

ANNUAL

SELF-IMPROVEMENT

GUIDE

HOW TO LIVE FOREVER (OR AT LEAST COME CLOSE)

BY STEWART WEINER

Lest man now take also of the Tree of Life and live forever, the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden.

—Gen. 3: 22–23

The Social Security System is supposed to go bust any year now. Fourteen per cent of America's elderly live below the poverty line. The latest game for juvenile alcoholics is granny bashing, as *Time* duly reported recently. If you're over 65 and admit it on a job application, the personnel department will most likely tell you they'll "get in touch." And our senior citizens have become like fish in a barrel for street thugs. Sure, there may be plenty of good news about getting old, but the nightmares listed above are the overriding concerns for the 5,000 people who turn 65 every day in America.

So into this dandy mess strut Big Time Scientists with their test tubes and laboratory mice and experimental data—and right behind them the Big Time Entrepreneurs with their gimmicks and pills and promises, and they all seem to be saying that by the year 2020, we can expect our lives to increase by as much as 40 years. Forty more years of old age; terrific.

"There is really only one serious philosophical question," Albert Camus wrote in *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*, and that is "to decide whether life is or is not worth living." Unfortunately, according to USC associate professor of philosophy Dallas Willard, most modern philosophers have let us down on this fundamental question. "They're just not dealing with the issue; surely not the way Plato did," says Wil-

In 40 more years, we may all be living 40 more years—and the ravages of aging will be not only postponed but less severe when they occur. So why not start making things better for ourselves now?

lard. "In his work *Phaedo*, written about Socrates' last days, Plato speaks to the question, Why live? and comes up with a number of reasons. The first is theological: God put us here, and it would be wrong and cowardly to desert our station. The second reason is ethical: One reason to live is because of our responsibilities to others.

"And the third is a little more complicated: We know that we will always have the chance to die; death is inevitable. Life, on the other hand, is our only chance at living."

WHY DO WE DIE?

The average human-life expectancy has increased dramatically in the last several thousand years. Better nutrition, sanitation, education, startling technological advances and more leisure time have increased our life expectancy from 22 in the first century A.D. to a ripe old 74 in 1980. But that's the median—all such figures mean is that half the population still dies before that age. And life ex-

pectancy is not to be confused with life span, which has remained constant since the beginning of man. You've all met Dagrut Tapagua in the Dannon yogurt commercials. And Mark Twain's oldest man in the world, a Buffalo man named John Wagner who was engaged to a 102-year-old woman for 80 years until their parents finally gave their consent. There were old coots like these back in ancient Rome, too. All of them make great copy, but we can't help knowing that no matter how long we live, we are only postponing the inevitable.

"The biological limit seems to be fixed," says Dr. Leonard Hayflick, senior research cell biologist at the Childrens Hospital Medical Center in Oakland. (For his work, Hayflick was recently awarded a \$20,000 Brookdale Award from the Gerontological Society of America.) If you want to live forever, his news is nothing to cheer about.

Briefly, the Hayflick limit arises from the idea that the cell can reproduce itself only so many times until, like the 500th dubbing of an original master recording, it begins to fade. (Massive doses of vitamin E in experiments with laboratory animals do seem to increase a cell's life span, and many people—especially those who sell vitamin E—have jumped onto this finding with passion. However, it's a giant leap from a mouse to a man, and nothing conclusive has revealed itself yet.)

"Aging," continues Hayflick, "may turn out to be just another natural process, similar to puberty. We are immortal only through the passage of our germ plasm to



Lindberg:
Eat like your ancestors.

our children."

And the way we head for the Big Trip North hasn't changed much since the beginning of man, either. Essayist and surgeon Richard Selzer has written in *Mortal Lessons* that "parasites that infest us crept into our ancestors. In the fragments of earliest man we have evidence of tumors, dental caries [cavities] and joint diseases. One suspects that the reason Neanderthal man did not stand wholly erect was because he was severely afflicted with arthritis, doubtless due to his dwelling in damp caves—a disease for which, incidentally, there is no more effective remedy today than was available to him then."

No question about it; the body can close the show in a second. So can the brain—even the brains of people who jog faithfully every day, eat a consistently nutritious and conscientious diet and have never smoked a cigarette. The ironies are endless. William Harvey, for instance, the medical man who centuries ago first delineated our circulatory system, died of high blood pressure. Robert G. Dicus, the man who established a chain of local physical-therapy clinics, died recently of Lou Gehrig's disease. Adelle Davis, who nagged us all into eating right, died of cancer. And it's even rumored that George Ohsawa, the man who invented the macrobiotic diet, died of malnutrition.

