

Lung Cancer
and Smoking

Obama's Nobel
Peace Prize

Recycling: Saving
the Planet

Cover photo
by **Mel**

Nov. 2009
TeenHelp.org's eZine
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Avatar

Saving the Homeless Youth
Information and resources for and about homeless youth and how you can help



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Contact

Your valuable contributions are what make Avatar so unique. Please submit us your content, whether it be an article, poem, joke, game, photo, drawing or anything else you have to share!

Submission form: www.teenhelp.org/avatar/submit
Email: avatar@teenhelp.org



Letter from the Editors and acknowledgments.

Letter from the Editors

Hey TeenHelp, welcome to the November 2009 issue of Avatar!

Happy autumn! The leaves are falling and there's a chill in the air, but you can keep nice and toasty when you curl up with this month's release of Avatar! The holidays are fast approaching, but for much of TeenHelp it's exam time! We hope you do well, and remember to keep away from that pesky H1N1 virus!

In other news, the Editors have tons of wonderful content for you this month, beginning with the **TeenHelp Times**. There you'll find an interesting article on the world's reaction to US President Obama being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, as well as an informative read on Remembrance Day.

Be sure to check out the **Mind & Body** section for a heartfelt and compelling piece on homeless youth, as well as an educational article on lung cancer and cigarette smoking. In this issue, in **Life-style**, you'll catch an engaging piece on National Novel Writing Month, and what better time could there be than to mark the start of the annual NaNoWriMo challenge? Also be sure to check out an enlightening piece on recycling and other ways to help the planet.

Also featured in this issue is a cause that is popular on many college campuses and in cities across America: Take Back the Night, so be sure to read about TeenHelp's **Cause of the Month**! As always, don't forget about **Dear Avatar**, Avatar's very own advice column. Try your hand at the maze and trivia in the **Fun & Games** section, where you can also read November's Top Tens: Things to do When You're Bored! And last, but certainly not least, be sure to read **Self Expression** and your November **Horoscopes**!

See you next month!
The Avatar Editors.

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Content Editor

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Graphics Editor

Jessie

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Mai (sushi_error)

Sub-Editor of Mind and Body

Maria (Gidig)

Sub-Editor of Lifestyle

Nat (Strider)

Contributors

The Avatar Editors would like to thank the following TeenHelp users for their valuable contributions published in this month's magazine.

Contributions from readers like you are what make Avatar so unique and wonderful. Please consider submitting content, whether it be an article, poem, photograph, or anything else.

www.teenhelp.org/avatar/submit or
avatar@teenhelp.org

Images

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Shish
Spazola
Stephanie

Self Expression

Far From Perfect
x_nicola



Obama's Nobel Peace Prize

by Mai (sushi_error)

With only eight months under his belt, the announcement of President Barack Obama being named the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize recipient stirred praise and controversy around the globe on October 9th, 2009. According to the Norwegian Nobel Committee, Obama was awarded the prize for "his extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples". In a press conference at the White House hours after the announcement, President Obama said he was "surprised and deeply humbled" to be awarded the prize. In a response, the White House said the prize was a "call to action" for all people around the world.

World reaction to the news has been mainly positive. UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon, said the President "embodies the new spirit of dialogue and engagement on the world's biggest problems: climate change, nuclear disarmament, and a wide range of peace and security challenges". Japanese Prime Minister, Yukio Hatoyama, congratulated the president and said he has seen the world change since Obama took office last year. Despite celebration, others around the world strongly feel the award is premature for President Obama. Former Polish President and Nobel Peace Prize recipient, Lech Walesa, called the decision "too soon ... [President Obama] has not yet made a real input. He is still at an early stage". South African Archbishop and former Peace Prize winner, Desmond Tutu agreed, saying "[Obama] has not even finished a year in his first term of office."

President Obama said he was "surprised and deeply humbled" to be awarded the prize.

Regardless of varying opinions, there is no doubt that this has only added more pressure on the President and his administration. In a way, it is difficult to make a case for Obama as other famous world leaders such as Mohandas Gandhi, who achieved peace, freedom, and solidarity in India, never received the award. Further, Obama has yet to foster peace in the Middle East, especially in Afghanistan (he will be sending in an additional 40,000 American troops this year). However, there is no doubt that Obama has instilled a sense of great hope in the American public and around the world. His elec-

tion has significantly changed a once negative view of America around the world to a positive one. If anything, the award is for encouragement, rather than merit, for now.

