



THE
New Era

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WAY,
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Cover: *Beehives in
Anchorage, Alaska, learn
to love the temple. See
“Planting Temple Seeds,”
p. 20.*

*Cover photography:
Janet Thomas (front),
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Planting
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one way
Beehives in
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The LIGHTHOUSE OF THE LORD

A Message to the Youth of the Church



by President
Thomas S. Monson
First Counselor in the
First Presidency

The teen years are not easy, but you do have a sure guide to safety and happiness.

You, the youth of the Church, are a glorious group, a chosen generation. You bring to mind the words penned by the poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow:

*How beautiful is youth! how bright it gleams
With its illusions, aspirations, dreams!
Book of Beginnings, Story without End,
Each maid a heroine, and each man
a friend! ("Morituri Salutamus").*

Just 20 years ago, many of you had not yet commenced your journey through mortality. Your abode was a heavenly home. We know relatively little concerning the details of our existence there—only that we were among those who loved us and were concerned for our eternal well-being. Then there arrived the period where earth life became necessary to our progress.

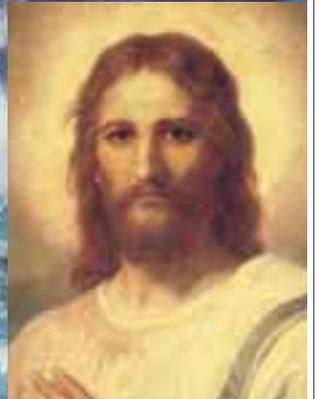
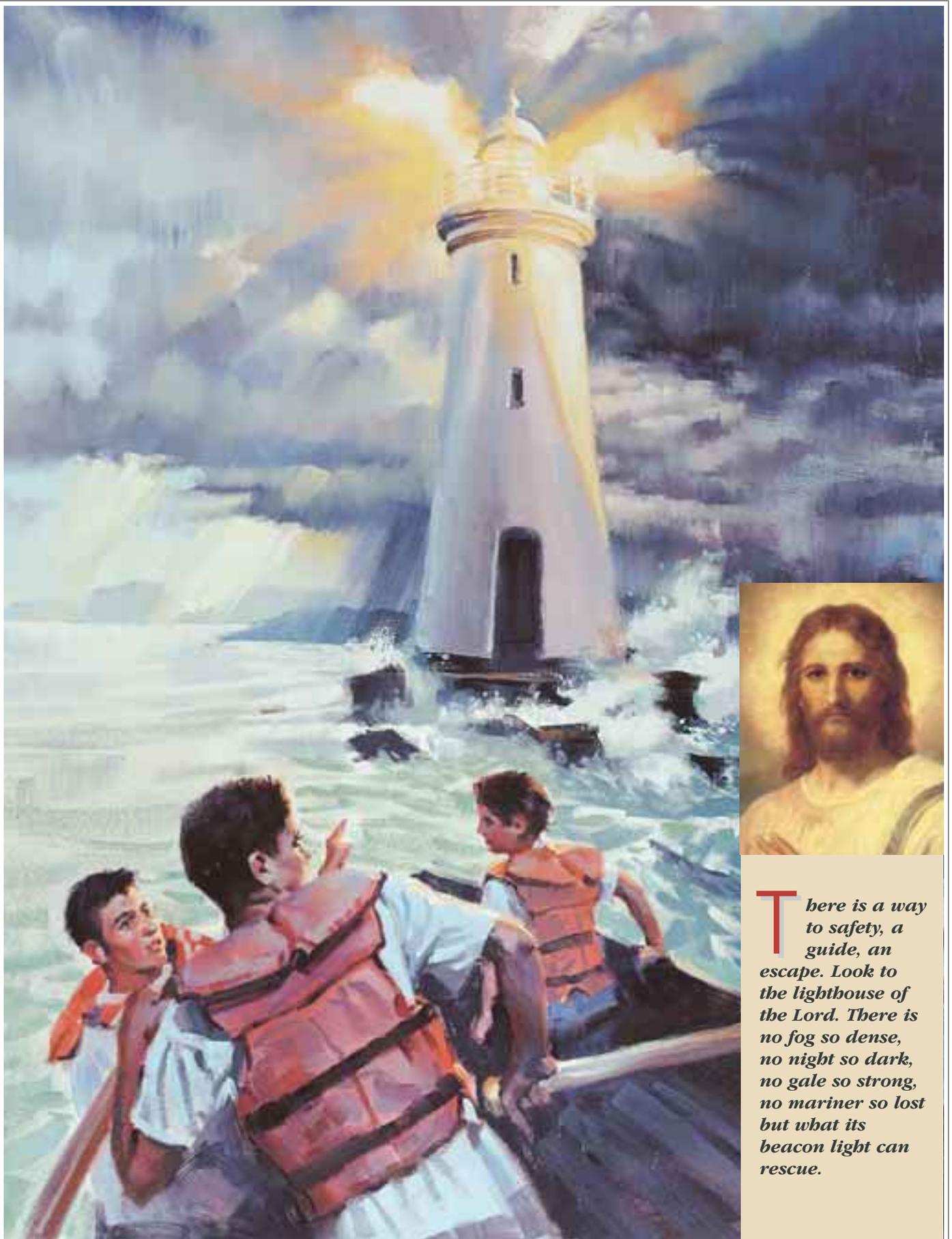
Farewells were no doubt spoken, expressions of confidence given, and graduation to mortality achieved.

What a commencement service awaited each of us! Loving parents joyously welcomed us to our earthly home. Tender care and affectionate embraces awaited our every whim. Someone described a newborn child as “a sweet, new blossom of Humanity, fresh fallen from God’s own home to flower on earth” (Gerald Massey, in *The Home Book of Quotations*, sel. Burton Stevenson, 1934, 121).

Those first years were precious, special years. Satan had no power to tempt us. We had not yet become accountable but were innocent before God. They were learning years.

Soon we entered that period some have labeled “the terrible teens.” I prefer “the terrific teens.” What a time of opportunity, a season of growth, a semester of development, marked by the acquisition of knowledge and the quest for truth.

No one has described these years as being easy. Indeed, they have become increasingly more difficult. The world seems to have slipped from the moorings of safety and drifted from the harbor of peace. Permissiveness,



There is a way to safety, a guide, an escape. Look to the lighthouse of the Lord. There is no fog so dense, no night so dark, no gale so strong, no mariner so lost but what its beacon light can rescue.

Associate with those who, like you, are planning for the things that matter most—even eternal objectives. Not only will your circle of friends greatly influence your thinking and behavior, but you will also influence theirs.



immorality, pornography, and the power of peer pressure cause many to be tossed about on a sea of sin and crushed on the jagged reefs of lost opportunities, forfeited blessings, and shattered dreams.

Anxiously we ask, “Is there a way to safety? Can someone guide us? Is there an escape from threatened destruction?”

The answer is a resounding yes! I counsel you: Look to the lighthouse of the Lord. There is no fog so dense, no night so dark, no gale so strong, no mariner so lost but what its beacon light can rescue. It calls, “This way to safety; this way to home.”

The lighthouse of the Lord sends forth signals readily recognized and never failing. May I suggest three such signals which—if heeded—will help guide us through the storms of life:

- 1. Choose your friends with caution.**
- 2. Plan your future with purpose.**
- 3. Frame your life with faith.**

First, choose your friends with caution.

In a survey which was made in selected wards and stakes of the Church some years ago, we learned a most

significant fact. Those persons whose friends married in the temple usually married in the temple, while those persons whose friends did not marry in the temple usually did not marry in the temple. The influence of one’s friends appeared to be equal to parental urging and more influential than classroom instruction or proximity to a temple.

We tend to become like those whom we admire. Just as in Nathaniel Hawthorne’s classic account “The Great Stone Face,” we adopt the mannerisms, the attitudes, even the conduct of those whom we admire—and they are usually our friends. Associate with those who, like you, are planning not for temporary convenience, shallow goals, or narrow ambition, but rather for those things that matter most—even eternal objectives.

Not only will your circle of friends greatly influence your thinking and behavior, but you will also influence theirs. Many nonmembers have come into the Church through friends who have involved them in Church activities. I share with you a treasured family experience which had its beginning back in 1959, when I was called to preside

over the Canadian Mission, head-quartered in Toronto.

Our daughter, Ann, turned five shortly after we arrived in Canada. She saw the missionaries going about their work, and she, too, wanted to be a missionary. My wife demonstrated understanding by permitting Ann to take to class a few copies of the *Children's Friend*. That wasn't sufficient for Ann. She also wanted to take with her a copy of the Book of Mormon so that she might talk to her teacher, Miss Pepper, about the Church. I think it rather thrilling that just a few years ago, long years after our return from Toronto, we came home from a vacation and found in our mailbox a note from Miss Pepper which read:

"Dear Ann:

"Think back many years ago. I was your schoolteacher in Toronto, Canada. I was impressed by the copies of the *Children's Friend* which you brought to school. I was impressed by your dedication to a book called the Book of Mormon.

"I made a commitment that one day I would come to Salt Lake City and see why you talked as you did and why you believed in the manner you believed. Today I had the privilege of going through your visitors' center on Temple Square. Thanks to a five-year-old girl who had an understanding of that which she believed, I now have a better understanding of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."

Miss Pepper died not too long after that visit. How happy our daughter, Ann, was when she attended the Jordan River Utah Temple and performed the temple work for her beloved teacher whom she had friendship long ago.

Second, plan your future with purpose.

In Lewis Carroll's classic *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Alice finds herself coming to a crossroads with two paths before her, each stretching onward but in opposite directions. She is confronted by the Cheshire Cat, of whom Alice asks, "Which path shall I take?"

The cat answers, "That depends where you want to go. If you do not



know where you want to go, it doesn't really matter which path you take" (1992, 89).

Unlike Alice, each of us knows where he or she wants to go. It does matter which way we go, for the path we follow in this life surely leads to the path we shall follow in the next.

I plead with you, my young brothers and sisters, to remember who you are. You are sons and daughters of Almighty God. You have a destiny to fulfill, a life to live, a contribution to make, a goal to achieve. The future of the kingdom of God upon the earth will, in part, be aided by your devotion.

Let us remember that the wisdom of God may appear as foolishness to men, but the greatest single lesson we can learn in mortality is that when God speaks and we obey, we will always be right. Some foolish persons turn their backs on the wisdom of God and follow the allurements of fickle fashion, the attraction of false popularity, and the thrill of the moment. Their course of conduct so resembles the disastrous experience of Esau, who exchanged his birthright for a mess of pottage (see Gen. 25:29–34).

And what are the results of such action? I testify to you that turning away from God brings broken covenants, shattered dreams, vanished ambitions, evaporated plans, unfulfilled

The path we follow in this life surely leads to the path we shall follow in the next. You are sons and daughters of Almighty God. You have a destiny to fulfill, a life to live, a contribution to make, a goal to achieve.

Remember that faith and doubt cannot exist in the same mind at the same time, for one will dispel the other. Should doubt knock at your doorway, just say: “I propose to stay with my faith, with the faith of my people. I know that happiness and contentment are there. My faith did not come to me through science, and I will not permit so-called science to destroy it.”

expectations, crushed hopes, misused drives, warped character, and wrecked lives.

Such a quagmire of quicksand I plead with you to avoid. You are of a noble birthright. Exaltation in the celestial kingdom is your goal.

Such a goal is not achieved in one glorious attempt but rather is the result of a lifetime of righteousness, an accumulation of wise choices, even a constancy of purpose. Like the coveted A grade on the report card, the reward of eternal life requires effort. The A grade is the result of each theme, each quiz, each class, each examination, each library project, each term paper. So each lesson in church, each prayer, each date, each friend, each dance all precede the goal of temple marriage—that giant step toward an A grade on the report card of life.

Our goal is to achieve, to excel, to strive for perfection. Remember, however, that our business in life is not to get ahead of others but to get ahead of ourselves. To break our own record, to outstrip our yesterdays by today, to bear our trials more beautifully than we ever dreamed we could, to give as we never have given, to do our work with more force and a finer finish than ever—this is the true objective. And to accomplish this task, our attitude is reflected in a determination to make the most of our opportunities. We turn from the tempting allurements and eventual snare so cunningly and carefully offered us by “old man procrastination.” Two centuries ago, Edward Young said that “procrastination is the thief of time” (in John Bartlett, *Familiar Quotations*, 14th ed., 1968, 399). Actually, procrastination is much more. It is the thief of our self-respect. It nags at us and spoils our fun. It deprives us of the fullest realization of our ambitions and hopes. Knowing this, we jar ourselves back to reality with the sure knowledge that “this is my day of opportunity. I will not waste it.”

Perhaps the Apostle Paul had our day and age in mind when he taught the Corinthian Saints that life is very much like a race. He said: “Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain” (1 Cor. 9:24).

The writer of the book of Ecclesiastes

also wrote of this subject: “The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong,” but to those who endure to the end (see Eccl. 9:11).

The race of life is not optional. We are on the track and running, whether we like it or not. Some see dimly the goal ahead and take costly detours which lead to disappointment and frustration. Others view clearly the prize for running well and remain steadfast in pursuit. This prize, this lofty and desirable goal, is none other than eternal life in the presence of God.

Unlocked for you will be the treasure chest of knowledge and inspiration as you plan with purpose your future.

Third, frame your life with faith.

Amidst the confusion of our age, the conflicts of conscience, and the turmoil of daily living, an abiding faith becomes an anchor to our lives.

By seeking Heavenly Father in personal and family prayer, we and our loved ones will develop the fulfillment of what the great English statesman William E. Gladstone described as the world’s greatest need: “A living faith in a personal God.” Such faith will illuminate our way as the lighthouse of the Lord.