So there we humans sit—somewhere between the galapago turtle that lives on for centuries and the fruit fly that barely has time to take a shower. We all have to go sometime. Or do we?

CAN WE ARREST AGING?

The hottest field in science currently is

"...I don't agree with vegetarians. I think we should give vegetables to the animals—then eat the animals..."

gerontology, the study of aging. Naturally, as our population has inched ever upward chronologically (we're now 30 on the average), we've become vitally interested in the subject. Especially in L.A., where we seem to feel an obligation not to go gentle—and certainly not flabby—into that good night. There's no dearth of people here who intimate immortality—and their intimations range from the realistic to the wholly outrageous.

GERONTOLOGY

Our new President, a senior citizen, is fond of saying that you can't solve a problem by throwing money at it. That may be true in some cases, but not at the Ethel Andrus Percy Gerontology Center at USC. (Andrus was the founder of the American Association of Retired Persons, a group with 12 million members.)

Fine Arts Building Number Two on USC's campus may be an army barracks, but the Andrus Center is an expensive, solid, multiarched affair with evidence of healthy endowments neatly accredited on lobby plaques. The center's benefactors are not just wealthy individuals; major pharmaceutical firms—such as Upjohn; Wyeth; Smith, Kline and French; and even Noxzema—have thrown money at the problem of aging. Last year's budget for the center totaled nearly \$1.5 million.

What's it all buying? Dr. Warner

Schaie, the director of the center's research institute, selected a group of 120 people over the past 25 years. He tests them periodically for their verbal skills, their use of passive and active vocabulary, arithmetic skills and inductive-reasoning ability.

"There are important differences," he finds, "between people now in their seventies and those in their thirties. People 70 or over had all the childhood diseases; people in their thirties haven't. People in their seventies have an average ninth-grade education; most people in their thirties have finished high school." Schaie reports there is very little change in test results until age 60. "If you're mentally deteriorating before 60," he says, "you can bet your buttons there's something wrong physically." From age 65 to 70 he notices some slow changes, and beyond 75 all of the people he's studied have shown *some* decline, with four out of five suffering from some kind of chronic disease.

"Some data have suggested that you can postpone aging if you're in tune with your attitude and with what's going on around you," notes Schaie. "For example, people who are isolated tend to show an earlier decline. A small group of widows with no careers, whose activities and incomes have shrunk considerably, shows the greatest decline in our studies. On the other hand, well-educated people in their seventies who are very busy and active still show modest gains in their scores."

When Schaie talks about the "reinforcements" that people who age successfully tend to have in common, he's referring not only to a comfortable economic status but to good family support and an interest in things outside of them-



USC's Schaie (left) and Willard: Where's modern philosophy when we really need it?

selves. "People so advantaged," Schaie says, "will have a high-quality old age. The ravages of aging will be postponed and less severe when they do occur. They're just not ready to cash in the chips." As Pablo Picasso once said, "I decided a long time ago to be 30."

Schaie's isn't the only gerontological game at USC, either. Other projects under way have found, for instance, that depression and forgetfulness are linked, and that part-time work for the elderly leads to a higher-quality old age. A study currently being done by Dr. Iseli Krauss has determined that an older person who is familiar with his or her neighborhood will be more likely to enjoy a vacation—or even a move to a new neighborhood. Though USC is a national front-runner in the field of gerontology, it has plenty of company on the subject.

At a recent Gerontological Society of America conference in San Diego, research presentations ranged from tooth survival of the aging male to irreversible-memory-dysfunction rehabilitation to gossip and old age. The latter, conducted by University of Georgia academicians on 156 residents of the Classic Gardens nursing home, indicated that gossip at a nursing home (to which only 4 per cent of our elderly are assigned, by the way) tended to help the mental adjustment of newcomers by the sharing of what the report called "sacred" knowledge.

Though none of the conference's scientists, clinicians or physicians were willing to offer real conclusions on the achievement of immortality, the general consensus was that the secrets of how to stop—or at least make more comfortable—the aging process would soon be revealed un-

**"...Shorter people live longer;
single people die faster; and
owning a pet helps retard
aging..."**

der the great weight of their inquiries. One breakthrough concept, for example, involves the genes.