Hopefully, this award will inspire world leaders around the world, as well as ordinary individuals like you and I. This award does place a significant amount of pressure on Obama to perform best, but it is not as if pressure is a new thing for the president. ■



Dear Avatar readers,

I'm sad to announce my permanent departure from Avatar beginning at the end of this issue. This was not an easy decision to come to, but after putting in a lot of thought and speaking to fellow Avatar editors, I have decided that it's for the best. I have been quite busy with academics, work, and extra-curricular activities after school, so my time is limited. I would have loved to stay on Avatar for much longer, but time did not permit me to do so.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time at Avatar, as I have learned so much about individuals from all kinds of backgrounds and improved my writing along the way. I enjoyed collaborating with my fellow editors and greatly appreciate the amount of support I have received from everyone. Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to voice my ideas and importantly, share yours to the world. I will continue to read Avatar when I have the time and hopefully, might be able to contribute a little once my schedule frees up. For now, good bye and happy readings! Thank you.

Sincerely,
Mai (sushi_error)



Remembrance Day

by Jessie

Remembrance Day, or Poppy Day, is commonly observed on the 11th day of November to mark the day World War I ended ninety-one years ago, in 1918. On or near this day, nine nations memorialize the sacrifices of both civilians and members of the armed forces in times of war, with special events such as parades and moments of silence.

On Remembrance Day many people wear paper poppies, small red flowers with black centers, as a symbol of remembrance. The red color of the poppy is a suitable representation of the bloodshed of past wars, but was chosen because of John McCrae's poem *In Flanders Fields*:

*In Flanders Fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.*

– from *In Flanders Fields*, Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, MD, Canadian Army

When is Remembrance Day in your country, and what is it called?

Australia: 11 November, Remembrance Day

Bermuda: 11 November, Remembrance Day

Canada: 11 November, Remembrance Day

France: 11 November, Armistice Day

New Zealand: 11 November, Armistice Day

South Africa: 11 November, Poppy Day

UK: 2nd Sunday of Nov., Remembrance Sunday

United States: 11 November, Veterans Day ■



Photograph by Stephanie



Photograph by Stephanie

Contact us!

Do you have any comments or feedback on any of our featured news and debates articles? Would you like to see one of your articles here or do you have any suggestions on what you'd like to see in future editions of Avatar? If so, we'd love to hear from you.

Form: www.teenhelp.org/avatar/submit

Email: avatar@teenhelp.org



Saving the Homeless Youth

by Maria (Gidig)

Each year, approximately 1-1.5 million youth suffer from homelessness (National Alliance to End Homelessness). Teenagers and children end up living on the street, by themselves, in unsafe conditions. This is a pressing social issue, and it is not okay to let our youth continue to live like this.

Unfortunately, we currently do not have the resources to save everyone from living such a life. The best we can do right now is get informed, learn about homelessness, and decide where each of us can go from there to help.

Though there is a wide range of reasons and situations that can lead to homelessness, the main reason many youth become homeless is from some sort of disruption within the immediate family. This may include divorce, domestic abuse, drug or alcohol problems from a family member, and many more. Someone could be kicked out of their house by their parents or guardians, or they may be runaways. 63% of runaways are never even reported, so we can't even be looking for them to help them out.

LGBTIQ youth have a higher risk of becoming homeless depending on the parents views of these sort of issues. Many parents have kicked their children out of the house after learning they identify as LGBTIQ.



Homelessness is not only for minorities, certain races, or various cultures; it affects anyone and everyone. While right now this might not be you, it could be later. This might be your cousin, your friend, your daughter, the girl who lived next door. By helping reduce homelessness, you are helping your society, and overall helping yourself.

Not only do you lose emotional and physical stability when you become homeless but many other costs are incurred, which is sometimes more than just finding shelter.

Many homeless youth end up in jails or adolescent detention centers trying to find a warm place to stay and some food. They're also picked up for things such as loitering, or stealing in order to have food or keep warm.

Homeless youth are also at a higher risk of substance abuse, disease and so forth. Many people turn to drugs and alcohol to get through the emotional parts of being homeless. Furthermore, living on the streets is often unsanitary, and infection and disease spreads much more quickly. Their hospital and doctor bills can cost a lot.

Shelters cost a lot of money as well! While it's great they are available for people to use, it costs a lot of money to keep them up and running.

A cost of homelessness that is not shown in money, is pushing on more sexual and physical abuse from people looking to hurt others. Youth on the street are at a higher risk to be sexually or physically abused which can cost their mental health.

