

# Fact and Opinion

by Stephan MacLEOD

**FACT:** Gorillas are the largest living primates — the family of animals that includes monkeys, apes and humans.

**OPINION:** In the primate family, humans might wear the pants, but gorillas look cuter in them.

**FACT:** A mature male gorilla can be over six feet tall and weigh 300 to 500 pounds. He can spread his arms eight feet across and is as strong as four to eight strong men.

**OPINION:** Strong men might look funny, but all that work and dedication is worth it in the end when you can flex your neck muscles.

**FACT:** Like humans, gorillas have two legs and two arms, 10 fingers and 10 toes, small ears on the side of the head, forward-looking eyes and

32 teeth. Unlike us, their arms are longer and more muscular than their legs, and their big toes look like thumbs. Their bodies are covered by thick dark hair, except on the face, chest, underarms, palms of the hands and soles of the feet. **OPINION:** I wish my big toes looked like thumbs. Then I'd never have to open cans of pop with my hands ever again.

**FACT:** An adult male gorilla becomes a "silverback" at about age 15 when he is full grown and the hair on his back turns silvery-gray.

**OPINION:** When I turned 15, the kids at school called me "silverback" because I had a metal rod installed where my spine used to be.

**FACT:** Gorillas normally walk by putting their feet flat and walking on

the knuckles of their hands.

**OPINION:** This saves them money on shoes.

**FACT:** They can stand upright, but they don't do it very often. When they do, it is often to "chestslap." Gorillas do not beat their chests with their fists but with open cupped hands, making the familiar loud sound which can indicate aggression or excitement.

**OPINION:** It may also indicate a really itchy nipple.

**FACT:** Gorillas can live more than 50 years.

**OPINION:** They'd live even longer, if they weren't so delicious.

**FACT:** Newborn gorillas are very small, weighing only about four and

a half pounds. They are helpless at birth and depend on their mothers for at least three years, and they usually stay in their family group as they grow up.

**OPINION:** But as soon as they're old enough to get a job, they're on their own.

**FACT:** Females mature at 10 to 12 years and males at 11 to 13 years.

**OPINION:** An early sign of maturity in male gorillas is when they start spanking the monkey.

**FACT:** Young gorillas must learn from their group how to find food, make nests, take care of babies and get along with other gorillas.

**OPINION:** I wish I was taught how to get along with other gorillas. I always end up pissing them off.