MASTER GENE

The idea of gene transplants may soon leave the realm of science fiction and enter a more practical mode of contemplation. Many scientists think there will be earth-shaking news on this front very soon—possibly within the decade—which sounds like hype until you listen to UCLA's Dr. Roy Walford.

Walford, an immunologist, has conducted some highly respected experiments that reveal a rather startling fact: The few genes that govern our rate of aging are all located in one place. This is startling for two reasons. First, there is the excitement generated by the idea that there actually are genes that do nothing but affect aging. They resist leukemia viruses, they develop "suppressor cells" for immunoresponse, and they resist various autoimmune diseases. The other headline stuff is that, because of these genes' central locus, further experimentation is made very convenient.

Walford calls these immune-to-aging genes the Major Histocompatibility Complex (MHC), and already researchers from other disciplines are working with it. Dr. Joan Smith-Sonneborn, for example, according to *Omni* magazine, has elec-

trified the scientific world with her experiments. First she damaged the DNA part of a paramecium's cell with ultraviolet rays and then repaired it with photoreactivation. This "trickery" performed on the paramecium cell made it live longer.

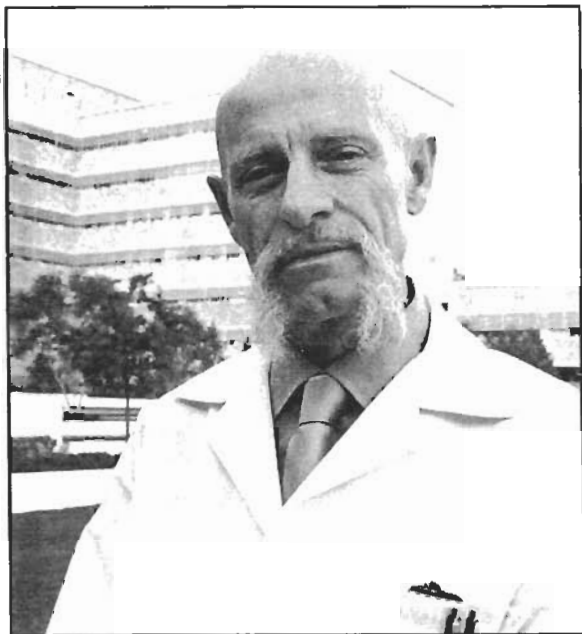
Could we apply this kind of process to the MHC? Says Walford: "If this system [the MHC] can be augmented to protect the body from aging, then we're on to something."

DIET

Surely no one needs reminding that what you eat, drink or otherwise put into your body helps determine how long that body will stick around, though the disputes over *what* should be consumed are as numerous as the options. And then there's the question of how much. Says Walford, "Increasing the life expectancy *is* possible right now—at least in animals. Laboratory studies here have shown that severe caloric cutbacks combined with nutritive supplements will cause mice to live considerably longer lives." However, he cautions, "the conclusive study on humans remains to be done."

Dr. Nathan Pritikin, founder and director of the Longevity Center in Santa Monica, has had widely reported success in increasing life expectancy through a low-fat diet for his patients—all of whom eat six meals a day. Is *that* the future? "Starting in 1982," Pritikin told *The Book of Predictions*, "you'll see a revolution in dietary customs in the U.S. The changes will be toward a dietary intake limiting animal protein to a maximum of one and a half pounds, with no more than 700 milligrams of cholesterol a week; fat to under 10 per cent of total calories; and protein of any

BERTAIN HILL



Immunologist Walford:
Mastering the master gene.

kind to less than 15 per cent of total calories."

Also in Santa Monica is Gladys Lindberg, who owns a chain of 10 health-food stores—Lindberg Nutrition. She claims she's 75, but she looks 50; she can grab the skin of her forearm with her long, pink nails and be unable to find any wrinkles. Surprisingly, she does *not* credit her condition to health food. Quite the contrary.

"My advice is to eat like your ancestors," she says. "My folks in South Dakota used to eat five meals a day, starting with pork chops and fried potatoes for breakfast, and they lived well into their nineties. Their food wasn't tampered with as ours is now." What does she think of someone like, say, Dr. Robert Butler, the director of the National Institute on Aging, who is a devout vegetarian and won't go near cholesterol?