Homeless youth need at least one of the following:

- **Early Intervention:** Improve families in anyway possible to help make sure that youth are not at risk for homelessness.
- **Intervene with Already Homeless Youth:** Quickly get them back with their family or friends to find a place to live. Help deal with the issues that caused the homelessness.
- **Other Housing Options:** Create other options for youth who it is not safe or reasonable for them to go back to living with their family and have no other options. ■

Resources for Homeless Youth:

- **www.streetconnect.org**
- **1-800-RUNAWAY** (1-800-786-2929) - A hotline there to speak to youth who are thinking about running away.
- **1-800-799-SAFE** - A hotline there to speak to people about Domestic Violence
- **www.teenhelp.org/hotlines** - A comprehensive list of hotlines for countries including the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, South Africa, and Ireland.



Lung Cancer and Smoking

by Jessie

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths worldwide, killing over one million people each year. This cancer is most prevalent in North America and Europe, and among people ages fifty and older with a history of smoking. In fact, lung cancer was rare before cigarette smoking became popular.

November is Lung Cancer Awareness month, and each year on the third Thursday of November the American Cancer Society holds an event called the Great American Smokeout. On this day, cigarette smokers are challenged to quit for twenty-four hours. The goal, the hope, is that people will choose to quit permanently when they realize that they are able to go an entire day without smoking.

Some people can quit with ease. Other people need moral or medical support, cigarette smoking alternatives, and a strong desire to kick the habit. It isn't a hard decision, when you think about it. Cigarette smoking is dangerous for you and for the people around you. It smells bad (honestly, it does) and it can yellow your fingers and teeth.



If you would like to quit, November would be a great time to do it. In many places the weather is getting colder, so stepping outside to smoke probably sounds a little less desirable than it would on a nice spring day. No one can promise you it will be easy, but support is available for everyone. Even if you are an underage smoker, you will not get in trouble for reaching out for help quitting. Doctors and local organizations can offer you the support and the tools you need to successfully quit.

There are countless methods of quitting smoking

Fact: lung cancer was rare before cigarette smoking became popular.

that you could try. An affordable idea is to replace cigarettes with a healthy snack or a healthy activity to keep you busy until the craving passes. When you would normally have a cigarette, eat a carrot or go for a run instead! Having a "stop smoking buddy" who can support or share your decision to quit smoking might help you out, too. If you are looking for one, ask around!

You smoke because it is something you enjoy, and giving up something you enjoy can be difficult. When you choose to quit, though, save the money you would usually use to purchase cigarettes. Don't spend it on bills, buy groceries with it, or lend it to other people. Instead, set it aside and save up until you have a nice chunk of cash, then go and do something nice for yourself. You deserve it, after all! ■

Contact us!

Do you have any comments or feedback on any of our featured Mind and Body articles? Would you like to see one of your articles here or do you have any suggestions on what you'd like to see in future editions of Avatar? If so, we'd love to hear from you.

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Email: avatar@teenhelp.org



TeenHelp's Cause of the Month: Take Back the Night

by Katrina

November's Cause of the Month, Take Back the Night, got its start in the late '70s as victims, but more importantly, survivors, of sexual abuse got together with their friends and family to raise awareness about the pressing issue. Earlier on, the events focused mainly on different local unsafe areas and how to make them safer. Throughout the '70s, and right up until November of 2009, there have been many more of these gatherings held, including times of reflection, of hope, of speaking out against abuse, and of healing with candlelight vigils, but mostly of showing those who turn up that they are loved.

Though these events were originally geared towards women, more and more men have begun to show their support, some of these men the victims of sexual abuse themselves. Take Back the Night appreciates anyone coming to events as it promotes healing among those already there. Today, Take Back the Night events focus on sexual abuse as a whole, whether it be domestic abuse, child abuse, internet abuse, or anything else.

"Take Back the Night's supporters have always understood the power of speaking out."

The website of Take Back the Night has a particular portion of the site dedicated to speaking out, "Shatter[ing] the Silence", which can be found on their website, www.takebackthenight.org. The site expresses what an integral part of the healing process talking things out is and encourages those who have struggled with sexual abuse to not let these crimes live up to their name: "crimes of silence".

There are so many more amazing parts of the site, but one of the most helpful may be the resources list which includes hotlines and other websites that may be beneficial to someone having experienced a traumatic event relating to sexual abuse. If you'd like to take a look at this list, it can be found on their website.

Finally, I would highly encourage anyone, as we are all affected somehow by the crimes Take Back the Night tries to prevent in some way, to check out the main site to get an idea of the incredible efforts of this great organization:

www.takebackthenight.org



Photograph by Katrina

Contact us!

Do you have any comments or feedback on TeenHelp's Cause of the Month? Do you have suggestions for a cause you would like to see featured in future editions of Avatar? If so, we'd love to hear from you.