When you have an abiding faith in the living God, when your outward actions reflect your inner convictions, you have the composite strength of exposed and hidden virtues. They combine to give safe passage through whatever rough seas might arise.

Wherever we may be, our Heavenly Father can hear and answer the prayer offered in faith.

Many years ago, on my first visit to the fabled village of Sauniatu in Samoa, so loved by President David O. McKay, my wife and I met with a large gathering of small children—nearly 200 in number. At the conclusion of our messages to these shy yet beautiful youngsters, I suggested to the native Samoan teacher that we go forward with the closing exercises. As he announced the final hymn, I suddenly felt compelled to greet personally each of these children. My watch revealed that the time was too short for such a privilege, for we were scheduled on a flight out of the country, so I discounted the impression. Before the benediction



was to be spoken, I again felt that I should shake the hand of each child. I made the desire known to the instructor, who displayed a broad and beautiful Samoan smile. In Samoan, he announced this to the children. They beamed their approval.

The instructor then revealed to me the reason for his and their joy. He said, “When we learned that a member of the Council of the Twelve was to visit us here in Samoa, so far away from Church headquarters, I told the children if they would earnestly and sincerely pray and exert faith like the Bible accounts of old, that the Apostle would visit our tiny village at Sauniatu and through their faith he would be impressed to greet each child with a personal handclasp.” Tears could not be restrained as the precious boys and girls walked shyly by and whispered softly to us the sweet Samoan greeting “talofa lava.” A profound expression of faith had been evidenced.

Remember that faith and doubt cannot exist in the same mind at the same time, for one will dispel the other.

Should doubt knock at your doorway, just say to those skeptical, disturbing, rebellious thoughts: “I propose to stay with my faith, with the faith of my people. I know that happiness and

contentment are there, and I forbid you, agnostic, doubting thoughts, to destroy the house of my faith. I acknowledge that I do not understand the processes of creation, but I accept the fact of it. I grant that I cannot explain the miracles of the Bible, and I do not attempt to do so, but I accept God’s word. I wasn’t with Joseph, but I believe him. My faith did not come to me through science, and I will not permit so-called science to destroy it.”

May you ever frame your life with faith.

When you, my dear young friends, choose your friends with caution, plan your future with purpose, and frame your life with faith, you will merit the companionship of the Holy Spirit. You will have “a perfect brightness of hope” (2 Ne. 31:20). You will testify through your own experience to the truth of the Lord’s promise: “I, the Lord, am merciful and gracious unto those who fear me, and delight to honor those who serve me in righteousness and in truth unto the end. Great shall be their reward and eternal shall be their glory” (D&C 76:5–6).

The lighthouse of the Lord provides the unfailing way. May we follow the guiding signals it sends to you and to me, that we may find our way safely home. **NE**

By seeking Heavenly Father in personal and family prayer, we and our loved ones will develop a living faith that will illuminate our way. Wherever we may be, our Heavenly Father can hear and answer the prayer offered in faith.

THE VOICE OF THE Spirit

Words and music by
Janice Kapp Perry

Reverently, as a prayer ♩ = 63-72

mf

1. Oh God, my E-ter - nal Fa - ther, I long to see Thy
 (2. Oh) God, my E-ter - nal Fa - ther, I long to hear Thy

face, But a veil was drawn be - tween us, that I might live by faith. And
 voice, But I left Thy lov - ing pre sence and came to earth by choice. And

yet I'm ver - y cer - tain I do not walk a - lone, For when I seek Thee
 yet I feel Thy guid - ance each time I kneel to pray. Thy kind and car - ing

hum - bly, Thy wis - dom is made known. The voice of the Spir - it comes so qui - et - ly, — And deep in -
 Spir - it il - lu - mi - nates my way. The voice of the Spir - it is so sweet to me; — It whis - pers

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side of me — it speaks Thy will. The voice of the Spir-it comes as light to me, — Gent-ly re -
 peace to me — thru thoughts di - vine. The voice of the Spir-it is so real to me. — Truth is re -

mind - ing me — of all that's real— A gen-tle
 vealed to me — in heart and mind— A gen-tle voice, so still, so small, A voice that hard - ly can be

heard at all, — A voice so clear to me, — A voice that pier-ces me to my soul. — 2. Oh — The

voice of the Spir-it is so sweet to me, — A voice that teach - es me all Thou would have me know. —

**Young
 Women
 General
 Broadcast**

This meeting will be a wonderful opportunity for Young Women, their mothers, and their leaders to hear a member of the First Presidency of the Church and the Young Women general presidency speak about matters specifically concerning Young Women. The Young Women general broadcast, on March 24 at 6:00 P.M. Mountain Standard Time, will focus on letting the Holy Spirit guide, teach, and comfort you (see John 14:26).

The meeting will be at the Tabernacle on Temple Square and will be shown at local stake centers. It will also be rebroadcast on KBYU at 8:00 P.M. Selected stakes will be invited to the Tabernacle. Tickets are by invitation only, and notification will be sent to stake presidents.

A Carnival OF CARING



The Mesa Central Stake's youth committee planned a day of games, sports, and food for some of the city's children. It would be fun, but would the children and teens really connect?

They wanted to give a day of caring and fun. So they did. What they received in return was unexpected.

The Thomas J. Pappas Elementary School in Phoenix, Arizona, isn't a typical school. At the end of the day, students don't go home, because they don't have homes. After school, the buses drop them off at various homeless shelters, old hotels, or even under bridges.

When the stake youth committee of the Mesa Central Stake learned about this school, they wanted to do something for the students. They wanted to give them a

day of fun and activities, so they planned a carnival with games, sports, and food. But the youth of the stake found that they gained much more than they gave.

On the morning of the activity, anticipation was high. What would students from a homeless school be like? What would they talk about? How would they act?

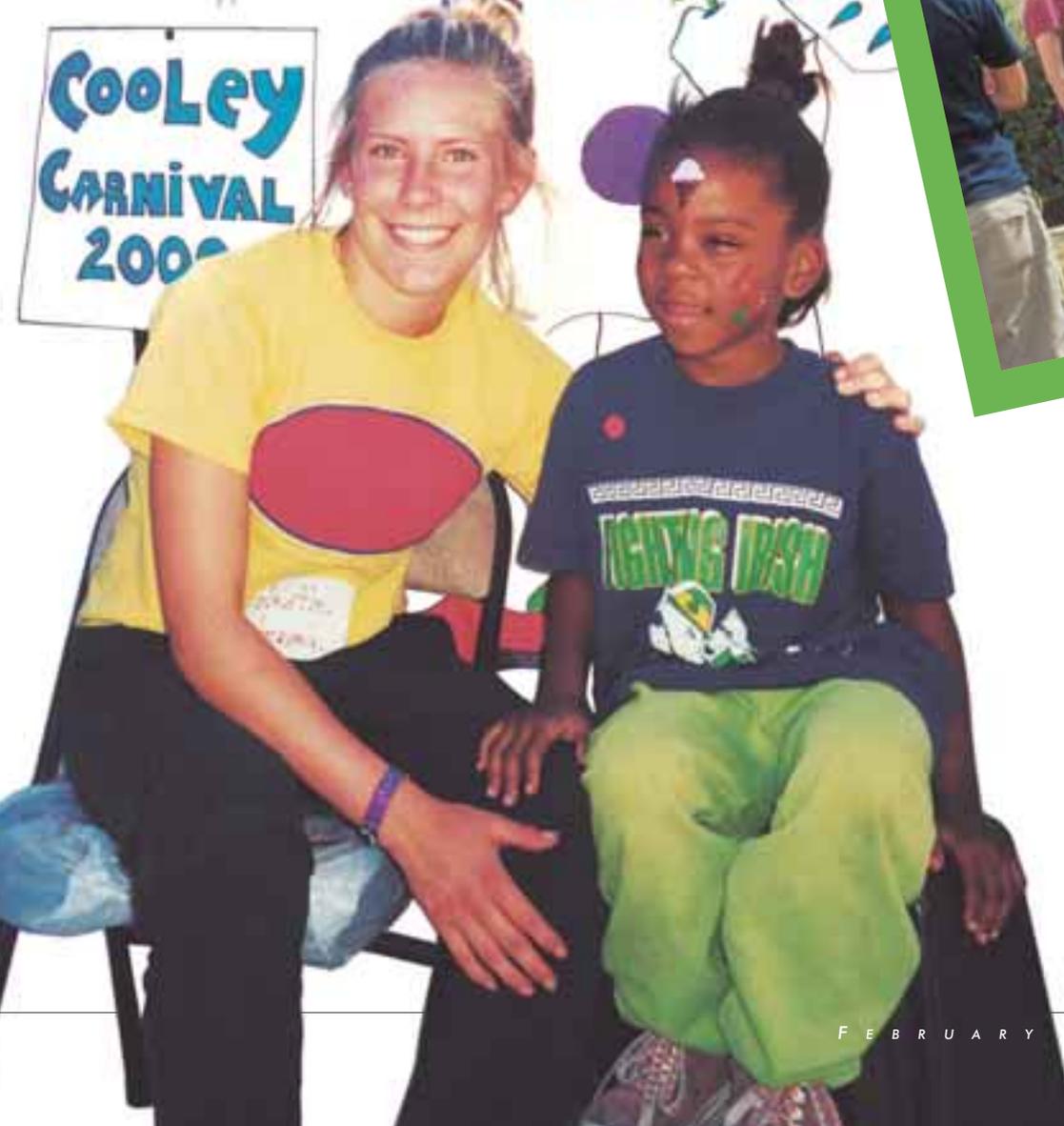
The youth from the stake were each partnered with a student from the school as a "buddy," or mentor, for the day. After eating breakfast with their new friends, everyone was divided into groups to rotate through the different activities.

Tashia Wood, from the Lazona Ward, was paired with a 10-year-old girl named Angelica. Tashia, 16, was nervous at first, but soon discovered that she had more in common with Angelica than she thought. "It was really cool because they were just like us," Tashia said. "They just wanted to have fun."

by **Matthew Baker**
Editorial Associate



COOLEY
CARNIVAL
2000



The youth were each partnered with a child to act as a "buddy" during the day's activities. Barriers of shyness and age difference quickly broke down.



One LDS youth, Joey Reidhead, reported that his partner started out being very quiet. But by the end of the day, they were like brothers.

After Angelica won a prize at one game, she gave it to Tashia and said, “I want you to have this because I don’t want you to forget me.”

“She wasn’t selfish at all,” Tashia said. “She taught me not to take for granted what I have, because I have a lot of stuff and I’m usually whining about things I can’t have. Instead she gave to me, and she hardly has anything. She usually doesn’t even have a home to go to at night.”

Joey Reidhead, 17, from the Harris Second Ward, quickly became good friends with his partner, 4-year-old Mikey. “He was very quiet. He didn’t talk very much. But you could tell when he was excited,” Joey said. “He was so excited, he went around to every single game twice. When I was taking Mikey around, he was just like a little brother to me.”

But what Joey remembers most isn’t the excitement of the day but the lesson about gratitude he learned when it was time for Mikey to go home.

“When he left to get on the bus, he said to me, ‘Why do I have to go?’ I wish

I could have traded everything that I had, because I had been so ungrateful. I wish I could have just given it to him, because I had taken it for granted so many times. I loved him so much, and it was strange that I had only known this boy for maybe three hours, and I had this overwhelming love for him. It was amazing.”

Most of the youth who participated in this activity had the same observation—in their efforts to give, they had received. They came away from the activity more grateful for their blessings. In their efforts to provide a day of entertainment for homeless children, they learned a valuable lesson in gratitude.

The ripple effect from this one day of activities has turned into a deluge of opportunity for service and sharing the gospel. Since the carnival, several Scouts have proposed Eagle projects that will aid the homeless children in their city. Several wards have gathered school supplies and clothing to donate to the school, and the carnival is now an annual event. **NE**

CLEAN THOUGHTS

Our thoughts, even fleeting ones, can seem an insignificant part of our day. But, in reality, our thoughts eventually determine our characters. Proverbs 23:7 says, “For as [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he.”

And, for those who are striving to be like the Savior, being pure in heart and mind is a must. Here are some helpful tips from the *New Era* and *New Era* readers on how to keep your thoughts pure:

❁ Indulging in impure thoughts can lead to hard-to-break thought patterns. Reject a bad thought as soon as it comes into your mind, and it will be easier to do so the next time.

❁ “Let virtue garnish [your] thoughts unceasingly” (D&C 121:45). Think good thoughts to crowd out the impure ones.

❁ Avoid watching, listening to, or reading any material that contains profanity, swearing, pornography, or other improper content.

❁ Make sure you choose your surroundings carefully and that your activities inspire good thoughts.

❁ Surround yourself with good friends who uphold Church standards.

❁ Pray. The Lord can help you overcome any problem you have, including unclean thoughts.

