April is here, and you know what they say..."April showers bring May flowers!" That's not only true, but it's a good thing to remember. If "rainy weather" comes your way, just remember how God showers us all with His blessings! And no matter what happens to us, God can always bring something good to you.
The Amazing Mr. Gibbs

By Donna L. Lawless

“My life is over! I’m a failure! My future is bleak!” Alex moaned as he sat at the kitchen table, his chin resting in both hands.

Alex peeked at his mother. He saw she was getting no reaction, so he laid it on a little thicker. “I’m ruined! My scholastic star is dimming fast.”

“My life is over! I’m a failure! My future is bleak!” Alex moaned as he sat at the kitchen table, his chin resting in both hands.

“He’s only a rabbit.”

“Do you think he’d turn green, if I put food coloring in his water?”

“No! Capital N, capital O. NO LIZARDS.”

“I can understand your feelings, Mom, but can’t you see my problem here?”

“No, Alex, I can’t. I don’t see that you have a problem at all. What’s wrong with Mr. Gibbs? Why don’t you enter him in the contest?”

“Mr. Gibbs? Mom, he’s hardly what you’d call amazing. He’s only a rabbit.”

“OH, he’s amazing, all right. I pay his feed bill. And he’s beautiful. I think he’d make a wonderful entry.”

“Alex thought for a moment. “Could I have an ant farm?”

“Capital N, capital O. I don’t suppose there’s any use asking Dad.”

“Here’s some clean straw for you, fella. I’ve got to think quick. The contest is in four weeks.”

“Hi, Alex.” The voice behind him made him jump. “Willy! You scared me, sneakin’ up like that!”

“Do you think he’d turn green, if I put food coloring in his water?”

“I know, capital O. I don’t suppose there’s any use asking Dad.”

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Alex stroked Mr. Gibbs’ warm, wiggly nose. “It’s not that I don’t like you, fella. It’s just that I need a spectacular entry, something totally different. There’s nothing wrong with you...you’re great. You’re just not amazing. Know what I mean?”

Alex filled the water jar and made sure there were enough food pellets.

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Alex filled the water jar and made sure there were enough food pellets.
“Some Amazing Pet Contest,” Alex groaned. “Everyone entered rabbits.”

“Hey, look! They like each other, Alex.”

“Great. Let’s go. We don’t have much time before supper.”

The two boys searched until Alex heard his mother’s call. “It’s no use, Willy. Better get Thunder Man. I’ve got to eat. We can look again tomorrow.”

And so it went for the next four weeks. The boys found nothing. It was a dejected Alex who trudged to school on contest day, lugging the rabbit cage with Mr. Gibbs inside.

“Willy, where did you put Thunder Man? I’ll put Mr. Gibbs next to him. At least he’ll be close to the winner.”

“Aww, Alex, don’t be like that. You make me feel bad. How do you know my rabbit will win? We haven’t seen the other entries yet. Put Mr. Gibbs by the water fountain next to Thunder Man. That way we can see them whenever we get a drink.”

“Look, Willy. There’s Sam. He’s got a rabbit, too.”

“Wow! There are two more. Andrea and Eric each have one.”

“How do you know my rabbit will win? We haven’t seen the other entries yet. Put Mr. Gibbs by the water fountain next to Thunder Man. That way we can see them whenever we get a drink.”

“Look, Willy. There’s Sam. He’s got a rabbit, too.”

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“Thanks, Alex, but remember, you never know who will be the winner until the contest is officially over.”

The morning passed slowly. After lunch the class got its first good look at all the entries.

“They’re all rabbits, Willy,” Alex told his friend. “Yours is the only white one.”

“Mine’s going to win,” Tony bragged. “He’s a rare imported breed. A Patagonian, to be exact.”

“Don’t count on it. Willy’s rabbit is an Angora,” Alex replied.

“You don’t know much about rabbits, then,” Tony sneered.

“You’ll see.”

“Some Amazing Pet Contest,” Alex groaned. “Looks like everyone entered rabbits. Thunder Man will win for sure, though. I’m happy for you, Willy.”

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“You’ll see.”

