalized its petroleum industry, halting foreign interests. The United States corrected this problem by liberating Iraq from the strong yet feminine grip of madman Saddam Hussein.

If the Netherlands is liberated, its people could be assimilated to fit the Canadian image of perfection. Imagine a Canadianized Netherlands where people stop on the clean and benign streets to ask, “Hoe is het toestand, eh?” Envision an Amsterdam where all the marijuana cafés and bordellos are replaced with Tim Hortons.

Canada must help bring peace through violence like United States and Great Britain. Therefore, Canada should save the Netherlands from itself because it is a land of relaxed morals and oppressed people that could be amalgamated and integrated into a proper Canadian way of life.

Irony:

May 2005, marked the 60th anniversary of Canada’s liberation of the Netherlands from the Nazis at the end of World War II.
Okay, so we have all heard about Climate Change and its impacts, but who knew that many of the interior communities have some of the worst air quality in the province? Many of the reasons we choose to live here contribute to this phenomenon. For example, the high mountains and deep valleys help trap pollutants in the valley bottoms. Some of these pollutants, such as wood stove smoke and road dust result from our methods of coping with cold, snowy winters. Other major contributors are diesel and gas exhaust, as well as slash and back yard burning. So which contributors can we do something about?

**Woodstoves**

Your woodstoves don’t have to pollute. To dramatically decrease the amount of smoke that your chimney emits make sure that only dry, untreated wood is burnt in small, hot fires. By burning your fire hot you also burn the smoke before it can leave the chimney. This will help reduce creosote build up in your chimney making wood burning that much safer for you and the environment. Living near an inefficient wood burner can elevate your indoor contaminants by up to 70%! These contaminants may account for symptoms such as sneezing, runny nose, itchy eyes and sore throat. And we all thought we had colds in the winter?!

**Diesel and Gas Exhaust**

This is the easiest one of all. If you are going to be stationary for more than ten seconds, turn off your engine! Start driving after no more than 30 seconds of “warm-up” idling, and avoid high speeds and rapid acceleration for the first five kilometres to allow all moving parts of your vehicle to warm up. If every driver of a light-duty vehicle in Canada avoided idling for just five minutes per day, for one year, we would save more than 930 million litres of fuel, worth more than $640 million! Tell your family and friends about the benefits of not idling, it will help them save money and create new environmentally friendly habits too.

**Slash and Backyard Burning**

Slash burning may appear to be a bigger problem than backyard burning, but in reality it has less of an immediate health impact. The particulate matter and toxic fumes released by backyard burning are far more dangerous to our health than the particulate released from a slash burn. When garbage such as plastics, treated lumber, coloured paper, styrofoam, and other household wastes are burnt, toxins such as arsenic, benzene, carbon monoxide, dioxin, formaldehyde, lead, mercury, nitrogen oxides, and particulate matter are released. Pollution from backyard burning can:

- increase the risk of heart disease,
- expose you and your neighbours to many cancer causing compounds,
- aggravate respiratory ailments such as asthma and emphysema,
- and cause rashes, nausea, or headaches.

Use and promote the alternatives to backyard burning such as composting, recycling, reusing, and refusing to buy heavily packaged or non recyclable items.

For more information about the air quality in your area visit:
http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/air/

Air Quality Groups in the Columbia Basin

WKAP (West Kootenay Airshed Protection) - formerly Nelson Clean Air Protection (NCAP) www.ncap.kics.bc.ca or 250- 825- 9527 (825- WKAP)
EKCCA (East Kootenay Citizens for Clean Air) - www.ekcca.com
GDAQC (Golden and District Air Quality Committee) - www.goldenairquality.com

By West Kootenay Airshed Protection members Tamara Mickel, 31, Nelson and Alison Stent, 23, Nelson

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As seems to be the case wherever you go, we often have a tendency to see the world before we take the time to explore our own backyards. I’d like to introduce you to some cool day and overnight trips in my neck of the woods that might be just what you need to revitalize your own body, mind and spirit this summer.

Rafting the Lower Elk River
Meandering peacefully through most of the Elk Valley, the Upper Elk River is somewhat deceptive in nature in that it provides few hints of the excitement it holds for rafters and others who choose to journey downstream into its lower reaches southeast of Elko. Local rafting companies based out of Fernie can take you on affordable and unforgettable day and half-day trips into the extraordinary lower Elk River Canyon, where in addition to riding the whitewater there are opportunities for cliff-jumping, swimming and wildlife viewing.