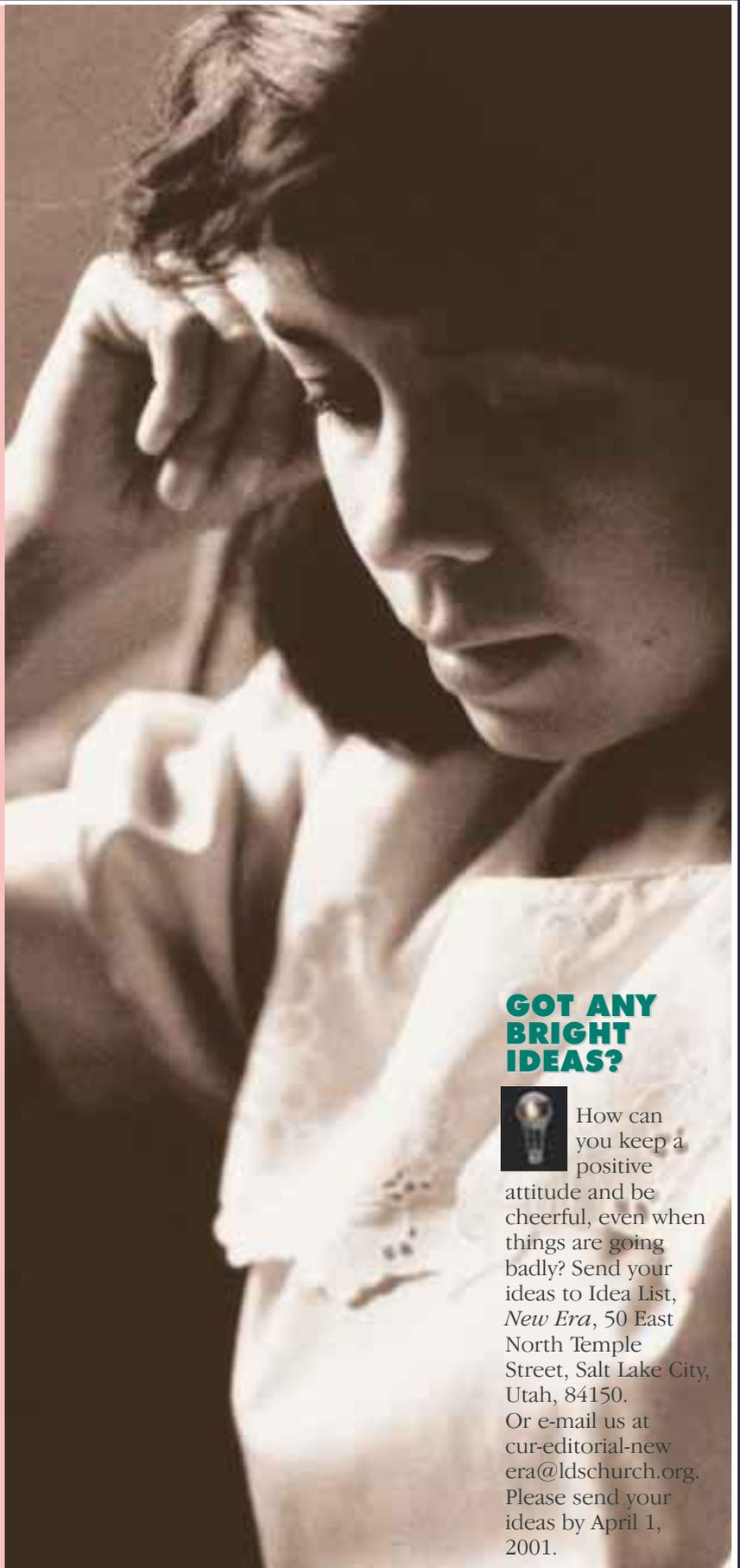
❁ Singing a hymn will elevate your thoughts. You could memorize a hymn you can turn to when you need to get rid of a bad thought.

❁ Your speech reflects your thoughts, so a pure mind will also help you to keep your language clean. Remove yourself from situations where people are gossiping or using profane or vulgar language.

❁ If you’re having trouble controlling your thoughts, imagine that the stage of your mind is always on a movie screen that everyone can see. Don’t think anything that might make you blush.

❁ Keep your thoughts clean to help you stay morally clean. Unclean thoughts make giving in to temptation much easier.

❁ Live so that you can be in tune with the Spirit. To receive the guidance of the Holy Ghost, our minds need to be pure and ready to accept Him. **NE**



GOT ANY BRIGHT IDEAS?



How can you keep a positive

attitude and be cheerful, even when things are going badly? Send your ideas to Idea List, *New Era*, 50 East North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, Utah, 84150.

Or e-mail us at cur-editorial-newera@ldschurch.org. Please send your ideas by April 1, 2001.

Q & A

“Why does the Church say we should not date until we are 16 years old?”

NEW ERA

Heavenly Father wants each one of us to return to Him. He has given guidelines to help us stay worthy and achieve this goal. Waiting to date may seem to be hard. But remember that the guidelines exist to help us return to our Father in Heaven.

It can be difficult to hold off on dating when the desire and pressure from peers are so strong. But there are many reasons for waiting, and the blessings that come from following this counsel are great.

In *For The Strength of Youth* we are instructed to “begin to prepare now for a temple marriage. Proper dating is a part of that preparation” (p. 7). Proper dating includes waiting until the appropriate age.

In your early teens you are just beginning a process of emotional, social, mental, and physical development that will go on for years. Dating too early in this maturing process can complicate your life.

For example, it’s not unusual to develop strong romantic feelings during your early teens. With those feelings

Following guidelines gives us security and brings us happiness.

Proper dating includes waiting until the appropriate age.

There is a higher rate of inappropriate physical relationships when dating begins too early.

Waiting to date allows time to mature mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

Serious one-on-one relationships limit your opportunities to associate with a variety of people.

READERS

Sometimes we don’t have answers to everything. When an angel asked Adam why he offered animal sacrifices, he replied, “I know not, save the Lord commanded me.” Heavenly Father has said, through His servants, that we shouldn’t date before 16. We should follow the example of Adam and have faith that what the Lord tells us is true.

John Wilson, 17
Rancho Cucamonga, California



Remember, our elders and parents know about dating. They’ve been there, too. They know what they are talking about, so why not wait?

Lena Smith, 13
Salem, Oregon





often come desires that are made even stronger by the fact that you are maturing physically. And all of this happens at a time when you still don't have the emotional and mental maturity to deal with those feelings. Studies have shown that there is a much higher rate of inappropriate physical relationships when dating starts too early.

Early dating often leads to exclusive relationships at the very time you should be expanding your horizons and associating with a variety of people. Serious one-on-one dating puts up a wall that blocks friendships with anyone but that "one." This barrier often keeps those dating from developing meaningful relationships with others.

As you approach dating age, remember that life doesn't begin at 16. Enjoy this time of your life. Get to know, and enjoy associating with, a variety of people. Develop your social skills so that when you are old enough to date, it will be an enjoyable experience.

Turning 16 doesn't automatically bless you with dating skills, just like being old enough to have a driver's license doesn't make you a good driver. Dating may be uncomfortable at first. You might be surprised to find that dating brings new pressures. There are many happy, normal young people over 16 who rarely or never date in the formal sense until marriage age.

After turning 16, it is best to date in groups and avoid pairing off with just one partner. Take it easy. Enjoy your friendships before moving into serious dating relationships. Dating is sort of a "trial run" for selecting a marriage partner, so you should date the kinds of people you would consider marrying.

Have the faith to follow the guidelines of Church leaders. Your dating years will be less stressful and more fun. You'll receive the blessings that come from obedience. And you'll be better prepared for temple marriage. **NE**

Answers are intended for help and perspective, not as pronouncements of Church doctrine.



The prophet has told us not to date until we are 16, and even then we should go in groups. We should want to follow his counsel and do what he asks us. It can be hard, but if we do it, it will be worth it.

Jameson Fife, 16
Cedar City, Utah



Just like getting baptized at 8 and preparing when we're 7, following the counsel of our leaders and waiting to date until 16 will give us time to prepare. We can use the time to set guidelines and make goals so that when we start dating we have a plan to avoid the potential hazards that dating presents.

Elder Michael Bonnici, 19
Utah Salt Lake City South Mission



Waiting until 16 gives us time to grow and mature before taking on another challenge.

Lucero Sumner, 18
Missouri City, Texas



“Dating and especially steady dating in the early teens is most hazardous. It distorts the whole picture of life. It deprives the youth of worthwhile and rich experiences; it limits friendships; it reduces the acquaintance which can be so valuable in selecting a partner for time and eternity” (Spencer W. Kimball, “President Kimball Speaks Out on Morality,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, 96).

HELP Q&A BE OF HELP

You can help make Q&A helpful by answering the question below. Please mail your answers before April 1, 2001, to Q&A, *New Era*, 50 East North Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah 84150. Print or type your name, age, city, and state with each answer. Also, please include a snapshot of yourself. This will not be returned. If your answer is of a sensitive nature, your name may be withheld from publication.

QUESTION

When people are talking about inappropriate things at school, how should I handle it?

KEEP YOUR LIFE SWEET



DATE WISELY.
SAVE YOUR HEART FOR THE RIGHT TIME.
(See *For the Strength of Youth*, 7.)

Planting TEMPLE Seeds

In a day-long activity, the Beehives in the Anchorage Alaska Stake centered their attention on the temple in a variety of ways that would help them prepare for all of its blessings.

... will bring these Alaskan Beehives a rich harvest in years to come.

Kelley could not find Samuel's wife. Kelley knew her name, but Samuel's wife just wasn't where she was supposed to be. It was like unraveling a mystery, and it was frustrating. "His wife had a nickname, and we had to get a special form for the census to get her record. Then we had to put their names in code before we asked for it. We would do these names in code, and then we were wrong, wrong, wrong."

For a little while one Saturday afternoon in Anchorage, Alaska, Kelley Staats, a Beehive in the Anchorage Sixth Ward, got a taste of what doing family history was really like. Even though Kelley was having a hard time for a few minutes, she was actually having a great time figuring out how to find information from census, cemetery, immigration, and church records.

The family history experience was just one of the day's activities held by the Anchorage Alaska Stake especially for the Beehives, all the 12- and 13-year-old girls in Young Women. The older brothers and sisters of these girls were attending their annual youth conference on the same weekend, but their Young Women leaders



by Janet Thomas
Assistant Managing Editor



After a cold, dark winter, the Beehives were eager to plant flowers around their temple. The temple gardens were still bare, and this was the first opportunity in the spring to plant flowers to beautify the building that has become central in their lives.

felt that the Beehives in the stake, while not yet old enough to attend youth conference, would have a good time and accomplish a lot in a day-long activity.

“Planting Temple Seeds” was the theme for the day. The stake center adjacent to the new Anchorage Alaska Temple was the selected location. The girls planned several activities all tied to their theme. Flowers needed to be planted on the temple grounds. The girls brought their gardening spades and enthusiasm for the project. They also were prepared to do baptisms in the temple. And they would also have the opportunity to fill out family group sheets and investigate family connections in the cultural hall, where tables represented different places and types of records that needed to be checked. It was a day to plant a lot of seeds, both literally and spiritually.

Our own temple

The Beehives of the Anchorage Alaska Stake are really grateful for having a temple so close. Until the temple was completed here, many of the girls had never had the opportunity of being inside a temple. But after the dedication in 1999, most have been able to perform at least one baptism.

Juli Thomas of the fifth ward describes the feelings she gets going into the temple: “It’s nice and quiet and very beautiful in there with all the paintings and the carpet and tiles. You feel the Spirit as soon as you walk into the font area. It’s kind of a warm feeling that washes over you. You feel good about what you’re doing and about yourself and about everything.”

Jessica Goodrich of the sixth ward described her first experience in the temple: “You walk in, and everything is white. I think it’s quite pretty and very quiet. The first time I went, everyone came up to me and said, ‘It looks like you’re enjoying this,’ because every time I was baptized, I’d come up with a huge grin on my face. It was just a happy feeling.”

Pulling on their gardening gloves, the girls divided into three large groups and took turns planting seedlings around the temple under the direction of the head gardener. After receiving some





These *Beehives* pause on the temple steps after performing baptisms. They divided into three groups, each taking turns during the day planting flowers, learning how to organize family history, and being baptized for the dead.

instructions, the girls dug in, literally. Rebecca Lamb of the fifth ward said, “It was neat planting the flowers because you know they will be pretty and everybody will want to look at them. It’s going to look really, really nice when everything is blooming.”

The groups loved planting flowers and making sure all the gardens around the temple were neat and weed free.

Digging into family history

For the family history experience, the two organizers, Liz Seymer and Asti Liang, borrowed some real-life family histories from stake members. They wrote the stories, leaving out some important details but leaving in clues to help uncover these facts. From the clues given them, the girls had to figure out where they needed to go for more information. Around the cultural hall were tables and resource people. One had census records. Another represented cemetery headstones. Others represented the Church’s Family History Library and computerized records. If the girls asked the right question of the person in charge of the table, they were rewarded with the correct answer. But if they didn’t know the correct question to ask, they didn’t get an answer, just as in real life. They had to retreat and do a little more figuring.

Mounted on easels to one side were the photographs of the families the girls were researching, as if they were just waiting to be found. Hilary Ekstron of the sixth ward said, “Our group had to go to five different places just to find out one thing. But it was really interesting.” It was surprising how quickly the girls became involved in their “mystery” family as they were introduced to certain types of records and how information is recorded.

Ready to bloom

After a day of changing from casual clothes for digging in the dirt of the gardens to Sunday dress for temple attendance, the girls were pleased by the activities that day.

Bille Jean Leffler of the 10th ward said, “I thought it was going to be something where we just sat and listened. I didn’t know it was going to be this much fun being together. It’s nice.” **NE**







So far, my college experience wasn't anything like what I had expected. I felt lonely and inadequate. Then the mail arrived.

by Ashley Eggers

My sister's small, simple gift reminded me of the far greater gifts I'd been taking for granted.

I sat at the table in my new apartment and glared at my noodles. It was raining, and it was Monday. I had just gotten the results back from a biology test and was not very pleased with myself. Furthermore, I had tripped in the crowded library as I was running to my next class. Now I was eating the last thing I had in the cupboard—bland noodles.

This is not the college experience I

had imagined, I thought. I had pictured myself as a triumphant Joan of Arc figure, out to rid the world of injustice. At the end of my first month away from home, I was feeling like the noodles in my bowl of soup, tangled and limp. I was just one in a sea of thousands of college students, and I could not help but feel a little alone.