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Email:

avatar@teenhelp.org



A unique way of seeking help.

I used to pretend to be someone else who would answer my questions and who I could talk to. Last year, though, I started to tear myself down instead of build myself up, and now I always talk to myself negatively. I could really use some advice.

Hey there!

Well, firstly, give yourself a pat on the back for reaching out to us about this. I know we're people across the internet, but it can really help just to get what you're going through down on paper and know that someone is listening and cares about you. I have to say that I think it was a great idea for you to start giving yourself advice from the standpoint of someone else. I was talking to a therapist at my school who uses the same technique; she'll ask students what they would say if it was their best friend who was going through the same problem. See, often, for good advice, all we have to do is listen to ourselves, but of course that's so much harder to do than say - I struggle with it myself! So that, by itself, in my opinion, is not unhealthy and is actually a very good technique to use. However, I do see an issue with it getting to the point where you started tearing yourself down and only talking negatively to yourself - that's not so healthy, you know? Self esteem is one of the hardest things to gain, and one of the easiest things to lose, but try this: each day, write down three positive qualities you find about yourself - they can be relating to your hair, your clothing style, your personality, whatever - but you have to do them. [: After a while, hopefully when you start feeling down, you can go back to this list. It won't work miracles, but I think it'll help. Just know that you're a beautiful person, inside and out, and don't let yourself think differently! Take care.

After thirteen days of being self harm free, I gave in and burned myself (for the first time!). I don't know why I did it, but I know that it hurts, and I hate myself for giving in. I'm so upset and depressed and today it's really hitting me hard. I just want to curl up and hide from the world.

Hey. I'm so sorry that you're feeling so down right now - no one deserves to feel like that, no matter who they are. I have to start by mentioning that everyone slips up. If someone is recovering from an addiction (which I would classify self harm as too), they'll more than likely relapse at some point during recovery. This doesn't negate how far they've come

though. So, you slipping up after thirteen days doesn't erase those two weeks, which, by the way, is AMAZING. Now you KNOW you can go at least two weeks if not longer! Each time, you have to aim for a higher number. Burning yourself, as I'm sure you realize, is not a healthy habit to get into, so I hope that you'll really try to utilize some alternatives, such as throwing ice at a tree outside, writing in a journal, or screaming into a pillow (more can be found at <http://www.teenhelp.org/alternatives>). It's a lot harder to do than it is to say, but I just know you can do it! Take good care of yourself and know that you don't deserve to be hurt by anyone, not even yourself.

I feel like my heart has just broken into a thousand tiny pieces. My ex, that I'm still hopelessly in love with, has met someone else, who he has described as beautiful. Funnily enough, I feel sick at the thought. I want to get over him so bad, but I just feel sick and sad. I just...need someone to reassure me.

Hey there.

I'm so sorry you're going through a rough time in the relationships and dating world right now. It's never easy to go through a breakup, but know that I think every single person on this earth who has ever been in a relationship has experienced a break up at at some point or another. I know that when people go through break ups, the two points that are toughest are usually the actual break up, and then when the person they were dating or married to meets someone else. So, know that this is fairly normal, and that, in the end, you'll get through it. If you'd like to check out an article for different ways of coping with and managing feelings after a break up, you can check out the article in our Relationships and Dating section titled "Breaking Up," which can be found in TeenHelp's Articles. Though not all of the strategies may work for you, I feel as though it's worth a try to give it a read just to see. Love is illogical and so weird, but I really do think that these things will work out in the end. I hope that things work out for you. Chin up!



A unique way of seeking help.

I have come to the conclusion that I am a lesbian, at least for now. Yesterday at diving practice, I was talking to and laughing with this guy. Later that day, my grandma said she thinks he was flirting with me. However, I've been telling her I'm a lesbian forever, so I'm confused on why she would tell me this and hope that maybe something will happen. I don't know what to do if it turns out he does like me and asks me out. Also, does anyone have any ideas on when my grandmother will figure it out?

Hi.

I'd just like to start off by saying that it's okay to be unsure of your sexuality, but I'm pleased that you do have an idea about it and are experimenting with that idea. Secondly, it's okay for guys and girls to be friendly and nice around each other and not have crushes on each other. I think we all have some friends of the opposite sex, for sure, it's just a matter of how others around us perceive our friendships with those people. If your grandmother is anything like my grandmothers, she's always asking who you have a crush on and just loves to see her little grandbaby pursuing relationships and talking to potential future spouses! I don't necessarily think that your grandmother was trying to push you against being a lesbian, but most likely just informing you that she thought this guy was flirting with you. My grandmothers love to do that to me. If the guy does turn out to like you and ask you out, you have to do what you would for any other situation - if you like him, give him a chance. If you don't, tell him you're not interested. You don't have to feel obligated to date someone just because they ask you out. Best of luck figuring things out!