Island Lake
Located just 10 kilometres from Fernie, Island Lake is one of the Elk Valley’s most accessible and beautiful treasures. With the peaks of the majestic Three Bears towering above, this classic Canadian Rockies lake offers you the opportunity to take part in everything from canoeing and swimming, to hiking and mountain biking the surrounding trails. Also home to Island Lake Lodge, which hosts cat skiing guests each winter, you’ll find an amazing restaurant, spa/massage services and luxury accommodations if your budget allows for it.

Heiko’s Trail
Completed two summers ago by Fernie Alpine Resort’s previous owner, Heiko Socher, Heiko’s Trail is a full-day (or overnight) hike near Fernie that takes hikers through 20 kms of amazing mountainous backcountry terrain. You’ll find the trailhead up Hartley Lake Road (behind the Three Sisters) and within under an hour from there will reach some spectacular caves that are worth taking a rest stop at for awhile. Travelling up and over several ridges from here you’ll see endless varieties of wildflowers that change with the elevation. Your travels are complete when you reach the lodge at Island Lake (you’ll need to leave a vehicle here or you’ll be making a return trip to Hartley Lake Road.)

Lussier (Whiteswan) Hot Springs
A must-do for any East Kootenay resident, these natural hot springs are located a short drive east of Highway 93 in Whiteswan Provincial Park. Enjoyable and easily accessible at any time of year, visitors have their choice of two pools (warm and hot) or a third option of refreshing themselves in the icy cold river found directly beside the hot springs. Whiteswan Lake has day-use and camping facilities, and is also just a short drive down the road which makes the hot springs a great option for a day or overnight trip.
Here are the people responsible for picking all the words and images in this issue. They’d like to know what you think. Hit the discussion boards @ www.scratchonline.ca and give them your opinion.

From left: Joe McDonald (Nakusp), Alison Brown (Trail), Tyler Bjarnason (Elkford), Kyle Holland (Moyie), Joe Reiner (Nelson). Missing: Dana Welsh (Trail), Derrick Jones (Golden).

Art by Jaymie Johnson, 15 Nelson

Photo by Crystal Smienk, 23, Balfour
Columbia Basin Youth Grants is a new funding program for youth projects. We give small grants (for projects up to $2500) and large grants (for projects over $2500) and there’s no deadline to apply! Check it out at http://www.scratchonline.ca/programs.php

If you have a great idea for a youth project in your community but need some money to make it happen, why not apply? You have nothing to lose!

CBT Youth Advisory Committee Wants You!

Columbia Basin Trust is looking for new members between the ages of 15-29 who are interested in joining the Youth Advisory Committee starting September 2005 for a one-year term.

We need young people from different walks of life, a range of ages, different communities and with different experiences. As a Youth Advisory Committee member, you’ll build an awesome resume! You have an opportunity for personal skill development such as community organizing and leadership skills, as well as an opportunity to meet, work and travel with a group of other young people from around the Basin.

The deadline to apply is June 28th. If you are reading this after June 28th, get in touch with us, maybe there’s another way for you to get involved with one of our great youth projects.

For more information about the Youth Advisory Committee, go to http://www.scratchonline.ca/about.php

www.scratchonline.ca is a great, youth-driven website. It’s got job postings, opportunities and events, discussion boards, on-line experts, a ton of great resources etc etc.

There are some kicking jobs on-line right now at http://www.scratchonline.ca/view_opportunities.php?cat=1 along with great links to other Job Posting sites (that are constantly updated)

Remember you can post your jobs or events or conferences at http://www.scratchonline.ca/index.php

Check out the awesome gallery of artwork and original writing while you are on-line

For information about any CBT youth project, you can email us @ info@scratchonline.ca or call 1-800-505-8998. If you want to know more about the Columbia Basin Trust click www.cbt.org.
TRAIL LOOKS FOR NEW YOUTH CENTRE

By Kyle McLellan, Trail

The Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) was created to encourage and support youth involvement and leadership within the Columbia Basin Trust and Basin communities. It also exists to support and build a greater network among young people in the Basin, to share their ideas and initiatives. The YAC supports youth through its distinct and creative programs. The Columbia Basin Youth Grants support youth projects that develop youth capacity and leadership – like the ones below. The Scratch Zine, a magazine for youth, by youth, and www.scratchonline.ca, a website for youth, exist to connect youth in the Basin, to exchange ideas, information and provide a space to showcase youth writing and art.