"Package!" my roommate yelled as she came in with the mail. I looked up to see a brown box flying across the kitchen.

Someone is sending me a package? It wasn't my birthday. I curiously opened the package and found a note and a small rectangular object wrapped in one layer of colorful paper and then wrapped with a solid layer of tape. I read the note first. Written in 10-year-old cursive, the note read, "I hope you will enjoy your present.



This is a short letter, but I miss you. Love, Maria.” As if on second thought, “Maria” had been crossed out several times and the “anonymous” sender instead had carefully drawn a heart with a question mark inside. I unwrapped the colorful rectangle and found a candy bar—my favorite kind.

I sat at the table and studied the note, realizing that I wasn’t just another face. Far away from my college dorm room, I had a sister who knew who I was, who missed me, and who loved me. She cared how I was feeling and sent me a reminder that I was important.

She now became a reminder to me of the power of service. This simple, thoughtful act had changed my entire attitude that afternoon and had a tremendous impact on my week. As I

sat at the table, her example spoke of the blessings that come to both the doers and the receivers of service. I felt loved, and my sister was coming to know the Savior.

This act of service reminded me of another family member: a Father who sends me everyday reminders that He knows who I am, misses me, and loves me. I have a Heavenly Father who selflessly sent to me and to everyone in this world a wonderful gift that shows just how much He loves us. He sent the Savior to show us how to return and just how important the worth of souls is. Every Sunday I have the same reminder, and it does indeed change my attitude for the entire week. **NE**

I wasn't expecting a package, but there it was, wrapped in colorful paper and lots of tape. Inside was a very special message.

STEPS IN TIME

The goal was to strengthen families. The youth of these five Seattle stakes chose dance to demonstrate the joys of family life.

by Shanna Ghaznavi
Editorial Associate

This dance spectacular was two years in the making, and it brought generations together.

Lindy, Charleston, hustle, Latin, and swing. If you guessed those were all dances, give yourself a big pat on the back. But can you guess what those dances have to do with strengthening families and friendships?

“We wanted to recognize the family and have the youth find the joy of modern-day families, and we wanted to

do it through dance,” says Bruce Bassett, a youth leader. Doctrine and Covenants 136:28 states, “If thou art merry, praise the Lord with singing, with music, with dancing, and with a prayer of praise and thanksgiving.” Five stakes in Washington took that scripture and ran with it—actually they danced with it.

The Plan

The Bothell, Snohomish, Everett, Lynwood, and Mount Vernon Stakes spent two years planning their dance festival in Marysville, and one and a half of those years working on it intensely. It was the first dance festival in that area in more than 20 years. “It teaches us how much effort and responsibility it takes to put on one of these festivals,” says Morgan Thatcher, 16, of the Everett Stake. “And also how much fun it can be.”

For the last five months of those two years, the youth learned all the dance moves they would need to pull off this spectacular event. Hours and hours of practice and some great choreography, not to mention raw talent, meant the final product was a big hit.

But the show wasn't all







Erin Bingham (above) admits learning the dances was hard work, but it was more rewarding than she could have imagined.

dancing. Those who weren't inclined to dance were able to perform in other ways. There were lights to run, sound checks to do, and banners to carry. There was also a play which brought all the dances together into a performance with a story line.

Picture it. A family reunion, complete with Grandma, uncles and aunts, and all the cousins you can handle. And memories. Lots of memories. The actors in the family reunion played their parts on a stage in the middle of a large gymnasium. One by one, the family members tell stories of dancing with their first love, or about cheerleading tryouts, or they read from their great-grandpa's journal. The stories were then brought to life by hundreds of youth, doing dances ranging from a square dance to hip-hop, depending on the story. The family's South African neighbor even stops by to tell one of his stories about dancing.

The Big Day

Early on the morning of the big performance, the youth are rushing around frantically trying to find lost hats and canes, or even the whereabouts of their stakes. But the chaos dies down as soon as the nearly 1,000

young people gather in perfect rows in the gym to say an opening prayer and begin practice. It is their first time practicing as a complete group. Previously, the stake groups had practiced on their own. A lot of organization and teamwork made it possible to integrate all the stakes and their dances. The youth practice all morning, but instead of being tired, by early afternoon they are excited to give the day's first performance.

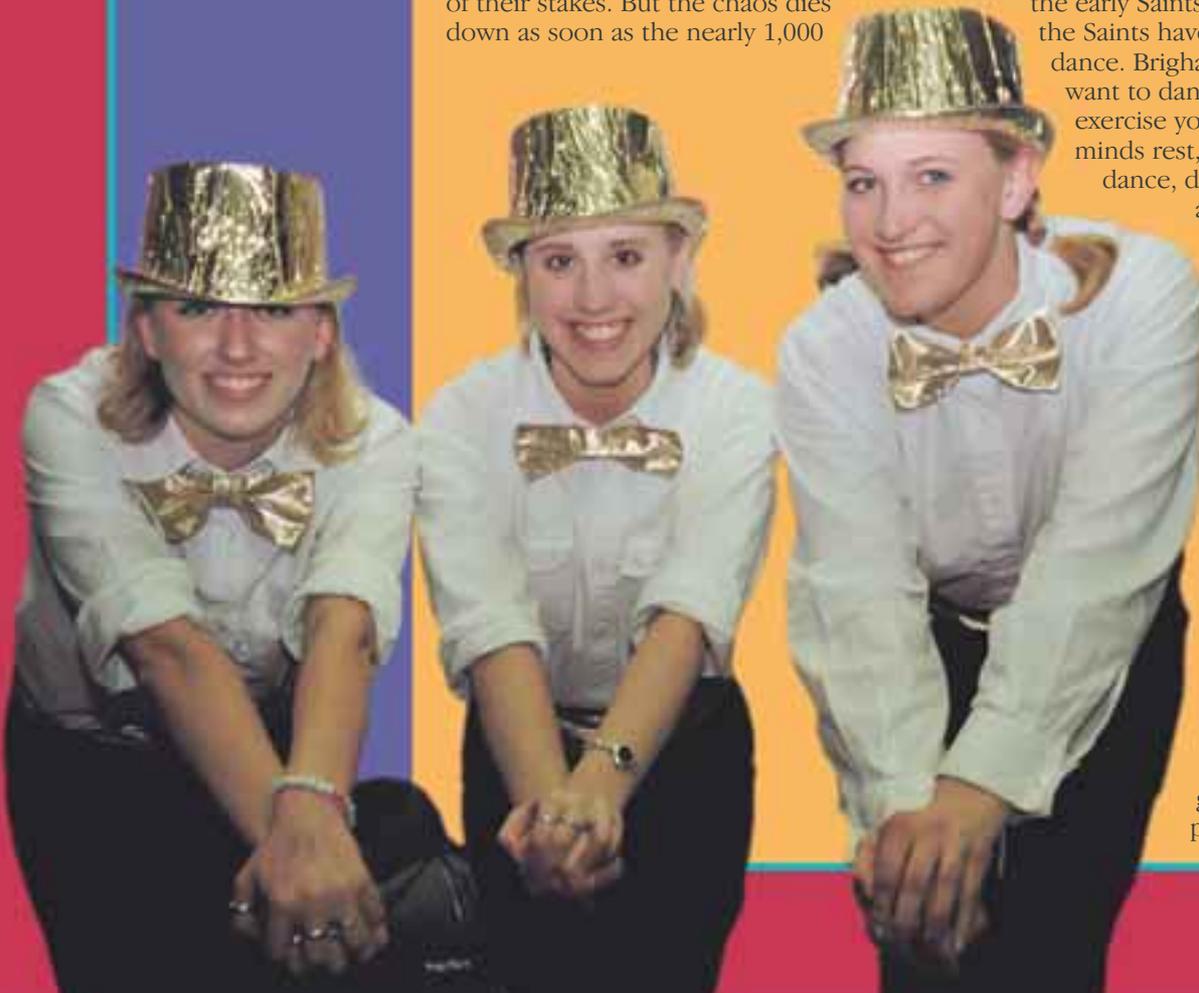
The Shows

By 1:00 P.M., everyone is costumed and waiting in the wings for their cues. The stage for the opening number is set when the family reunion begins. "Celebration," a 1984 song, is the first dance number, and all the stakes participate. Hula-hoops fly, streamers wave, and each stake performs its unique number while coordinating with the other stakes.

Prompted by the memories and stories of the on-stage family, the youth keep dancing. A hat and cane number, a Latin dance, and a classic disco hustle. Then it was on to a pioneer square dance.

The youth are reliving the legacy of the early Saints. Since pioneer days, the Saints have praised the Lord with dance. Brigham Young said, "If you want to dance . . . do it, and exercise your bodies, and let your minds rest," and, "If you wish to dance, dance; and you are just as much prepared for a prayer meeting after dancing as ever you were, if you are Saints" (in *Journal of Discourses*, 6:149, 148).

The last song, which was also part of the opening number, has a prayerful quality. The score is an original, written by Ann Bailey, the event's music director. The song title, "A Time to Dance," is taken from Ecclesiastes 3:4. The spirit filling the gymnasium was one of praise and worship,







Sharon Kwan (above), after participating, investigated the Church when she returned to Hong Kong, where she was later baptized.

thanks to the dedicated youth of Washington, who were congratulated with a standing ovation and many tear-filled eyes. The youth performed the whole show again a few hours later to another packed gymnasium.

The Sacrifice

Although the dance festival turned out to be a big success, it seemed like a gamble at first to many of the youth who opted not to have youth conferences so they could participate in the festival. The practices were long and hard, and most of the youth had never done any of the dances before.

The festival also required a lot of stretching, physically and socially. Besides the exertion of dancing for hours, many had to dance with partners they'd never met before. It was difficult at first, says Erin Bingham, 15, of Mount Vernon, "but it's just neat seeing a lot of Mormons together." Most of the youth said the closeness to their families and to other young people they have met was more rewarding than they could have imagined.

The Blessings

Shaler Mortensen's whole family was involved in the dance festival, doing everything from making costumes to actually dancing. "It wasn't like youth conference," he says, "but to compare the two is like apples and oranges. This is a lot more work."

But all their hard work paid off. Not only did the youth get to enjoy the company of many other Latter-day Saints they might not have met otherwise, but they also learned skills they can put into practice. "Stake dances are going to be a lot of fun now," says Erin. One of the stakes has already requested Latin music at the next stake dance.

Another blessing of bringing Latter-day Saint youth together is the fellowshipping and missionary work that happens when they are together. "It's a chance to show nonmembers that we aren't weird people and we can have fun," says Richard Horne, 17, of the Bothell Stake.

Of the five friends the youth brought with them to dance in the festival, two have joined the Church, and two are taking the missionary discussions. "They like the fellowshipping, and they know the Church is true," Erin says.

Keoni Barney, 16, is a recent Church convert in the Mount Vernon Stake. "All the kids were just so nice," he says. He found out about the Church when he moved in with his aunt and uncle and started dancing with the youth at their practices. He says his friends' examples helped him gain a testimony. "I've never seen so much energy out of a group of youth in my entire life," Keoni laughs. He says he can't keep up with them, but maybe it's the over-sized collar on his disco outfit that's holding him back, he jokes. "I love having the opportunity to be in the dance festival."

Like Keoni, Jimmy Fisher and Sharon Kwan also investigated the Church because of their friends' examples. Jimmy decided he was going to be baptized before he decided to participate in the dance festival, and Sharon, an exchange student from Hong Kong, took the missionary discussions and was baptized shortly after the festival.

Praising the Lord

Underlying the costumes, ultra-cool dance moves, and camaraderie is a special spirit. Everyone felt it—Sharon included. She says she found out "it's possible to praise the Lord through dance."

Alison Herron, a choreography director from the Everett Stake, says, "I never would have stuck with it if not for the many sweet moments when the Spirit bore witness to me that we were doing something wonderful."

The youth felt something special that day—and not just on that day, but through the entire process—and that they will never forget. It wasn't just about the dancing. It was about dancing with a purpose. It was glorifying the family and praising the Lord. **NE**







THE LAST BARREL

The trouble with Grandma living across the road was that she usually wasn't across the road; she was hanging around the corral telling me what to do.

by Nanette Larsen
Dunford

I thought I knew this old woman who kept giving me advice. Then she was suddenly gone, and I was left with a mystery.

The last barrel was rushing toward me.

"Your horse isn't on the right lead, Susan," shouted Grandma from the fence.

I know, Grandma. You don't need to tell me, I thought.

Leaning low over Ginger's withers, I shifted a little to the left and tapped my horse emphatically with my right boot. Underneath me, I could feel Ginger's long stride switch left—but not in time. Ginger went so wide around the barrel she nearly knocked me against the corral fence.

As I urged her toward the imaginary finish line, I could see Grandma shaking her head.

"That's no way to win a rodeo prize. Those other barrel racers will whip you good."

"Grandma, you know Ginger isn't usually this bad!"

"That's just the point! You've been working her too hard. She'll go sour on you before she ever makes it to her first contest."

I stuck out my lower jaw. "I can train my own horse, Grandma."

She didn't seem to hear me and went right on. "The way I see it . . ."

The trouble with Grandma living across the road is that she usually isn't across the road. She's at our house giving advice to everyone. Last week it was my hair for the school dance. The week before it was my "mediocre" A minus in journalism class.

"There isn't any excuse for it," she said. "You can write 10 times better than those other youngsters." But Grandma's favorite hangout was on the corral fence watching me train Ginger.

Grandma reached to scratch behind Ginger's ears. "That sassy little blonde down in Glenville who won rodeo queen last year, she can hardly rein left or right. You better not let her beat you at the barrels."