“Don’t worry, Willy,” Alex

Cont. pg. 18
The girl looked out at the muddy field.
It was the soccer field, the battlefield of war.
She looked down at her cleats, black Nikes with the orange stripe.
She placed one foot on the new white boundary line, the paint still wet and clean.
She walked slowly across the green and dewy grass, mentally preparing herself for the fight.
She stretched and pulled, tightening her lacings.
It was almost time, she knew, almost time.
The seconds ticked by as she stood uneasily at her station, her position of center forward.
And then, as though a silent alarm clock had gone off, girls poured out, laughing and shouting.
The calm peacefulness of it all had broken, but the magic still lingered in her mind.
The army lined up, ready to begin the struggle, and the ball was hers.
And as she dribbled through the flying legs of the soldiers,
She remembered how the muddy, grassy field of war had been, before they had begun to fight.
The soccer field, the battlefield.

--by Susannah Barton Tobin

Fred: My little brother fell out of a 50-foot tree this morning.
Ned: Wow! Was he badly hurt?
Fred: Nope. He had only climbed up the first two feet.

Teacher: Bobby, you missed school yesterday.
Bobby: Nope, not a bit!
Read the story and find the answer: Genesis 37:28; 41:39-40; 42-44.

Bible Snapshots
Illustrated by Victoria Jensen
Based on God Cares by Doris Burdick

Joseph’s brothers had sold him into slavery in Egypt, but now they came to Egypt for food, since they were starving in a famine. They had no idea that Joseph was now Egypt’s governor. Joseph decided to test them.

Finally Jacob allowed Benjamin to go with his brothers back to Egypt, because all the family was starving. Joseph again wanted to test the brothers to see if they were still cruel men. He gave Benjamin more food than the others to watch their reaction.

So far so good, but Joseph decided on one more test. He hid his special cup in Benjamin’s sack of grain and then had his servant go after the brothers and accuse them of stealing. What would happen when Benjamin was found to have the cup in his sack?

Puzzle Power

1. Underline the correct answer in each sentence to complete it correctly:

a. Joseph kept (Reuben, Simeon, Benjamin) in prison when the other brothers returned home.

b. Joseph wanted to see if (the Egyptians, his brothers, his servants) were still cruel and selfish men.

c. When Joseph’s brothers returned, Joseph gave (Simeon, Benjamin, his servant) more food than any of the others.

d. Joseph had his (signet ring, special cup, royal brace-let) put in Benjamin’s sack of grain.

1. Find the words from the story in the puzzle below by looking up, down, backwards, forwards and diagonally. There will be 6 letters that you don’t use. Circle them and you will find the name of the person who God elevated to a high position because of his faith and his refusal to sin.

BACK
BENJAMIN
BROTHERS
CRUEL
CUP
EGYPT
FAMINE
FOOD
GOVERNOR
GRAIN
JACOB
KIND
MEN

NEXT
PRISON
SACK
SEE
SERVANT
SIMeon
SON
STARVING
STEALING
TEST
TIME
WATCH

TX EN I MA J NEB
I S A C K NI A R GR
M T T P Y G E C P OO
E E W AT C H R R V T
E A N J R J O U I E H
N L T N A V R S R E
I I E P U C I L O N R
M N S I M E O N N O S
A G T S K C A B G R E
F O O D N I K E P H E

(Solution on pg. 19.)
The Rescue Squad

By M. Hart, Illustrated by Debora Weber

1. My friend Ruben and I set out to be heroes, but somewhere along the way, we started wondering what we had gotten ourselves into. It all began when our pal Bernie broke his leg.

No, I guess it really started before that, when a bunch of us guys formed a club. We never did think of a name for it, or any real reason for having it. We’d sit around in somebody’s living room and somebody would call roll. And one guy was treasurer (because he happened to have a box to keep our $1.50 dues in) and counted the money at every meeting.

We thought a lot about what we could do to make our club famous. We had big plans. We were going to give a show and make money, so we could buy special badges and T-shirts. And then we’d act mysterious, so other kids would wonder what we did at our meetings. There were six of us: Bernie and Ruben and me and three other guys.