ANKORS is the parent organization of the Safe Spaces Program, which is a program serving gay/bisexual/lesbian/trans-sexual/true-spirited/questioning (GBLTTQ) youth. The Program aims to provide support to these youth all over the Columbia Basin by providing safe spaces for them to meet and access to recreational activities. The program also aims to raise awareness of homophobia and discrimination, and to increase support of GBLTTQ youth in all sectors of the community.

Safe Spaces received $50,000 from the Columbia Basin Trust in August of 2004. The majority of this money went to the East Kootenay branch of Safe Spaces, as it started later than the West Kootenay branch and needed more financial support. With this funding, an East Kootenay coordinator has been hired to organize “Pride Speaks” in the schools to raise awareness of GBLTTQ youth issues. A West Kootenay Pride Speak Coordinator has also been hired to train volunteers and give presentations at schools.

The Columbia Basin Safe Spaces Program is being used as a template for the national program being created.

www.scratchonline.ca
The first SCRATCH magazine hit the streets in winter of 2002?

According to the first issue of SCRATCH, the number one reason to live in the Columbia Basin is the wicked backcountry.

The article “Diversity Sucks”, made a great satire for readers in the Spring 2004 issue.

SCRATCH published a cool and inspiring article about Christopher Swain and his marathon swim down the entire Columbia River?

Severn Cullis-Suzuki, daughter of David Suzuki, has been published in SCRATCH?

An article by Michael Franti, lead singer for the very cool band Spearhead, was published in SCRATCH?

You can win stuff by entering SCRATCH contests?

Everything we publish comes from young people 15 to 29 years who live right here in the Columbia Basin?

SCRATCH has published issues on self image and self esteem, diversity, youth activism, the environment, music, politics and mind/body/spirit.

There’s even a SCRATCH website with great on-line galleries of art and writing, lots of resources and yes, even more!

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**You think you know how to SCRATCH?**

By Tyler Bjarnason, Elkford

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**The Winner is**

Tim Girard, 20 from Creston won the SCRATCH politics quiz published in our winter 2005 issue. Are you feeling lucky? Take this (easy) quiz and win big, just like Tim. OK, you won’t win that big but we will send you a bunch of cool SCRATCH stuff.

---

Enter on-line @
www.scratchonline.ca
or fax your answers to 365-6670. Don’t forget to give us your name, email and address. Enter by June 19 and you could win a car...

FALSE. No really, you could win a SCRATCH prize pack ... that’s TRUE!
My trip to Calgary…

Doesn’t sound too exciting does it? But it wasn’t just an ordinary trip. First off, you have to know that I hurt myself a lot. My friends call me gimpy.

Anyway, my trip was not for pleasure or business in case you want to know. However, it was very important. It all started with me biking to my friends on a summer evening. I was going to go to a movie with them until I crashed my bike. The catch was that I landed with my gut on my handle bars. That turned out to be a lot worse than I thought. I went to the hospital to get checked out. I thought I would go to the movie later.

After some chest x-rays and consulting another doctor, I was told I was going to be medi-vac’d to Calgary – just in case I tore my liver!

So I had a 40 minute helicopter ride for free. When I got to the Alberta Children’s Hospital they did two sets of CT scans and I found out how lucky I got. I missed hitting my liver by about half an inch, hitting my large intestine instead.

My tip to you: don’t land on your handle bars. It’s not healthy!

— wet jeans

cold, damp, coarse
uncomfortable, permanent, unpleasant

run for shelter
get worm, pry off shoes
pull off socks
peel off jeans
dig for warm pants
dive into them
drag them over wet skin
...become warm...

We asked for your travel stories!
Here’s one.

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My tip to you: don’t land on your handle bars. It’s not healthy!
A: Abstinence – otherwise known as Not Having Sex. Abstinence is the only sure-fire way to avoid STIs (sexually transmitted infections).