I leaned down and yanked the wire latch off the corral gate.

"Just push open the gate for me, Grandma," I asked.

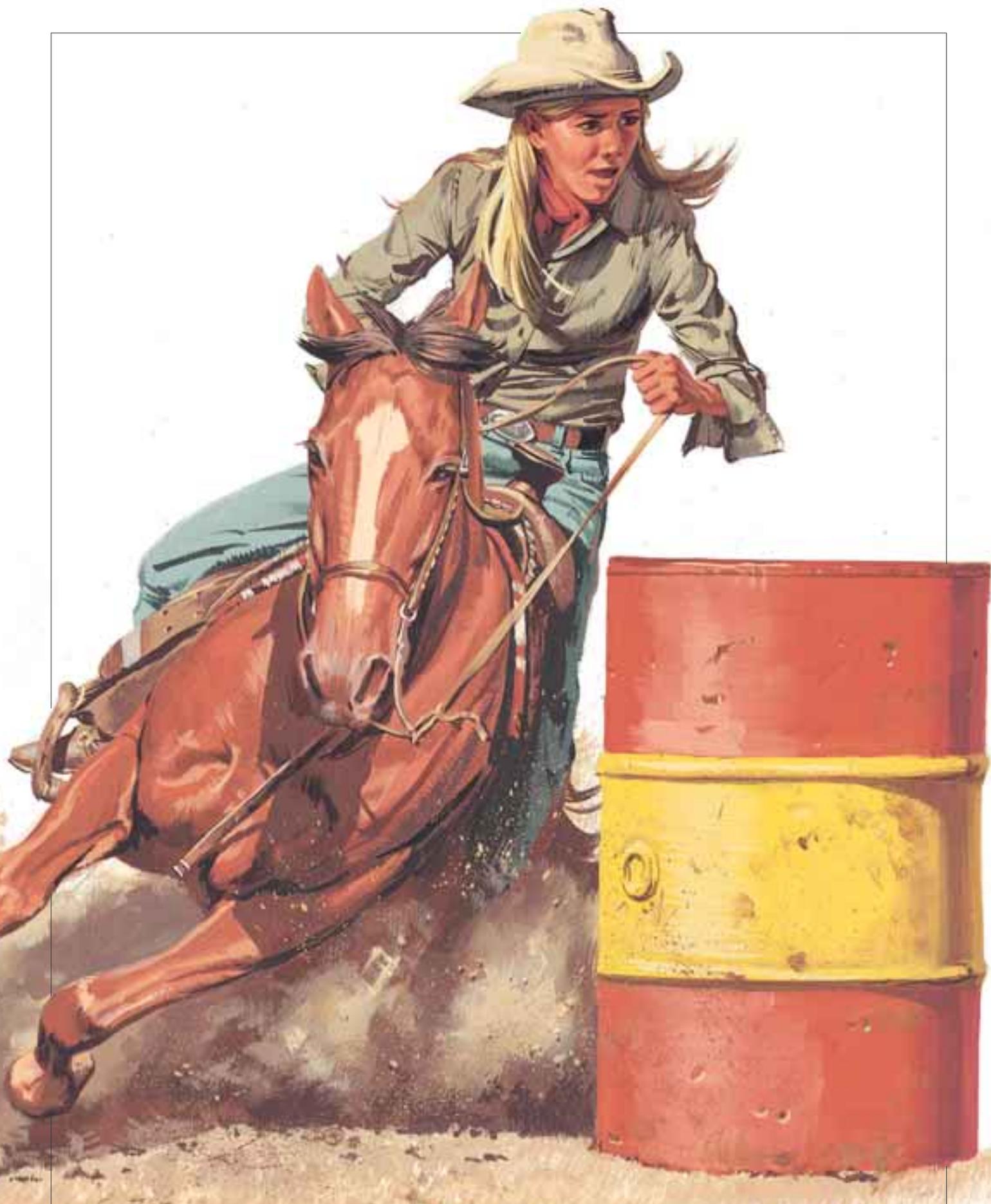
"You better let that horse cool down before putting her away."

"I know, Grandma," I sighed impatiently.

She opened the gate for me. "If you're going to win," she said, "you better shorten your stirrups a notch and hang more with your horse."

I exploded. "Grandma, I'm riding, not you."

Grandma looked up at



Ginger was sliding. Too far. We were falling. In slow motion, we were crashing into the barrel. Grandma's sad gray eyes flashed before me. Falling. Falling. "It's okay," whispered Grandma. "I know you can write it." "Write what?" I muttered. Then I hit the barrel.

me in surprise. Ginger danced underneath me.

I was heating up. "What do you know about horses, anyway! Have you even been on one in the last 50 years?"

I was staring right at her. I could see the hurt come into her gray eyes. But I didn't stop. "Just leave me alone. Don't come watch me anymore."

I jerked Ginger toward the hay field and galloped away. My face was hot with anger. I knew Grandma was standing stiff and hurt behind me. I fumed, gritting my teeth. But as the breeze cooled my face, I knew I would apologize. I'd never seen Grandma look so hurt. I fingered Ginger's black mane. Tomorrow would be a good day. I'd apologize tomorrow.

"**D**ead? Dead!" My voice started to squeak, and I felt the tears coming. I didn't want Mother to see. "But Grandma is too young to die."

"I'm sorry," said Mother, putting her hands on my shoulders. "The doctor said her heart just gave out in the night."

"But, but—not today! Grandma can't die today! I was going to make things right."

At the funeral I sat hunched on the bench beside my two brothers. I kept looking down, but the only thing I could see was Grandma's hurt gray eyes. In my head pounded the words, "What do you know about horses? Don't come watch me anymore."

"I'm sorry, Grandma," I murmured. But I knew it was too late.

Someone was laughing. How could anyone laugh at a time like this? I looked up. Uncle Al, Grandma's younger brother, was telling stories about her.

"Me and Annie got dancing so fast," he was saying, "that she fell right off Aunt Lizzie's porch and broke her arm. Aunt Lizzie was mortified, not because Annie broke her arm, but because she was doing that awful dance, the Charleston."

Charleston? I thought. Grandma didn't look like the Charleston type. Around our house, we always heard her "whatever happened to the waltz" sermon.

The next speaker took his time getting to the podium. He was close to a hundred years old. He had been Grandma's bishop when she was first married and was still her bishop when she sent her first son on a mission. Even now, every-

one still called him Bishop Jensen.

"I loved Annie when she was a teenager," he said hoarsely, his brown hands trembling. Then he chuckled. "Oh, she wasn't my girlfriend, mind you. She had pluck. When it was haying time, she'd offer to help us and everyone else in the valley. And I remember the day she came racing over to our house on that chestnut horse. She wanted us to be the first to see the saddle she won at the rodeo."

Grandma had won a saddle? I shook my head incredulously. Maybe old Bishop Jensen wasn't remembering quite right.

I left the funeral feeling as if I had forgotten something. One sentence by the last speaker had caught me, as if Grandma were speaking to me. But now his words were gone from my mind. It's no use anyway, I thought. There's nothing I can do for Grandma now. I can never wipe away last Saturday at the corral.

"I never knew Grandma had a chestnut horse," I said to Dad as we drove to the cemetery.

"I think I only heard her talk about that horse once," he said.

"And the saddle?" I asked.

"That was news to me. With me being the youngest of seven boys, I guess she was tired of telling the same stories by the time I came along."

Several horses were dozing against the pasture fence as we turned into the cemetery. A stylish palomino raised its head. It looked like the horse owned by that blonde down in Glenville.

"You better not let her beat you at the barrels," Grandma had said.

There is something I can do for Grandma, I thought. I can beat the rodeo queen in the barrel racing competition.

I was next. Ginger knew it too. She kept prancing sideways and tugging on the reins.

"Easy, girl. Don't get all worked up before we get out there."

The afternoon was warm. Sweat was already seeping from under Ginger's saddle blanket. The reins felt sticky in my fingers.

The crowd roared as last year's rodeo queen zoomed out for her turn at the barrels. I could see her blonde braids streaming behind her. She zipped sleekly around the first barrel and bolted for the next.

This blonde and I were the last two barrel racers. The other competitors' times had been mediocre, so I felt Ginger and I still had a chance.

The rodeo queen circled the second barrel without a hitch. Uneasily, I eyed the last barrel. Maybe she would tip it over and get disqualified.

I could see the girl and her horse lean together around the third barrel. It was too close. The barrel rocked wildly. But it didn't go over. At least it might have knocked a couple of seconds off her time. The crowd thundered as she spurred toward the finish.

I'll show them, I thought, as I positioned Ginger for a run into the arena. But I was scared.

I charged out. The flag dropped at the starting line as Ginger and I flashed past. I hadn't thought of Grandma until that very second. Suddenly I had a feeling that beating this rodeo queen was not what Grandma had in mind.

Ginger's black mane flew in my face as I reined her low around the right barrel. She veered around it smooth and tight—just like a pro. I didn't feel as much like a pro. I was slightly off balance and bumpy as we raced down the arena to the far barrel. Ginger went a little wide on this barrel, but we were still on target.

Now for the last barrel. I was in her rhythm again, so my confidence rose. "Dig, Ginger, dig," I whispered, leaning over her neck.

She flicked her ear back briefly. I felt the tremble before blastoff.

Then we were hurtling toward the last barrel. Too fast. I tried to check her, but we were already swerving steeply around the barrel. I was off balance, askew in my stirrups. Ginger was sliding. Too far. We were falling. In slow motion, we were crashing into the barrel. Grandma's sad gray eyes flashed before me. "You can do it," she was saying.

"I'm sorry, Grandma. I thought I could beat her."

I was falling.

"I was never too good with words," said Grandma. "But you are."

"No, my words hurt you."

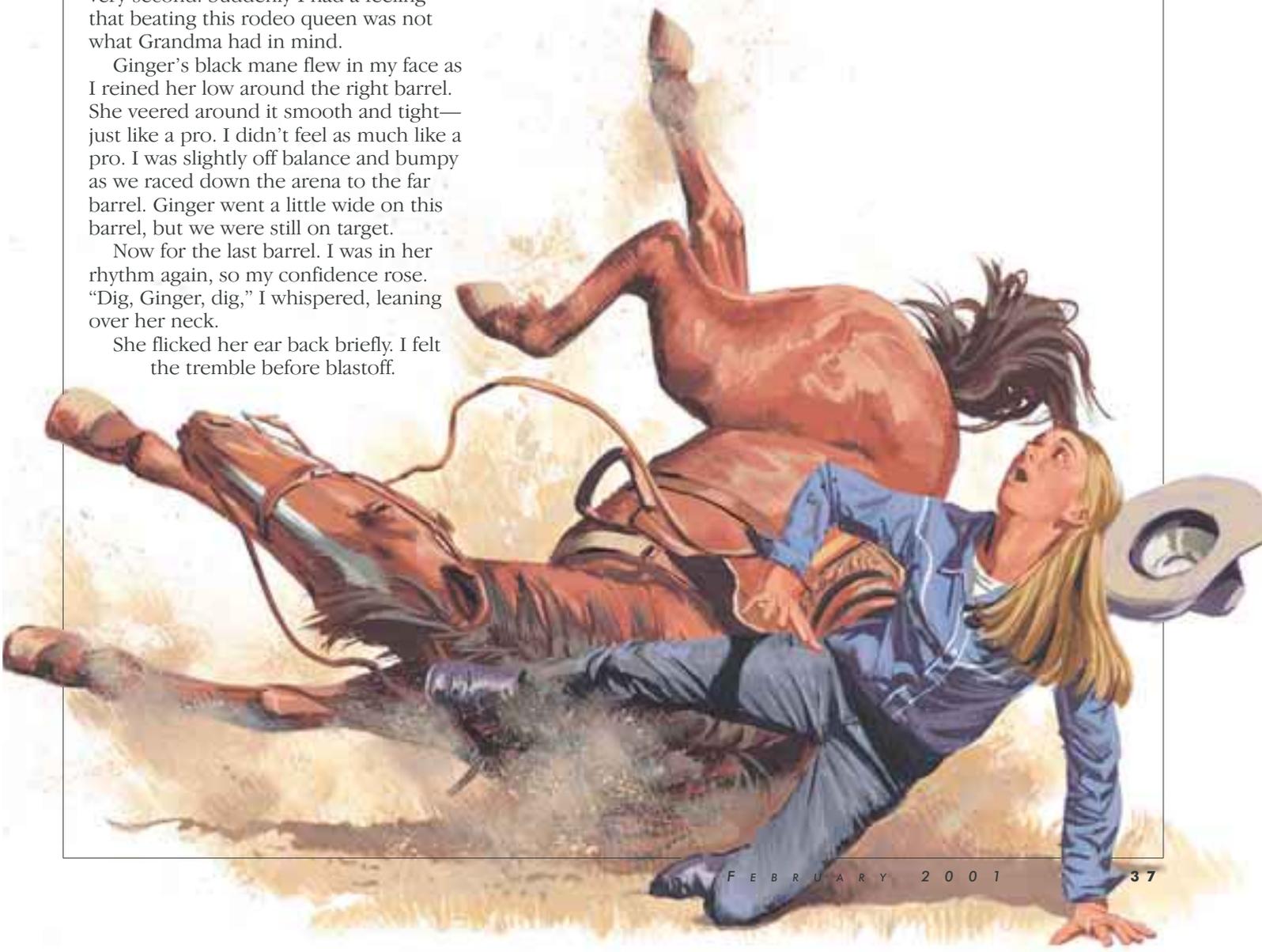
Falling. Falling.

"It's okay," whispered Grandma. "I know you can write it."

"Write what?" I muttered.

Then I hit the barrel.