Bernie always wanted it to be a sports club. Every time we met at his house, he’d always haul out his prize possessions and pass them around for us to see: a couple of beat-up old baseballs autographed by some players nobody ever heard of. See, his dad had been a baseball player in a minor league someplace, and he had given the balls to Bernie when he was little. But Bernie’s dad wasn’t around anymore.

2. One of the balls had been battered so hard that the stitches had busted open on one side. But, boy, to Bernie those balls were pure gold. We got a little tired sometimes of having to say, “Yeah, Bernie, they’re really great.”

Anyhow, we just went on sitting around and talking about what kind of club we should be—till Bernie had this accident.

It wasn’t big and dramatic or anything. One day he just stumbled down his porch steps, and he wasn’t even sure at first that anything was wrong. But the next thing we heard, he was laid up with a cast on his leg. Clear up over his knee.

Now, the first thing we found out is that you feel kind of funny going and seeing somebody in a cast. When somebody is OK, he’s just a person, and you treat him like anybody else. But when you see him sitting up in bed with a cast, somehow he’s a different kid. Kind of pathetic-looking, you know.

All of us club members went over to Bernie’s house together, and we were horsing around, trying to act natural, writing our names on the cast and trying out his crutches. And wouldn’t you know it, he had these goofy baseballs in bed with him and kept looking at them as if he’d never seen them before.

It wasn’t till we left his house that it suddenly hit us that Bernie’s mom was his whole family. She had to commute into the city to work and was gone a lot of the time. So Bernie was on his own.
3. Bernie was used to taking care of himself, but this was different. When we were fooling with his crutches, we realized that they made even ordinary things hard to do. Just getting up a couple of stairs or opening a door was tough, much less getting into a school bus. And he sure wouldn’t be able to help his mom around the house.

After we left his house we were pretty quiet. Finally Ruben said, “We gotta do something to help. Here’s something our club can do that’s really important.”

Well, at that moment, we were full of club spirit and brotherhood, and we all shook hands and promised that we’d help Bernie and his mom till Bernie got better. I don’t know about the other guys, but I felt all proud and noble.

So, ta-dal We became the Rescue Squad. We worked out a plan to take turns helping with errands and chores at Bernie’s. We even went over there after school to help him keep up with school work.

After Bernie could go back to school, it began to get harder. Two of us had to help him—one to boost him on and off the school bus, and one to carry the books.

Even so, it was an ego trip at first. Our folks and Bernie’s mom, and even the teachers, thought we were the greatest things since sugar-free gum. The principal even patted me on the head in the hall one day. Give me a break!

4. But about the beginning of the third week, it began to get pretty boring. We didn’t have time to do anything else. Then one by one, the other three guys came up with excuses, and Ruben and I had to do everything by ourselves.

And the trouble was, about that time, everybody was taking us for granted. Even Bernie. He had started out thanking us for every little thing.”Oh, thanks for picking up that pencil I dropped.” (“No trouble, Bernie.”) “Thanks for sweeping up those 100,000 corn flakes I spilled.” (“Sure, Bernie, your wish is our command.”)

Then at the end of the fourth week, when we were boosting Bernie onto the bus and dropped his books all over the street, he turned around and yelled at us: “Do you MIND?”

We pretty near gave the whole thing up right then and there. But when we got him home that afternoon and saw his mom come in tired from work, we ended up mowing the lawn and taking out the trash, too. Can you believe it?

In the end we made it all the way through to the sixth week when the cast came off. On that day we went over to his house and his mom thanked us. And that was it.

I don’t know what we expected, exactly. Speeches and marching bands? Something, just so the whole thing didn’t trail off into nothing.
The next morning Ruben and I sat down together on his front steps to figure it out.

“Well,” I said, “we didn’t do it to become world famous.”

“Why did we do it?” asked Ruben. “That was more work than I’ve ever done before in my whole life.”

We thought it over awhile.

“I guess,” I said, “we did it just because it was the right thing to do. Sometimes it was lousy doing it—but we sure feel better than if we hadn’t done it, don’t we?”

We thought that over.

“Right,” said Ruben.

Just then a car pulled up in front, and Bernie’s mom got out and came over and handed us a paper sack. “Bernie says thanks,” she said kind of quietly. And then she got in the car and drove off.