"I'm not a doctor," she says emphatically, "but I can still disagree with a doctor's advice. I don't agree with vegetarians. I think you should give the vegetables to the animals—and eat the animals. And I really disagree with the cholesterol scare. Some of the research done on it, in which they fed mature rabbits lots of egg yolks which clogged the poor animals' arteries, was ridiculous. Rabbits are vegetable eaters—no wonder their systems couldn't handle the egg yolks."

EXERCISE

Tom Brokaw may sit there every morning feeling so proud of himself for running five miles—and James Fixx may have made a fortune huffing and puffing for every product he can get his agent on—but jogging has lately come under severe criticism. Says Dr. Jonathan Miller, the physician-

singer-comedian-director and now star of the PBS series *The Body in Question*, "I've seen the joggers in Central Park. The place looks like an outdoor mental hospital." And local chiropractor Garyx Zimmerman says, "Man was meant to either walk or run in fright. Man was not meant to jump up and down on hard concrete. It's bad for your spine."

Though all of the evidence isn't in yet, the experts have currently been opting for swimming as the perfect antiaging exercise.

VITAMINS AND HERBS

Back to science. Back to Dr. Linus ("Mr. Vitamin C") Pauling, the man who won the Nobel Prize in 1954 for chemistry. (Vitamin C, according to experts, is an antioxidant that retards aging by neutralizing the "free radicals"—those pesky devils that cause diseases and, theoretically, are blamed for causing old age at the cellular level.) Pauling's advocacy of C first legitimized the idea of supplementing your body's chemical formula with vitamins for a longer, better life. Now, 33 million Americans swallow vitamins every day.

Chiropractor Zimmerman, for instance, who runs the Health Affair in West Hollywood with partner Don Dickensen, who has a Ph.D. in nutrition, charges clients \$625 for a vitamin-testing and prescription program. (Not included, of course, is the cost of the vitamins.) They work by the theory, which they state sincerely, emphatically and convincingly, that most of these 33-million vitamin swallowers haven't the slightest idea what is needed by their own individual body; each one is as different as a thumb print.

"We do extensive testing of our patients

IT'S ALL A MATTER OF YIN AND YANG

BY MAURICE ZOLOTOW

Most of the attention paid to Chinese medicine lately has focused on the insertion of needles into one's body. But there is more to acupuncture than simply the relief of pain—it also can do more in the areas of rejuvenation and longevity—especially when coupled with the renowned Chinese use of herbs and elixirs. And, now, an understanding of yin and yang.

I'm sure you have all seen that symbol of yin and yang, a circle in which two fetuslike shapes are curled together, one white and one black. The white is yang and the black is yin. Yang is masculine. Yin is feminine. Yang is sky and air. Yin is earth, from which comes food. Sun is yang and moon is yin. According to ancient Chinese principles, all things under heaven and on earth partake of these energy forces which eternally flow in even or uneven rhythms—the systole and diastole of the heartbeat, the inhale and exhale of the lungs, night and day, summer and winter, spring and fall, action and reaction, all foods are either strongly yin or strongly yang, grains and vegetables and fish and fowl, all creatures great and small and the body we bring to our doctor is also divided into almost infinitesimal aspects of this curious interplay.

Chinese physician Zion Yu—whose Rejuvenation Center will open early this year on Robertson Boulevard—explains it this way: "We have yin and yang with every subject. For man the right side is yang, the left side is yin; for woman, the right side yin and left side yang. The front of man is yang and front of woman is yin."

Indeed, every part of the body has its yin and yang aspects. "If you give a patient treatment and you don't balance the yin and yang, then you might deplete him," Yu says, almost helplessly as he tries to explain these mystical concepts to one like myself oriented toward materialism and laboratory science.

"When people are off balance," he says, "they have used up their t'chi [the Chinese word for energy, or life force], and when people get to old age, the t'chi that's generating is not working properly so it does not produce enough yang to balance off the yin—thus, the physical body gets deteriorated, and the nervous system slackens down, which affects also your mental attitude. You feel negative and sad, you are not looking upward. The purpose of right side—left side balancing is to make you feel centered in yourself."

When Yu's \$600,000 rejuvenation clinic

opens early this year with a staff of 30, it will offer all the facets of healthy longevity the traditional Chinese way: San Francisco's Stephen Chen, Ph.D., whom Yu considers the best diagnostician and herbalist to be found, will be in residence two days a week to make diagnoses by taking the pulse. (Chinese doctors do not use x rays or blood examinations.) There are 14 pulses in Chinese medicine, seven in each wrist, located above, below or at the wrist bone. Taking the pulse allegedly can determine which meridians are blocked and which organs are in trouble. Chen will also prescribe herbal medicines when required. The prescriptions will then be filled by one of the many herbal apothecaries in our Chinatown.