When I came to, I was deep in rodeo



Who was this woman I had called Grandma? What had happened to the chestnut horse and the prize rodeo saddle? It wasn't until I talked to Uncle Al and others that the mystery began to unravel.

arena dirt, and Ginger's hot breath was in my face. But I knew what I needed to do.

A cowboy was leaning over me. "Write what?" he said.

"Did I say something?" I asked.

"You keep saying you need to write something."

I rolled to my feet. "That's right. I do need to write it."

"You all right?" he asked.

"I'm just fine."

I started by interviewing Grandma's seven sons. They each gave me a different view of Grandma's life.

"Mom was the only widow I knew who could get seven kids ready for church and still be five minutes early," said Uncle Orvil.

"Mom would feed every hobo who'd come along the tracks," said Uncle Russ. "I was scared of them and would hide behind her skirts. But she wasn't scared. She'd just put them to work chopping wood."

"I remember Mom telling me that she wanted to be Annie Oakley when she was little," said Uncle Rolfe, "so she took her stick horse and ran away. She was gone for most of the day. Half the county was looking for her. They finally found her fast asleep in a pasture full of unbroken mustangs."

"Long before anyone had heard of family home evening, Mom had what she called family time once a week," said Uncle Matt. "There was no getting around it. We had to be there."

None of my uncles knew much about the chestnut horse or the rodeo saddle.

"Mom kept pretty silent on some things," said Sid, my oldest uncle. "All I know is that she didn't have that horse very long."

He motioned to several boxes of scrapbooks and letters. "But you might find something there. You're welcome to take them home with you."

Digging through the scrapbooks, I finally found a small picture of Grandma on her chestnut horse. "Me and Flash, 1930" was scrawled on the back. I was surprised how much Grandma looked like me sitting on that horse. Straight brown hair and freckles.

When my great-uncle Al came to town, I asked him, "Do you know any other stories about Grandma besides the ones you

told at the funeral?"

"Oh, I'm chock-full of tales about my sister," he said. "I remember her first date with your Grandpa."

Date? It had never occurred to me that someone would actually remember Grandma going on a date.

"To be honest, I remember her second date better. It was almost the last. Her first date was kind of normal. She came home with this goofy smile on her face and walked past me like I didn't exist. But on her second date, she came home scratching like a hen in the barnyard. I thought she must have fleas. She kept yelling, 'I can't stand it,' all the while yanking at her clothes and peeling down her socks. Come to find out, Harry's old Plymouth also served as a truck. He'd forgotten to take the chicken feed sacks out in time for his date. Harry and Annie got covered with chicken mites. They were scratching like a couple of dogs all night and didn't dare say a word to each other. Luckily, chicken mites would rather be on chickens than people, so Annie got over it quick. But it took a few weeks for her and Harry to get back together."

Uncle Al and my dad were laughing so hard tears were running down their cheeks. Suddenly I remembered the words from the funeral. "Whoever does Annie's life story is in for a few laughs."

Uncle Al knew a little more about her chestnut horse. "Oh, yes, how she loved that little mare. Annie's dream was to become a trick rider and ride in rodeos and wild west shows."

"A trick rider?"

"Yep, she got pretty good at it too, considering she didn't have that horse very long. I did watch her fall a few times in the pasture."

"Did she barrel race too?"

"Oh, no, that was before the days of barrel racing," he said. "But she did enter some sort of horsemanship event at the rodeo. Maybe you've heard about the saddle she won?"

I nodded.

Uncle Al shook his head. "It's too bad about that saddle. I don't think she ever got to use it."

"She didn't?" I said.

"Nope. She sold Flash right after that."

"Why?"

"Oh, I have my suspicions. But the person who might know is my brother Bill."

I hugged my notebook as I entered the rest home. Uncle Bill, Grandma's next oldest brother, always made me a little nervous. He tended to get confused when he talked. But today he seemed sharp.

"Why did Annie sell her horse?" he repeated, leaning forward in his wheelchair. "Well, the Depression was coming on. I told her it didn't matter; I could earn the money myself. But she had already made up her mind. Maybe you know how bullheaded she could be. She wanted to do her part for my mission. She said she couldn't stand watching Flash eat hay in the barn while I might be hungry in England."

"And she sold her new rodeo saddle too?" I said.

"Well, I don't recollect that she did," replied Uncle Bill, scratching the top of his head. "I think she kept that saddle a long time, hoping to buy another horse so she could be a trick rider. Then later on she hoped to have a daughter to give it to. To be honest, I don't know what happened to that saddle."

I had almost completed Grandma's history by the time I found out what happened to her prize saddle. I ran across a letter from Bishop Jensen in the box of papers Uncle Sid had given me.

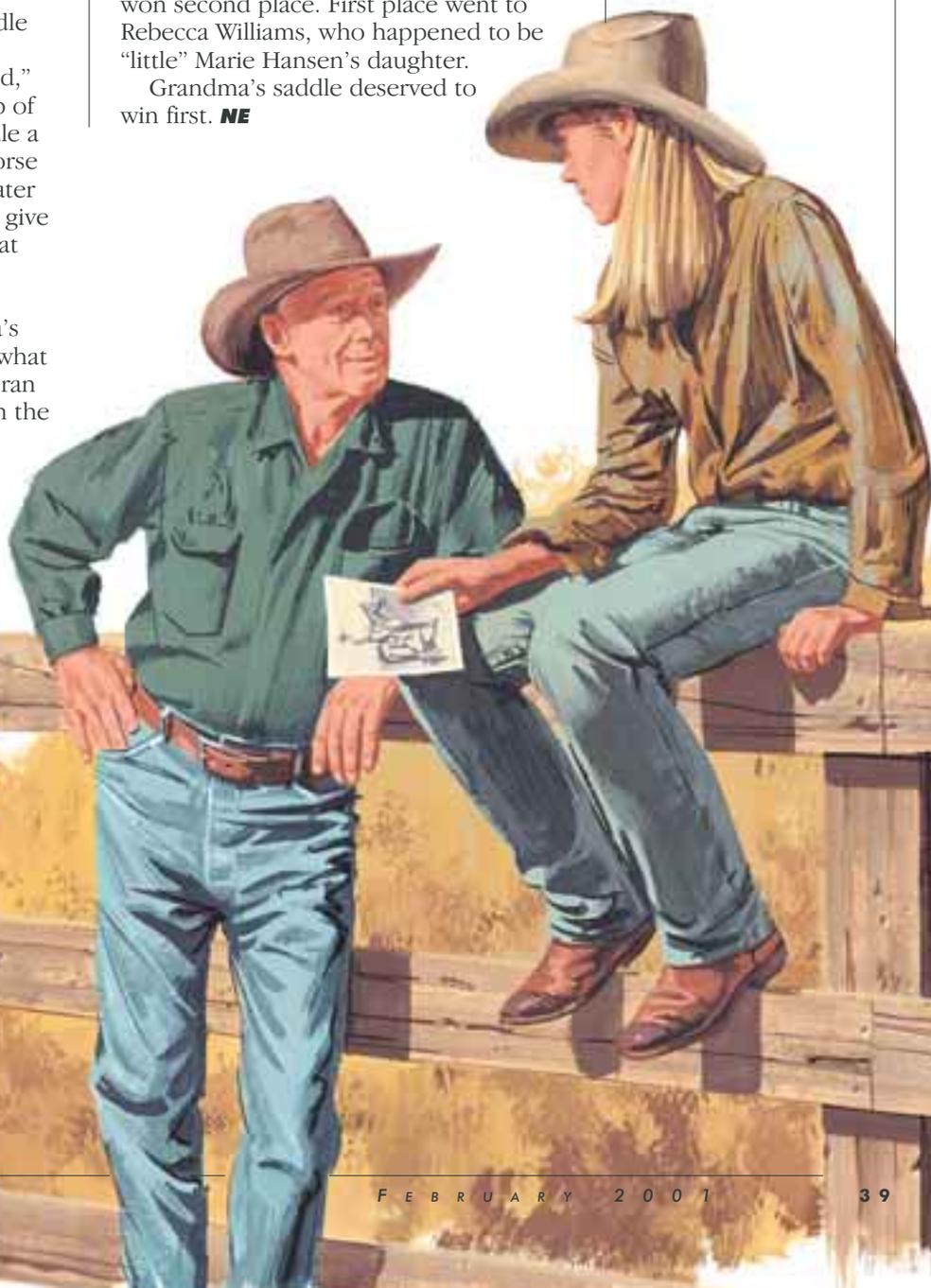
"Dear Annie: I know how you like your gifts to be anonymous. But I just wanted to tell you how

thrilled the Hansens are with your saddle. They were afraid of paralysis after the accident, but now their little Marie seems determined to put that saddle on a horse. I knew you wanted your saddle to go to a girl who loves horses, and there's no doubt Marie loves horses."

I finished Grandma's history and made copies for my family. Everyone was thrilled, including Bishop Jensen, who turned 100 years old the day I gave him his copy.

By the way, I never did beat that sassy blonde from Glenville in the barrels. She got married that summer and moved away. But the next year, I shortened my stirrups a notch like Grandma said and won second place. First place went to Rebecca Williams, who happened to be "little" Marie Hansen's daughter.

Grandma's saddle deserved to win first. **NE**



REMEMBERING *Sarah*

Joseph Smith said she would be remembered; these young women helped keep that promise.



The young women in the Salt Lake Eagle Gate Stake's 18th North Ward have a unique way of doing work for the dead. Many of them have done the conventional things lots of teenagers do: finding names, doing baptisms at the nearby Salt Lake Temple, and keeping records of their own lives to pass on to future generations. But this activity has been a little different.

The Salt Lake City Cemetery is within walking distance of the girls' homes, and they have spent many hours there, working to revive the memory of a woman who seems to have been nearly forgotten. The headstone at the grave was never very large, and after more than a hundred years of cold winter storms and summer heat waves, it was crumbling, the name completely worn off.

The girls took some time to learn about the woman buried there. Her name was Sarah Melissa Granger Kimball. She was a Relief Society president for 41

Sarah
Melissa
Granger
Kimball was one
of the great
women in the
early years of the
Church. Now she
inspires the Young
Women of one Salt
Lake ward in
their own roles as
women of faith.

by Lisa M. G. Crockett

years in a ward near the girls' homes and worked tirelessly as a wife, mother, and educator.

The girls decided that a woman who had contributed so much to the lives of women who were the early settlers of Utah deserved a little more recognition than the tired old headstone afforded her.

So they got to work. First, they listed the work that needed to be done and divided it into individual assignments. Crissy Renda was the group's researcher. Rebecca Priggemeyer documented the group's progress on film. The other girls helped in various aspects of selecting a new monument to mark the grave, and they each participated in keeping a journal about their feelings and insights during the project.

"I used to think of Relief Society as something for people old or boring," says Elizabeth Clark. "But learning about Sarah, I realized that she was energetic and really dedicated to making women's lives better. The way I feel about Relief Society has really changed."

It isn't every day the Relief Society general presidency, the general board, and a representative of the Young Women presidency show up to a Young Women activity. But this was no ordinary activity.

When the time came to place the headstone, the Young Women wanted to



Strong Minded and Warm Hearted

Sarah Melissa Granger Kimball

Born 29 Dec 1818 in Phelps, New York
Died 1 Dec 1898 in Salt Lake City, Utah

Married *Hiram M. Kimball*

Born 31 May 1806 in West Fairley, Vermont
Died 1 May 1863 at sea in a steamship
explosion enroute to
the Sandwich Islands
to serve a mission

Their Children:

Hiram W
Oliver Granger
Franklin D

Adopted Children:

Kate
Elizabeth
Julius



The Young Women who erected a monument to Sarah (above) say the stories of her dedication will shape their lives and keep her memory alive. (Inset) Sister Mary Ellen Smoot, Relief Society General President, paid tribute to Sarah.

do something special. They had spent countless hours researching Sarah's life, and they wanted to pay tribute to Sarah for what they had learned from her.

"I am so grateful for everything that Sarah has done for the women of the Church," Crissy says. "By researching her life, I have come to feel a closeness to her."

Many of Sarah's accomplishments are listed on the back of the monument the Young Women erected. At age 15, Sarah was invited to be educated with the School of the Prophets. She founded the Ladies Society of Nauvoo. She helped build the first Relief Society hall and Relief Society granary. She served as the first president of the Utah Women's Suffrage Association, where she was a strong voice

in the campaign to give women the right to vote. She also served in the general Relief Society presidency for 12 years.

As these young women did this unique work for the dead, they discovered that their work was a fulfillment of prophecy. Sarah was promised by Joseph Smith that because of her

devotion she would be remembered from generation to generation.* As the young women uncovered stories about Sarah, they learned of her dedication to the Church. They believe the stories of her dedication will shape their lives and keep the memory of Sarah alive. **NE**

*Augusta Joyce Crocheron, *Representative Women of Deseret* (1884).