So I have this new friend. We've become really close and aren't afraid to tell each other anything. I know that she has a serious weed problem...actually, I don't think she's been completely sober once in all the time that I've spent with her. I really want to help her but I'm not sure there's anything I can do. She'll go on and on about how everything's her fault and it wouldn't be that way if she weren't "such a fucked up druggie". It hurts me to hear her say that and I don't know how to respond. Really all I want is for her to be happy...Any advice would be great...

Hey,

That is quite a tough situation to be in. I think it is great that you want to reach out to your friend because she seems like she could really use a person to lean on and this truly shows how much you care about her. Have you thought of approaching her and asking if everything is OK? Perhaps, you could meet her at a cafe or go on a walk, then tell her how worry and concern you are for her safety and health. You should tell her that you will always be around if she needs someone to talk to her and/or suggest that she speak to her parents or at least a guidance counselor. Honestly, I think the best thing you can do for your friend is talk to her and give her as much support as possible. In the end, it is entirely her choice to seek help, but you can help her make a decision by supporting her.

Ask us for advice!

If you would like to submit a question for us to answer, you can email us at avatar@teenhelp.org or PM any of our Avatar Editors. We would love to hear from you!



Kicking off your month with pizzazz.

National Novel Writing Month

by Nat (Strider)

New Years is a time to set personal goals, but November is the month to step forward and achieve your personal goal of writing. November hosts National Novel Writing Month, a great way to embark on a creative journey and express yourself in ways you would not have thought possible, as well as have a lot of fun.

Chris Baty founded NaNoWriMo just over ten years ago, giving everyone a chance to dedicate themselves to writing. The goal is to write a 50,000 word novel within November, which is approximately 175 typed pages. The idea behind the 50,000 words is that it is a challenging —yet doable—standard. Split up over thirty days, it averages to be about 1667 words per day. Generally this number fluctuates, as people have their own personal schedules and are able to write more on some days than others, but it is a good way to assess your work.

...when you know that you have thousands of people supporting you, then it is easier.

But NaNoWriMo isn't just about the number of words. It's about setting yourself a reasonable goal and getting your ideas down on paper. Most people wouldn't normally sit down and write a novel on their own and truly dedicate themselves to it, but when you know that you have thousands of people supporting you, then it is easier. Also, NaNoWriMo is a world event, so out of those thousands of people participating, there are often some in your area. Writing groups and workshops are hosted in many major cities, and people congregate in libraries, bookstores, and coffee shops to have writing battles and meet new friends.

With a word count unfortunately comes the focus to be drawn to quantity rather than quality. But when you force yourself to write as vigorously as this competition demands, then making spelling and grammar mistakes will happen whether you want them to or not. In fact, learning from mistakes is a good lesson to experience firsthand when writing a novel. Remember that NaNoWriMo is about getting the initial first draft of the novel down. It is up to you if you want to edit and revise afterward.

Here are a few survival tips to writing your first NaNo novel:



Photograph by Jessi (Spazola)

1. Warn your friends and parents. They deserve to know why you are spending so much time writing, and besides, support from around the world is great, but having those you care about cheer you on is always a good feeling.
2. Schedule your day. NaNoWriMo is a fun task, but it should not come before homework and other previously planned activities. Write when you have extra time, but don't push other important things to the side.
3. Keep a notebook handy. If you don't carry a laptop everywhere, then having a notebook with you is really useful. Jot down a few lines between classes or at lunch and then type them quickly when you get the chance. It will help you pace yourself throughout the day and keep up with your word goal.
4. Do not erase anything! Okay, you can erase some things if you need to, but it's more important that you get everything down instead of spending all of your time editing. Editing can come later. November is the time to write.
5. Have fun! NaNoWriMo is challenging, but it's also supposed to be fun. Don't worry yourself over whether or not what you are writing is the next top seller, just make sure that you are proud of what you accomplish.

National Novel Writing Month is an opportunity you get only once a year, so why not give it a shot and see what you are capable of? Set yourself a realistic goal and let your creativity find its way onto the page. Remember making it to the 50,000-word finish line is a bonus, it is amazing yourself in the process that it worth every minute. ■



Kicking off your month with pizzazz.