B: Bacterial Vaginosis – an infection that mostly affects sexually active women. It is very commonly misdiagnosed, as most women think they simply have a yeast infection and treat it with over-the-counter medications. However, it requires antibiotics.

C: Chlamydia – a bacterial infection of the urethra (the tube that carries urine out of the body). Women’s cervix, uterus and ovaries can be infected and it can cause sterility.

D: Death – the inevitable end result of AIDS.

E: Emergency contraception – a pill that a woman can take within 72 hours after having unprotected sex to ensure that she will not become pregnant. This pill does not prevent STIs.

F: Fever – a symptom of some STIs.

G: Gonorrhea – a bacterial infection that can affect the mucous membranes of the urethra, cervix, rectum, mouth, throat, and eyes.

H: Herpes – an incurable viral disease, which means that once you get it, you’re stuck with it.

I: Immunity – NO ONE has immunity from STIs.

J: Jumping into action – this is what you should be doing if you think that you may have an STI; go to the doctor and get tested so that you can get treatment.

K: Kissing – some STIs (like Mononucleosis) can be passed from person to person by kissing, or even sharing drinks and cigarettes.

L: Lymphogranuloma – also known as tropical bubo, Nicholas-Favre disease, and sixth venereal disease. If left untreated it can cause serious tissue damage, scarring, rectal or intestinal blockages, and extreme swelling of the genitals (elephantiasis).

M: Mononucleosis – more commonly known as the “kissing disease”. Symptoms include swollen glands or lymph nodes (especially in the neck), fever, tired achy feelings, loss of appetite, white patches on the back of the throat, and tonsillitis.

N: Nine – this is how many times more likely a teen is to get an STI than an adult aged 30-39.

O: Ovaries – the ovaries are affected by many STIs.

P: Pediculosis pubis – more commonly known as crabs.

Q: Queasiness – a symptom of several STIs.

R: Rashes – a symptom of many STIs.

S: Syphilis – a highly infectious disease. It progresses through four stages – primary, secondary, latent, and tertiary – each of which can last for a few years. It can be fatal in the final stage.

T: Trichomonas – a parasitic infection that affects the urethra in men, and the vagina and cervix in women. It can be cured by taking Metronidazole, but the drug can have many side effects, including nausea, headaches, and abdominal cramping. If left untreated, trichomonas can increase the risk of getting HIV.

U: Urine – many STIs can cause painful urination.

V: Vaginitis – an infection of the vagina caused by various germs including yeast and trichomoniasis. Symptoms include burning and itching.

W: Warts – genital warts. A virus that infects the genital area. Symptoms can come in the form of wart-like growths or abnormal cell changes.

X: Say X ten times really fast; it sounds like what you do to get STIs!

Y: Yeast infection – an infection of the vagina. It is not technically an STI, but it occurs most commonly in sexually active women.

Z: Zovirax – an antiviral drug used to treat some types of herpes.
Finding a partner is like shopping. Everyone has a different style. Some people run into the first store they see, and grab the first thing in sight off the shelf. This can cause problems when they realize afterwards that what they have purchased wasn’t really what they wanted after all. However, this technique is not always flawed. Occasionally, the first thing a person sees may be exactly what they are looking for, and they will leave pleased with their decision.

Other people prefer to shop around before they finally make a choice. This is the standard and most accepted method, although, shopping for more than one item at once is often frowned upon.

Still others may look for hours and hours, but return empty-handed at the end of the day. Though often discouraged, they will likely return bright and early the next morning for another day of browsing. Perhaps they may even find what they are looking for!

Of course, people’s shopping habits do not just revolve around personal choice. There are a number of other variables too. For instance, we must take into account the budgets of the shoppers. A person with a larger wallet will be able to afford a more esthetically-pleasing purchase. Of course, most people know that eye candy isn’t everything, and that items with less glamour and a smaller price tag often turn out to be of better quality.

An unfortunate situation can often arise when a person wants an item that is out of their price range. This can often lead to emotional scarring and a plethora of melodramatic poetry, especially in the teenage years.

Everyone’s needs vary greatly as to what they are looking for in their purchase, but there is something out there for everybody, if they are willing to put enough time into carefully selecting an item that they will be pleased with.