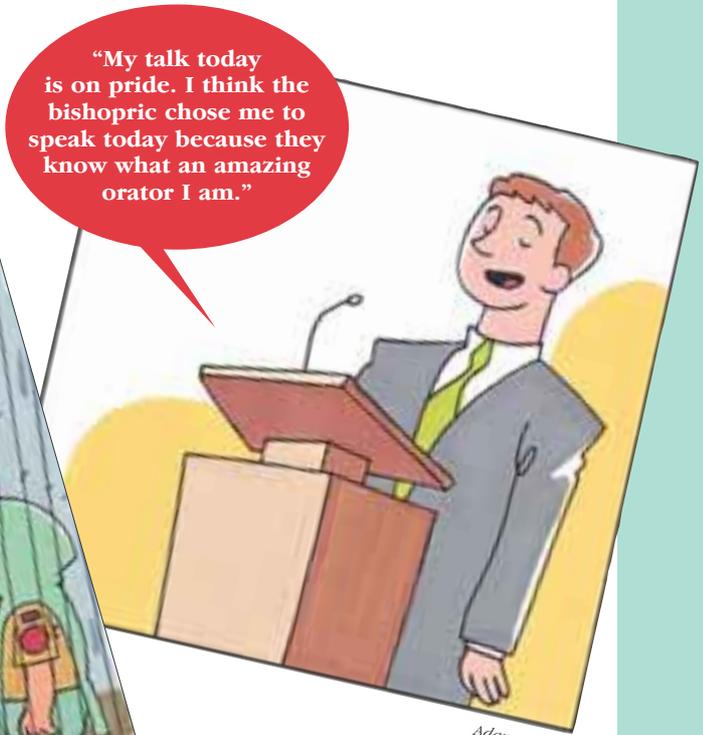
Ryan Stoker

It was time to go to church, so Sarah told her three-year-old daughter, Brittany, to put her shoes on. Later, she noticed what her daughter had done and said, "Brittany, your shoes are on the wrong feet." Brittany innocently answered, "But, Mom, they're the only feet I have."

Bruce E. Dana
Hyde Park, Utah



Adam Koford



Adam Koford

MORE THAN SKIN DEEP

President Hinckley has spoken clearly about tattoos and body piercing. For those who may still be struggling to understand why this topic is of concern to parents and Church leaders, here's what we've learned.

by Janet Thomas
Assistant Managing Editor

Many fads are fairly harmless. But this one leaves people marked—or mutilated—for life.

When Sara was 16, she got a tattoo. It was a small flower on her back, where no one would ever see it except when she wore her swimming suit. She did it without her parents' permission, and they were upset when they found out. She and her girlfriends had gone together to get tattoos at the same time. They had talked each other into it. They thought it was kind of cool.

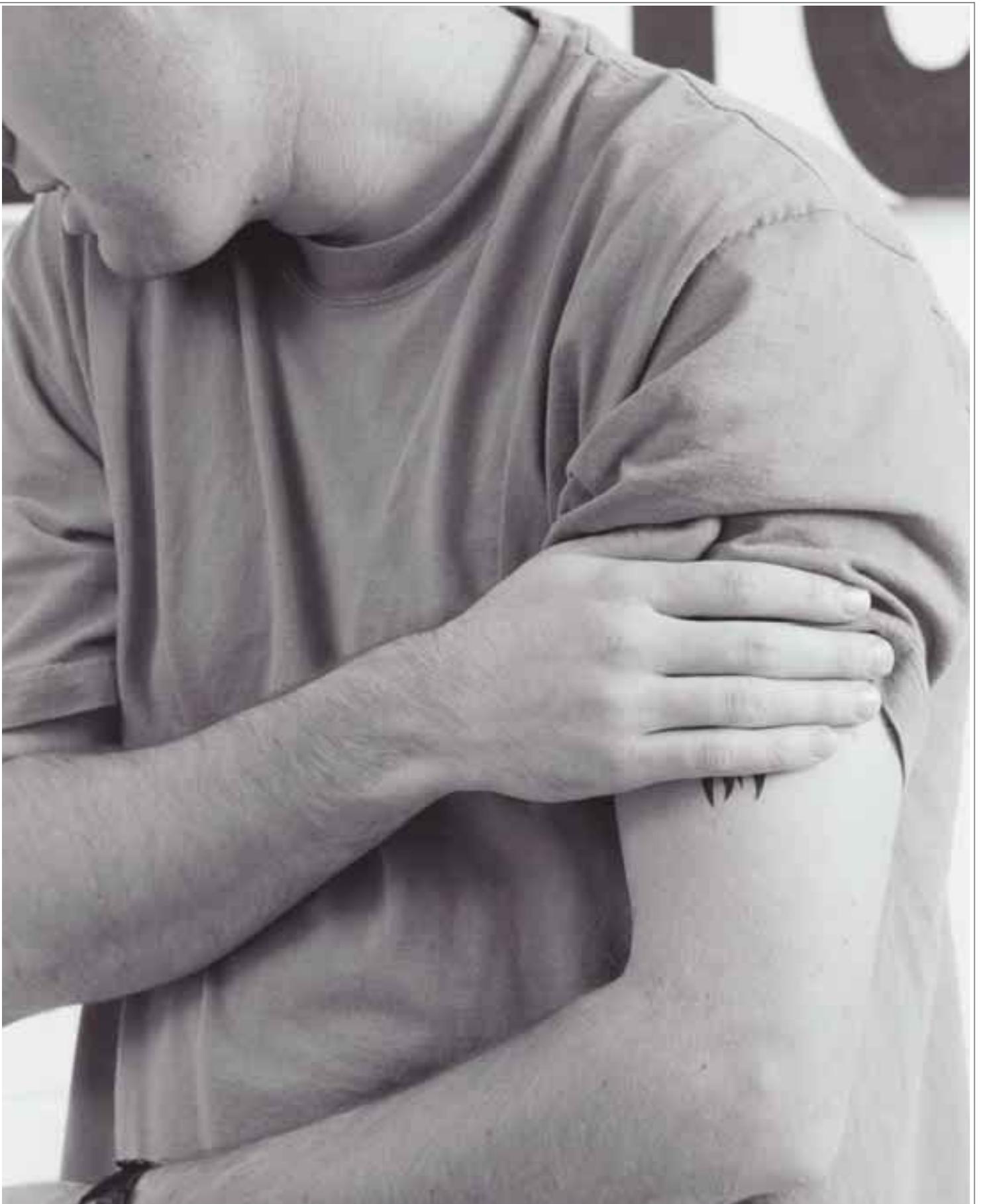
Sara started regretting her decision shortly after. But she became truly heartsick five years later, when she was getting ready to go to the temple to be married to a wonderful young man. She was worthy in every way to attend the temple, but she wished more than anything that she did not have that mark, that foolish tattoo, on her body. It had come to represent a childish, silly wish to follow the crowd, an attitude that she had left behind long ago. The only thing that couldn't be left behind so easily was the tattoo itself. Now as newlyweds, with both Sara and her new husband still trying to finish their educations, they are not financially in a position for her to undergo the laser treatments necessary to remove her tattoo. She just wishes that she had never had it done.

Fads and fashions come and go. Recently, practices like tattooing and body piercing have become popular. The trends of tattooing and body piercing, as with other worldly fashions, are not long lasting, although the marks or scars they leave on the body are often permanent. These worldly fads are practices that members of the Church should choose to avoid because they don't complement an attitude of respect toward our earthly bodies as the scriptures and prophets teach. Of course, those who have had tattoos prior to joining the Church have no need to feel embarrassed.

Correct Principles

The Prophet Joseph Smith was once asked by a visitor to the city of Nauvoo how it was that he governed so many people who lived in such peace and prosperity. The Prophet said, "I teach them correct principles and they govern themselves" (*Journal of Discourses*, 10:57–58).

This same advice would apply to the changing fads and fashions of the world. It is neither possible nor proper for Church leaders to comment on how members should react to every fad that comes along. What may be appropriate for members in one area of the world may be inappropriate for members in another culture. Tattooing may have leadership significance in Pacific island cultures that it does not have in North American cultures. For much of the world, tattooing has become a fashion fad or a gang-related imprint. The best



Photography by John Luke. Posed by models

We should avoid an appearance that will cause people to judge us or our faith wrongly.

At the same time, we must not judge the goodness or worthiness of others—including judgments based on appearance.

guide in deciding how to respond to such enticements is to look to the underlying principle of the gospel as taught by the scriptures and the prophets.

Our bodies are precious and should be respected in every way. The Apostle Paul said, “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are” (1 Cor. 3:16–17). In addition to knowing about the body- and soul-destroying sins of immorality, drug use, and abuse, we need to know also that our bodies are precious gifts from a loving God. That knowledge will help guide us in our decisions about how we treat our bodies.

An Attitude of Rebellion

As a pediatrician, Dr. Ray Thomas of Salt Lake City must treat his young patients who have medical problems that result from tattooing and body piercing. “When I was in medical school I had the assignment to surgically remove tattoos of any young people who came through the county hospital and wanted them removed. Almost universally, it seemed, they got them as a whim. I found that within three years of getting a tattoo, people universally wanted them off. The exception was people in the Cook Islands, where I served my mission. There it was a symbol that the chiefs had put on.”

Dr. Thomas also sees some body piercing. He asks these patients the reasons they decided to follow this fashion. “Most of the time it is a rebellion statement,” says Dr. Thomas. “Sometimes it is an attention-getter because of a lack of self-confidence. Sometimes they are not happy with their physical selves.”

Medical Complications

In his practice, Dr. Thomas treats injuries that occur when a piercing is accidentally caught and torn out. “The problem is sewing that type of laceration. Underneath is the healed part of the skin where the ring has been. It doesn’t heal well and leaves quite a bit of scarring.” This type of scarring, known as keloid, is difficult to control or remove.

Tattooing or body piercing also

introduces foreign bodies that can cause either infection or allergic reaction.

“Sometimes people develop an allergic reaction to metal,” says Dr. Thomas.

“They not only have to avoid piercing, but they also cannot wear the same kind of metal on a watchband, a wedding ring, or anything else. It is a sensitivity that is a lifelong plague for them.”

Dr. Thomas has also treated patients who have accidentally inhaled pieces of metal from tongue and lip piercings, and those who have developed infections. “I’ve had a patient with a lymph gland that had swollen in the side of his neck due to a tongue ring that caused infection. A foreign body will cause bacteria to filter into the lymph system and make it swell.”

The Spiritual Consequences

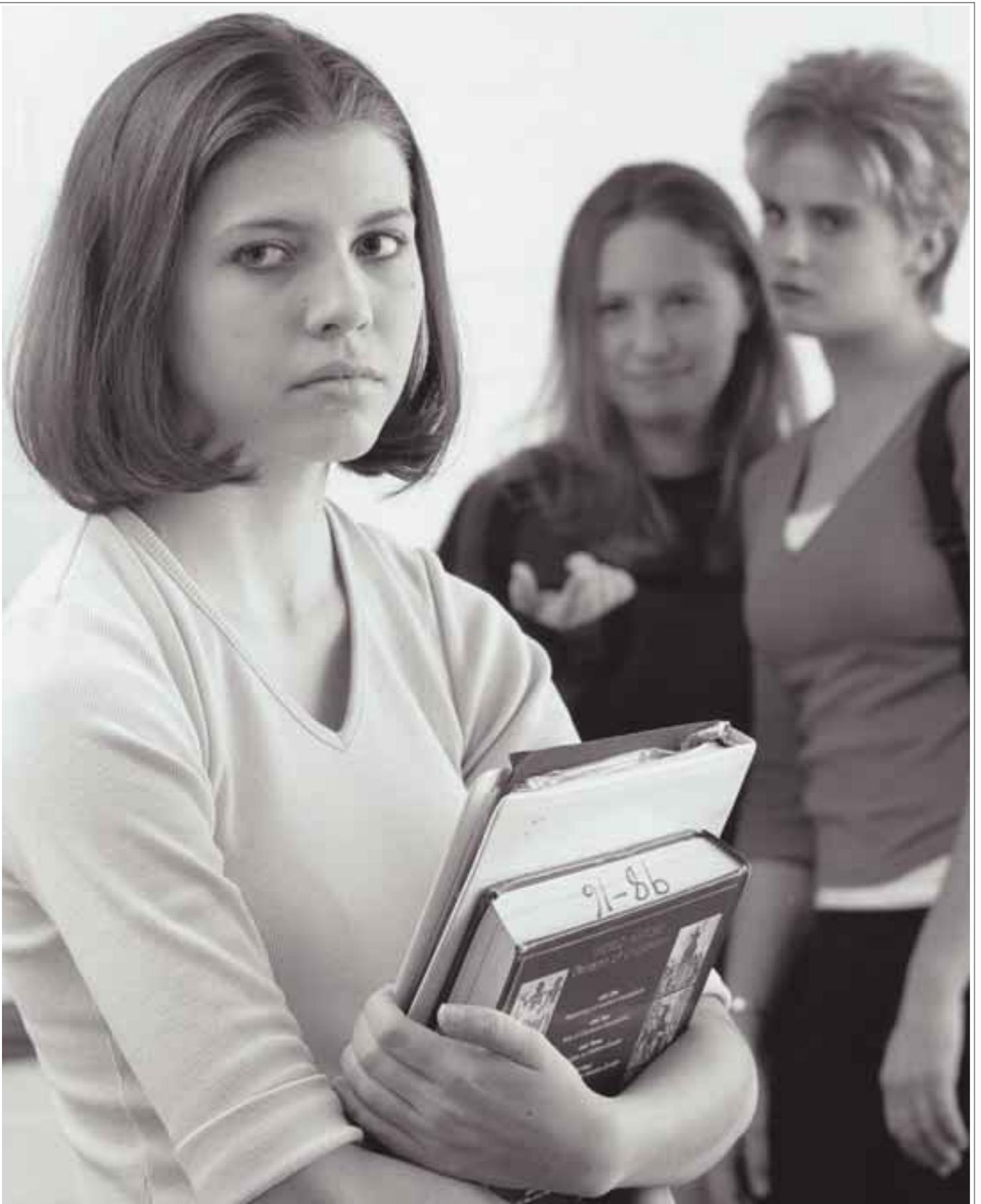
Dr. Mark Taylor, a dermatologist in Salt Lake City, sees patients who want to have tattoos removed. Dr. Taylor indicates that the laser process is expensive and that certain tattoo colors cannot be removed very easily. He finds it unfortunate that something done on a whim, almost like doodling, now costs time, money, energy, and pain to remove. “Tattoos connote, in my opinion,” says Dr. Taylor, “a lack of judgment, lack of forethought, lack of being able to see into the future and understand consequences.”