Recycling: Saving our planet one can at a time

by Jessie and Mel

We've all heard the phrase "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle." Being green is in, but more than just popular, it's the right thing to do. Protecting our environment and our earth's limited resources is more important than ever. Once you get the hang of it, taking care of our planet is easy, too.



Disposing of waste and recycling.

Loose, dry papers (magazines, newspapers), **plastics and glass** (bottles, jars, and jugs), and certain **metals** (steel or aluminum cans), as well as dry cardboard can all be recycled. Additionally, starting a **compost pile** with food scraps and peels like corn husks can also help the environment. Food scraps can be put in the same piles as leaves to decompose, and can later be used as mulch. You can also toss **old bread** out for the birds. Unless you live in a city, this is a great option to get rid of unused and old bread. If there's mold on the bread don't worry, the critters will eat around it.

Some things just have to be thrown away. **Hazardous waste**, like paint cans and household or automotive chemicals, can be taken to the local dump. Alternatively, call your city to find out when local pick-up takes place. **Do not recycle garbage.** Certain food scraps, as well as objects that can harbor harmful bacteria, like sponges, should not be kept and cannot be recycled. Some other non-recyclable, non-reusable waste includes light bulbs, wet or greasy paper and cardboard, Styrofoam, and wax paper.

Out with the old and in with the used?

Sure, because these days you can **buy recycled and environmentally friendly products!** Everyday necessities and luxuries may be made from recycled or partially-recycled materials, such as clothes and paper products like toilet paper, napkins, and paper towels. Most stores also sell reusable cloth or canvas bags for replacing everything from sandwich bags to shopping bags. You can also buy environmentally friendly everything, from packing peanuts to dish soap and other cleaning supplies.

Additionally, you could consider **replacing** some garbage-producing or energy insufficient products with reusable ones. Instead of using paper towels, use old rags to clean, especially if you have a low-energy, environmentally friendly washer and dryer.

Reuse what you can and **donate** things you won't to the appropriate programs or organizations. If it's gently worn and able to be used, it can be donated! **Change your habits**, too. Conserve water by turning it off when you are not using it, and open the windows to air out the house on fair-weather days!

This November would be a great time to start switching up your habits, because November 15 marks the 12th annual America Recycles Day! What are you waiting for? ■

For more information check out:

www.americarecyclesday.org





It's all fun and games until there's nothing to do.

Top Ten Things to do When You're Bored

by Mel

Are you bored? If you are and don't know what to do, this top 10 list is for you! Here are some things you can do in your spare time to make time fly by:

- 1) **Go out!** When there's nothing else to do, there's nothing better than getting in a little extra activity. So go for a walk, go for a run, visit your favorite coffee shop, meet up with some friends or do anything your heart desires.
- 2) **Play a game.** Whether you play a board game with a friend or family member (Scrabble, Monopoly, Risk, etc), play an online game on www.addictinggames.com or take out your favorite gaming console, playing a game is a great way to keep yourself distracted for a while.
- 3) **Sing and dance** to your favorite songs. Mix it up! Enjoy your time.
- 4) **Call a friend** and see what they're up to.
- 5) **Watch a movie!** Not sure which movie to watch? Go down to your local video rental store and check out some of the new releases.
- 6) **Get creative!** Draw, paint, make a craft or do all three. Let your creativity flow!
- 7) **Write a poem, song or story.** If you don't have anywhere to store your work and you'd like to share it with others, start a blog or create a DeviantArt page!
- 8) **Read a book.** Don't have a book? Take a walk down to your local library and find one to borrow! If you're not sure what you'd like, ask the librarian for a recommendation. The librarian will be happy to help you! The possibilities are endless.
- 9) **Do something you've been wanting to do,** but just haven't got around to doing yet. Clean your room, rearrange the books on your shelf, do laundry, take out the garbage, finish your homework up



Photograph by Ricardo (Shish)

early or whatever else is on your 'to-do' list.

- 10) **Volunteer.** If you have a lot of spare time and find yourself bored, see if there's a local event going on to which you can volunteer some of your time to. There's never a bad time to help. While you're at it, check out some of our open positions here on TeenHelp! We're always looking for a helping hand.

Have fun and remember that there's always something fun to do!

More Top Tens?

Want to read more TeenHelp Top Tens?

Homemade Costumes - October 2009 (Volume 3, Issue 4) release of Avatar, page 11.

Back to School Items - September 2009 (Volume 3, Issue 3) release of Avatar, page 15.

Roller Coasters - August 2009 (Volume 3, Issue 2) release of Avatar, page 13.