There will be baths of varying temperatures and with various herbs for different conditions to be followed by masseuses giving "meridian therapy" massages. Then comes the acupuncture treatment, as well as daily exercise classes under the guidance of Mary Chu, or Lady Chu, a master of T'ai Chi Ch'uan, who now gives two-hour classes at UCLA Extension thrice weekly. If you don't already know, T'ai Chi is a slow and rhythmic style of body movement requiring great mental concentration, and it is quite unlike calisthenics or working with weights or Nautilus machines. It is the antithesis of running and jogging. Asians believe that it is the best way of conditioning oneself and maintaining the yin-yang balance and thus longer life.

How does this method prolong life?

"By strengthening the nerves. Take, for example, young people—no matter how much tension they are under, their nerves are so strong that all they need is a good night's sleep. When you reach a certain age, say, after 45, you still have the same nerves as a teenager, and you can make them function again if you keep in balance."

Why does he condemn iced beverages as negative?

"It is a shock to the nervous system. Body temperature is 98 degrees—the body works hard to keep that. You drink iced drinks at 45 degrees, you slow your nerve energy and create arthritis, stiff joints. Arthritis is very common in this country because people drink too much that's ice cold."

What is his recommended diet for healthy longevity?

"We recommend that people eat chicken and fish for protein—lots of vegetables, no beef, maybe once in a while a little veal. Yes,

there is a yin-yang list of foods, but it is very complicated to explain in detail." The late Yukazu Sakurazawa (a.k.a. George Ohsawa) was a Japanese disciple of oriental medicine who emphasized diet and coined the word *macrobiotic* to describe what he regarded as the ideal well-balanced yin-yang cuisine. There is an Ohsawa Foundation based in Oroville, California. Ohsawa wrote many books. You can explore some of his esoteric food theories in his *Zen Macrobiotics*, which I recently picked up at the Bodhi Tree Bookstore on Melrose.

Three vegetables are on his taboo list: potatoes, eggplant and tomatoes, which are highly yin foods. Ohsawa has a list of foods that are high and low in yin or yang elements. He devised a diet high in cereals, especially brown rice. On his diet, you went the first 10 days entirely on meals of brown rice and very little water. Ohsawa thought water and all liquids were baleful. He also had a very low opinion of fruits, soups, fish, fowl, red herring and red meat.

The most Ohsawa was willing to concede was his number-one diet. His purest was the number-seven. The number-one was 40 per cent cereals, 30 per cent vegetables, 10 per cent soup and 20 per cent fish or fowl.

What about vitamins?

"Vitamins are very good, especially for older persons. But do not take vitamins on an empty stomach. Some people think if vitamins are taken on an empty stomach, they go directly to the organs. No—the stomach digests the vitamins, and so you digest nothing but chemicals, which is harsh for the stomach and hurts delicate tissue."

Finally, what is his opinion of some of the popular types of exercising—running, jogging, weightlifting?

"Any exercise is better than no exercise. We believe in internal stretch exercises like T'ai Chi, combined with rhythm breathing. When you lift weights or work against a machine you put all your pressure outside. With internal exercise you strengthen inside muscles, tendons, as well as experience relaxation.

"In addition, people running and jogging need an understanding of what they do. They put all the strain on their heels and toes—and running a long distance is bad for a woman's uterus and bladder and faces get more wrinkled. All the blood goes down to the feet. I recommend people who do long jogging or running learn how to do headstands and reverse the flow back to their heads." ■

to determine their particular physical conglomeration. Once we know what the requirements are, through physical observation and laboratory analysis, we can prescribe a lifetime diet with vitamin supplements," says Zimmerman. To arrest aging, these two men recommend good old reliable vitamin C, as well as other antioxidants: vitamins A and E, selenium and zinc paba. Selenium, according to Dickens, rebuilds cell walls. Whether it's all hype or help remains in question.

Then there are Chinese herbs. Eleanor Chientan, who took over the Chientan herb company after her husband died, has a small retail store on Olympic Boulevard near Alvarado Street. On the walls of the store are pictures of Eleanor's late husband, Gold Chientan, with Ronald Reagan and Sam Hayakawa—two men who are testaments to *some* kind of longevity.