As a member of the Church, Dr. Taylor is concerned about the spiritual consequences his patients have had to face. “If you wear anything on your body that discourages the presence of the Spirit, that conveys a message of disobedience or rebellion,” says Dr. Taylor, “it becomes discouraging to spirituality.”

Having a tattoo or body piercing can also be offensive to others. Employers may not want an employee representing his business who has tattoos or body piercings.

As members of the Church, we are instructed not to give offense. “People taunt others by these outward acts,” says Dr. Taylor. “A pure body, unmarked, is not offensive.”

Some members of a congregation may be distracted from the reverent feelings they come to church services to gain, by the piercings or tattoos of those called upon to bless or pass the sacrament or



Your physical body is a divine gift that is essential to your progression. That's one reason the Word of Wisdom was given. Now another prophet has given wise counsel about how we should treat our bodies.

participate in the program.

Dr. Taylor has come up with two questions that are good to ask before undertaking any sort of fad. "Will it make me feel differently or negatively about myself? Will it make other people feel differently about me? If the answer is yes to either question, then it's probably not a good idea to do it. For example, a woman having pierced ears does not make me think differently of her. However, for men, it makes me feel differently about them if I see them with pierced ears."

The Biggest Danger

The biggest danger from body piercing or tattoos may not be the object itself. The biggest danger is where these things can lead. Will this pull you into situations that you should avoid? Will it introduce you to a circle of friends that are better left alone, such as a gang? Is your attitude toward spiritual things changed? Does it open up opportunities for other types of more serious rebellion?

When asked about the reasons for his gauged ears and pierced tongue, one young man says, "I was just curious. Now, it's my play toy," referring to his habit of clicking the barbell through his tongue against his teeth. His tongue piercing, however, has also affected his speech.

When pressed a little more, he admits his piercings convey an inaccurate image of what he is really like. "My teachers confronted me and said I was quite a surprise. They said I wasn't anything like the way I look. They had been expecting the worst. Some people assumed I didn't want to graduate."

His body piercings have affected his relationship with some friends and their parents as well as his ability to get jobs. "My friend's dad asked me, 'Why the change of heart?' He won't let me hang around with his son, my friend, as much. We were supposed to room together at college, but his dad won't let him."

This young man has also been turned down for jobs he has applied for, and he knows that there are certain places of business that won't even accept his application.

Why make things more difficult for himself? This young man just shrugs off

the idea that his choice has affected his life, although he does not have a difficult time listing the areas in which his choice has actually made things harder.

Your Body Is a Gift

Your Heavenly Father has given you the opportunity to have your spirit and mortal body united at birth. It is a great gift, essential to your progression. Just knowing that should make you want to care for your body and avoid drugs, other harmful substances, immorality, and abuse or neglect. Part of that attitude of caring for our bodies should be to recognize that tattoos and body piercing are driven by the whims of fashion.

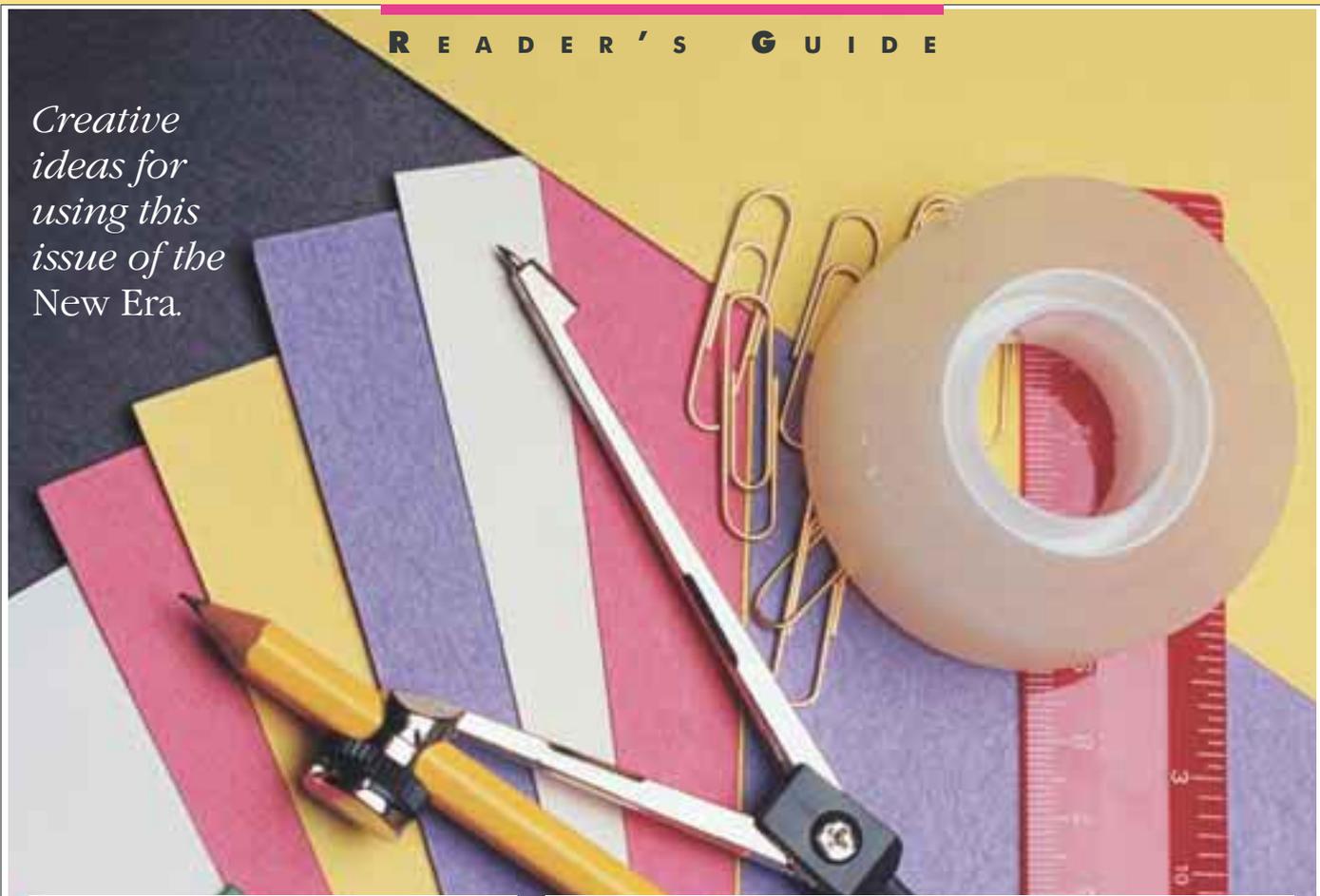
President Gordon B. Hinckley addressed the fads of tattooing and piercing in our last general conference:

"Now comes the craze of tattooing one's body. I cannot understand why any young man—or young woman, for that matter—would wish to undergo the painful process of disfiguring the skin with various multicolored representations of people, animals, and various symbols. With tattoos, the process is permanent, unless there is another painful and costly undertaking to remove it. . . . A tattoo is graffiti on the temple of the body.

"Likewise the piercing of the body for multiple rings in the ears, in the nose, even in the tongue. Can they possibly think that is beautiful? It is a passing fancy, but its effects can be permanent. Some have gone to such extremes that the ring had to be removed by surgery. The First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve have declared that we discourage tattoos and also 'the piercing of the body for other than medical purposes.' We do not, however, take any position 'on the minimal piercing of the ears by women for one pair of earrings'" (*Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 52).

Since "by the Spirit are all things made known unto the prophets" (1 Ne. 22:2), we should trust in their wisdom and counsel concerning the sacred nature of our bodies and avoid potentially harmful side effects and future regrets. Equally as important, our personal spirituality will flourish if we make such far-reaching decisions based on true principles and not the pull of fleeting fashions of the world. **NE**

Creative ideas for using this issue of the New Era.



Family Home Evening Ideas

□ Read the article “More Than Skin Deep” on page 44 and, together as a family, talk about why Church leaders are giving us this counsel at this time.

□ Church leaders have made a list of standards printed in *For the Strength of Youth*. Get a copy of the pamphlet for each member of the family, and read and discuss it. In addition, make a list of family standards such as curfews or rules for your own household and post it on the refrigerator or in another prominent spot where everyone can read it.

Personal Improvement

□ Are you feeling stuck in a rut? Could you use some fun and new friends? Read the Q&A about dating on page 16 and brainstorm some ideas for great group activities you and several friends could participate in. Try to choose a game or activity that allows for a lot of mixing rather than pairing off. Some activities to try: making cookies, building a snowman, a scavenger hunt, board games, charades.

□ Read “Love, Anonymous” on page 26. Write a cheerful, positive, anonymous note and slip it, with a small treat, into the pocket or backpack of a brother or sister.

Laurel Project Idea

□ Read the story “Planting Temple Seeds” on page 20 and get involved in researching your family history. Some ideas include: learning how to fill out a four-generation chart, interviewing your grandparents about their lives, or researching a family line that needs work.

Young Men and Young Women Activity Ideas

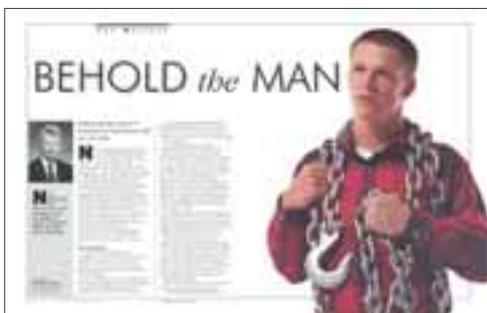
□ The dance festival in Washington included hundreds of participants (see “Steps in Time,” page 28), but you can reap some of the same benefits by learning just one or two dance styles. Volunteer with a couple other teens to learn the swing, the jitterbug, or the Charleston. Then teach the steps to the group.

Seminary Devotional Idea

□ Bring a pitcher of fruit juice. Before pouring someone a glassful, add one last ingredient. Sweep the floor and collect the dirt or bring in a small amount of dirt. Add it to the juice. Compare it to listening to and watching entertainment that may have something objectionable in it. Use the Idea List on page 15 for ways to keep our thoughts clean.

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Home delivery

For the first time ever, I read an issue from cover to cover. The May 2000 issue is great. Our home teachers bring the *New Era*, the *Friend*, and the *Ensign* to our family when they come. I'm thankful there are people in the Church who help out others even in the smallest ways. I made the decision to start going to church again in January of 1999. All of the articles in the May 2000 issue helped me, but "Behold, the Man," "Coaching the Coach," and "Slow-Motion Miracle" all have had a great influence on me.

*Camille Neilson
Sheridan, California*

Knows the feeling

I wanted to write you and thank you for your article "I Didn't Fit In" (May 2000). When I read it, I felt so grateful that I was not the only one in this vast world that has experienced that feeling of stupidity when you stand up for what is right in a crowd of people who are not doing what's right. My roommate recently invited me to go with her to another city to visit a friend she hadn't seen in a while. I agreed to go with her simply because she is my friend and I wanted to support her. When we arrived at the house, I walked in and was overwhelmed by the smell and the smoke. Everyone was doing drugs. I crouched in the corner hoping they wouldn't see me, but of course they did and they started pressuring me to smoke. It became so overwhelming that I ran outside, got in my roommate's car, and just cried until she finally came back out. During that time, I prayed harder than I've ever prayed. I longed so badly to be surrounded by my good LDS friends. I realized that even standing up for what you believe in is not enough. You have to be in the right places because the Spirit will not dwell where others around you are doing things to drive it away.

Name Withheld (via e-mail)

An idea

I just received the June issue of the *New Era*, and I am so pleased you decided to make it all about missionary work. I can't wait

"Thank you so much for inspiring me and so many others with the little taste of a missionary's life."



to go on a mission myself, but I can't go until I'm 21. I'm only 16, so that seems like a long time to wait. But that issue has given me an idea of what to expect. I can't wait to go into the MTC and have that feeling of love and companionship with other missionaries. I have read this issue cover to cover—and then some. Thank you so much for inspiring me and so many others with the little taste of a missionary's life.

*Ashley Wright
Littleton, Colorado (via e-mail)*

One good, one bad

I am writing this letter for two main reasons—one good and one, unfortunately, bad. I'll start off with the good. My family and I enjoy reading the *New Era* every month, and it is obvious that it helps every individual in my family. The stories published somehow always come at the right time, and remarks given by youth always amaze me. I am, however, really sad to say that many people are disappointed that the *New Era* is mainly based about members of the Church in America. You will always notice that sometimes, and mostly every time, the *New Era* is only about members of the Church in the United States. In Australia, where I live, the youth do many wonderful things and are never mentioned like the youth are in America. You should widen your views on who to write certain topics on.

*Jason Rao
Sydney, Australia (via e-mail)*

Editor's note: Because we're a small staff with a limited budget, we can't possibly go to every place where there are Church members for articles. That's why we rely on our readers to send us stories and story ideas from their areas. We'd love to hear from you.

The New Era welcomes your letters. Send them to We've Got Mail, New Era Magazine, 50 E. North Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah 84150 or via e-mail at:

*cur-editorial-newera@ldschurch.org
Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.*

P H O T O O F T H E M O N T H

by M. David Rowe

Sunset

by Esther Yu

God painted me a sky today.
He used blues, whites, reds, and greens.
Yesterday He used purples too.
I guess
God is an artist
who likes to experiment with perfection.



“It was neat planting the flowers because you know they will be pretty and everybody will want to look at them. It’s going to look really, really nice when everything is blooming.”

See “Planting Temple Seeds,” p. 20.