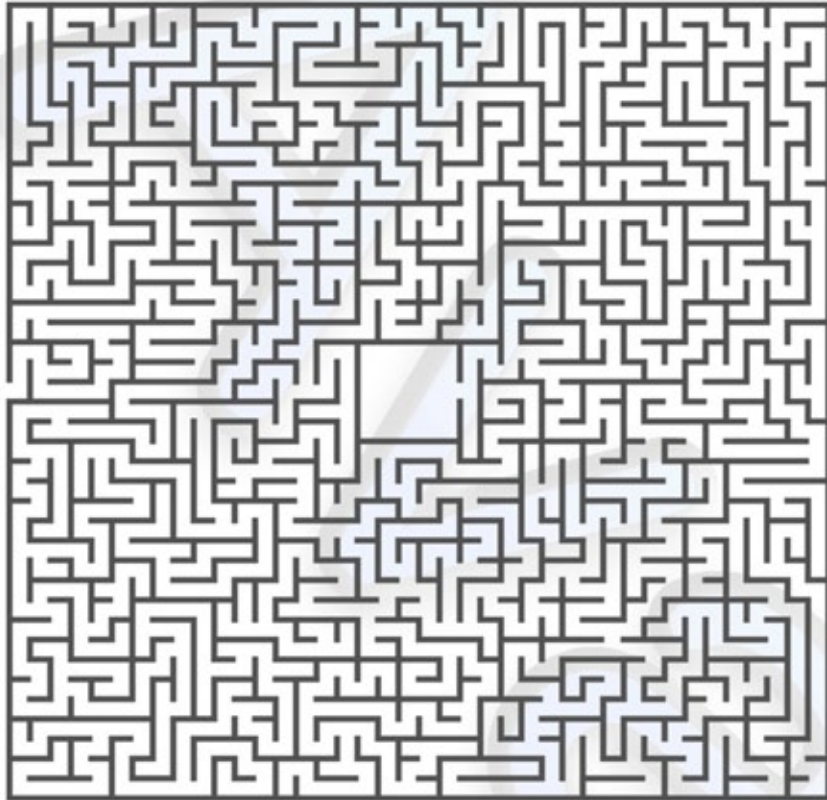
Summer Recipes - July 2009 (Volume 3, Issue 1) release of Avatar, page 15.



When life gives you lemons, play games!

Maze

by Jessie



Name that tune!

"You can't give up, when you're looking for a diamond in the rough
'Cause you never know when it shows up
Make sure you're holding on
'Cause it could be the one, the one you're waiting on"

TeenHelp Trivia

When were weekly Facilitated Chat Room Discussions introduced?
(Answer below)

What's that?



(Solution below)

Did you know?

The word "novel" originally derived from the Latin novus, meaning "new."

Word of the Month

Arcane - Information understood or known by only a few.

How do you say that?

Music - English
Muziek - Dutch
Musique - French
Musik - German
Música - Spanish
Музыка - Russian



Expressing life through your fingertips.

I Promise

By x_nicola

I hereby promise to stay by your side,
Even when everything's wrong, and you're
trying to hide.
I'll be right here, holding your hand and
leading the way.
I swear on everything I have, it's going to
be okay.

Sometimes the pain is too much, and
you'll want to give in.
But know I'm here fighting with you, your
demons cannot win.
When you see no point in living, stop and
think a while.
Of how I'm always going to be here, trying
to make you smile.

It's just one promise, but straight from my
heart.
I'm going to be there, right from the start.
So hold your head up high, face the world
with a grin.
I'm right here with you, dear, we're not
giving in.

Lost Love

By Far From Perfect

I thought everything was perfect
I thought our love was strong
I thought that you still loved me
But baby I was wrong

You broke my heart in pieces
It's like you never cared
You know I'll always love you
But baby now I'm scared

We are back together
But everything's not right
I miss when you said you loved me
It made everything alright

I want it back the way it was
Before we broke apart
Things would just be easier
If you never broke my heart

Maybe things will be the same
After a long time
But at this very moment
I'm just glad to call you mine

Untitled

By Katrina



Untitled

By Kaylyn (rescueisnotamyth)





Poisonous scorpion for the win!

by Katrina

This month's sign: Scorpio (October 23 - November 20)

It's finally time for that birthday celebration we've all been waiting for, Scorpio, and just in time for some chilly, nippy weather! This month, you're going to begin to perceive the way of the world so differently and much more positively. Is it because you're another year older? It's possible. Just remember to be intuitive and optimistic; you never know where life might lead you.

Strength: You are so determined and motivated. You're also so good at encouraging others to do their best.

Possible Weakness: At times, you may turn away from the world and become somewhat reclusive. Just remember that there are always people who care for you.