Ruben opened the crumpled sack and reached down in the bottom and brought out—those two dumb old baseballs. We sat and stared at them for awhile. We thought how much they meant to old Bernie, and how he was trying to tell us thanks by giving us his biggest treasures.

Well, we both knew we’d have to give them back eventually, but first we’d have to keep them long enough, so he’d know we understood.

We looked at each other and grinned. We felt appreciated.

“Which one do you want?” Ruben asked.

“I’ll take the one with the stitches busted open,” I said.

Did You Know...

Smoking can cause wrinkles, because the skin receives less blood and is more sensitive to sunlight when you smoke?

People who smoke may have less flesh-pink color to their skin and more of a yellow-gray color?

People who smoke have the highest death rate from cancer and circulatory (heart, blood vessel) disease?

There are many more people who have ulcers among smokers than nonsmokers?

Smoke from cigarettes can slow a driver’s reaction time?

You get twice as much tar from the last few puffs of a cigarette than you do from the first puffs?

The cigarette that you smoke can actually be harmful to others around you, even if they aren’t smoking?

So...

If you want to increase your chances of looking like a wrinkled, yellow prune, having heart disease, ulcers and being in an automobile accident, then smoking is for you!

And be sure to smoke cigarettes right down to the end while you’re at it and smoke around other people so they can look like wrinkled, yellow prunes too!

“Monkey See, Monkey Do!”

Have you ever heard this saying? Well, sometimes people are like monkeys. If they see someone smoking or drinking or taking drugs, they’ll do it, too.

Why not be a smart monkey and think for yourself?
Quick Fruit Turnovers
By Laurie J. Edwards

Are you hungry for a delicious, easy-to-make snack? Well, here’s one that’s sure to please your taste buds!

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 bananas
- 1/4 cup raisins
- 1/4 cup coconut (optional)
- 1/4 cup chunky peanut butter
- 1/2 cup canned, crushed pineapple, drained
- 1 tube of refrigerated biscuit dough.

DIRECTIONS:

1. Mash banana and blend in peanut butter.
2. Stir in raisins, pineapple and coconut.
3. Open the tube of biscuits and flatten each biscuit by rolling it with a rolling pin until thin.
4. Place a spoonful of banana mixture in the center and fold biscuit in half.
5. Press edges together with a fork to seal.
6. Bake on a greased cookie sheet for 10-12 minutes at 400 degrees or until tops are brown.

Cousin Linda
By Sharon K. Motzko, Illustrated by Debora Weber

My cousin Linda is coming to visit. Mother says to be pleased. It will give me someone to play with Who’s exactly the same age as me.

But Cousin Linda isn’t much fun. She never plays what I want to play. When I object, she makes such a fuss, Then whines till she gets her own way.

Linda always wears fancy dresses With matching bows in her hair. Her parents just bought her a new bike, But don’t tell me...I don’t care!

Cousin Linda says all the boys like her, Though I don’t see how that they could. She swears, if she’s lying, lightening will strike her. And I think perhaps that it should.

Cousin Linda thinks she knows everything. She talks till it drives me insane. There’s no doubt about it, no way around it, Cousin Linda is really a pain!
whispered. “Thunder Man’s the winner. I just know it.”

The judging was to take place after math class. Just before the bell rang, Willy went for a drink and one last look at their rabbits.

“Pssst, Alex,” he whispered as he slid into his seat. “Someone threw a bunch of pink erasers into Mr. Gibbs’ cage. I’ll bet it was Tony.”

Willy frowned. “What would he do that for?”

“Alex and Willy!” the teacher warned, “I don’t recall giving either of you permission to speak. What’s so important that it can’t wait?”

The boys looked at each other, then Willy answered reluctantly, “When I got a drink I saw that someone had dumped a whole bunch of pink erasers into Mr. Gibbs’ cage. If he eats them, he’ll get sick.”

The teacher marched over to the cage. She peered inside and investigated everything quite thoroughly. When she saw that someone had dumped a whole bunch of pink erasers into Mr. Gibbs’ cage. If he eats them, he’ll get sick.

The teacher turned to the class she was smiling. “Why, Willy, those aren’t erasers. They’re brand new baby rabbits!”

The entire class was startled.

“Come and see for your-