Famous Scorpions: Pablo Picasso, Marie Antoinette, Katherine Hepburn, Grace Kelly, Jamie Lee Curtis, Whoopi Goldberg

Sagittarius

(November 21 - December 21)

Because last month was not so great for you, rest assured that this month will be great! Nothing incredibly new or exciting will happen, but you will have plenty of time to regain your bearings after all that happened last month. Take this month with a spoonful of sugar and really try to focus on self-betterment and being as happy as you can be.

Capricorn

(December 22 - January 19)

This is your love month! By love month, I mean the month you may either rekindle an old flame, meet someone new, or have a really special bonding moment with the partner you're already with. If it doesn't happen by mid-month, don't worry - the longer you wait, the more special these moments will be.

Aquarius

(January 20 - February 19)

Hi Aquarius. At the beginning of the month, you may go through some issues financially, but it will all be sorted out by the last week of the month at the latest, but hopefully much before then. In the mean time, try not to stress out too much, but just don't spend lavishly and you should be just fine.

Pisces

(February 20 - March 19)

Zip up your jacket, Pisces, and don't get frost-bite! With the lack of sun and increasing intensity of cold weather, it's going to be hard for you not to feel a little down and out this month! However, just remember there's always room for you by the fireplace surrounded by those who love you. It's okay to treat yourself to hot chocolate every once in a while!

Aries

(March 20 - April 19)

This month, you really need to buckle down. No matter what point you are in your life, a senior in high school getting ready to go to college or university, a college almost-graduate, someone looking for work, or even in your younger years, there's an important decision looming in your future and you want to be sure that you make the right decision by taking full advantage of any extra time you may have this month.



Poisonous scorpion for the win!

by Katrina

Taurus

(April 20 – May 20)

This month will be a nostalgic one for you, Taurus, as you sift through your iTunes shuffle and listen to songs you haven't heard in months or years. If you haven't done this already, I highly suggest that you do! Though nostalgia can sometimes make us yearn for the past, it usually ends up with a heartwarming feeling of how far we've come since that point in our lives.

Virgo

(August 23 - September 22)

Hello dear Virgo! This month is all about balance. While the love life may not work out so well at the beginning of the month, the financial aspect of life and all of your friendships are going to blossom immensely around the middle and end of the month, so you do have things to look forward too! While you are going through tough times, just reach out to support for friends and family; they're there for you!

Gemini

(May 21 – June 20)

You know that random person who's been after you for the past couple of months? I feel like it's time to talk to them one way or another - either hang out with them and give them a chance, or tell them you're not interested. You'll be much less stressed out and overwhelmed once you do this. And if you don't think there's a person out there with a crush on you, think again!

Cancer

(June 21 - July 22)

If you've been worrying a lot about something, Cancer, others are starting to notice this and see how it affects you as a person. Try this: Everyday, instead of worrying all through the day, pick a period of 10-15 minutes in the middle of the day and NOT right before you fall asleep. Have worry time. Get all of your worries out, and promise yourself you won't think about it until "worry time" the next day.

Leo

(July 23 – August 22)

Leo, this month, you need to take time to appreciate the arts! It seems as though you've been slacking off on this for a while now, and it'd be great if you could jump back into it. I know there are some plays or recitals of some sort going on at a local high school or college around you, so get in the know, get some tickets, and go get some art knowledge.

Libra

(September 23 - October 22)

I hope your birthday month went well! This month, it's so important for you to get a proper amount every month, but it seems like you're going to have a lot of work to do this month, so you need to stay well rested and well hydrated in order to stay on top of it.



Acknowledgements

Image sources

Lung Cancer and Smoking: www.freedigitalphotos.net
Obama's Nobel Peace Prize: www.everystockphoto.com
Recycling: www.everystockphoto.com
Saving the Homeless Youth: www.freedigitalphotos.net
Star signs: www.grafamania.net

Articles

Cause of the Month: Take Back the Night: www.takebackthenight.org
Lung Cancer and Smoking: info.cancerresearchuk.org; toxsci.oxfordjournals.org
Saving the Homeless Youth: www.youthnoise.com; www.endhomelessness.org

Thanks for reading!

Thank you for taking the time to read this issue of Avatar! Any comments, questions, suggestions or criticisms can be directed towards the editorial team. You can also send us any submissions you have for Avatar, which are a really important part of keeping Avatar alive. We appreciate any submissions that are made to us. We look forward to hearing from you, and hope you enjoy the next edition of Avatar!

The Avatar Editors.

Please visit us at the Avatar page, www.teenhelp.org/avatar, or email us at avatar@teenhelp.org.