The main ingredient in many of the compounds that Chientan sells is *pure* Chinese ginseng, reputed to be good for insomnia, poor memory, impotence and general weakness—all frequent symptoms of aging. These compounds are supposedly good for everything from preventing a hernia to promoting weight loss. Chientan, however, is careful to caution, "I want you to understand fully that I am not practicing medicine here."

ALCOHOL

So long the butt of medical derision doled out over cocktails, booze may be coming back into its own as an antiaging drug. Says UCLA's Dr. Lissy Jarvik, head of the Department of Aging, "The data show that alcohol is good for you within reason. Studies have indicated that nontetotalers

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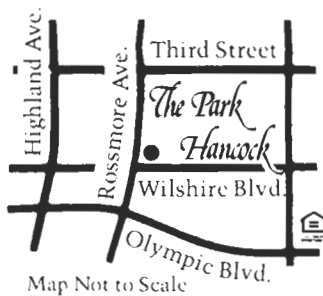
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LIVE FOREVER

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live longer than teetotalers. My guess is that alcohol loosens the inhibitions, and it lessens the stress that can age you. It also increases high-density proteins and decreases cholesterol. It just may turn out to be good for us."

INTELLIGENCE

Jarvik has another interesting theory on aging: the critical-loss factor of intelligence in the aging process. "If a person's intelligence loss meets our critical quotient," she says, "it's as good as a five-year death sentence." When asked whether we couldn't increase life span by increasing intelligence, say, through continuing education, she says with a smile, "I never thought of it, but you may be on to something."

HUMOR

Immanuel Kant wrote in his *Critique of Pure Reason* that laughter produces a feeling of health and moves the intestines and diaphragm. Norman Cousins, who literally cured himself of a life-threatening disease by large doses of laughter, wrote in *Anatomy of an Illness* that it has always seemed to him that laughter is a good way to jog internally. William Fry, a Stanford University professor, has written extensively on the respiratory aid of mirthful laughter. Even stone-face Freud thought that humor was highly useful in counteracting nervous tension and proved an effective therapy.

And there is this bit of evidence:

"How's your uncle Harry?" George Burns asked Gracie Allen.

"You remember the doctor gave him six months to live?"

"That's why I asked. What happened?"

"My mother told him not to pay the bill."

"Did that do any good?"

"Sure did. The doctor gave him another six months to live."

"Then what happened, Gracie?"

"After nine years, the doctor finally died."

At USC's Andrus Gerontology Center, there has been a three-year experiment on the subject of humor as therapy. In a program led by Maxine Ewers, nursing-home residents (average age 84) at Saint John of God Nursing Hospital in L.A. were given weekly doses of puppet shows, variety shows and even a CETA-funded group show called *Going Like Sixty*. Residents found the program to be enormously effective in reversing the mental process of aging. As one member put it, "Laughing is like a bright flash of light that doesn't happen too often to me anymore."

According to Ewers, "These weekly injections of humor made a considerable difference in these people's lives. It allevi-

ated apathy, boredom, tension and loneliness, and it offered a great distraction from pain. We could see an observable shift in attitudes."

CHIROPRACTIC

Long hissed at by the traditional AMA-oriented medical community, chiropractic now seems to be making great strides toward respectability. And its practitioners are certainly making the most of their new visibility.

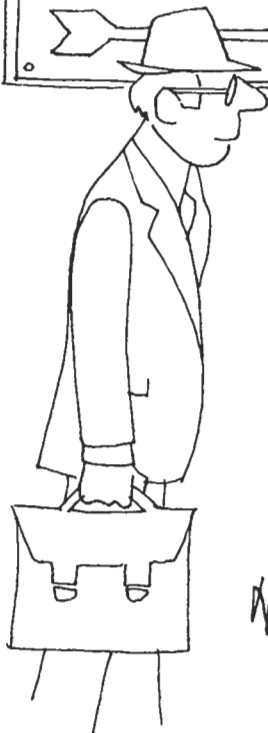
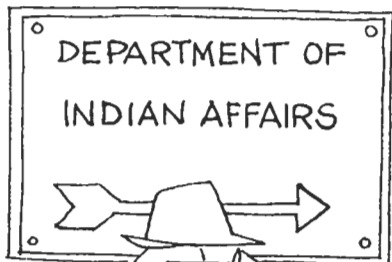
L.A. chiropractor Ann Blair, for example, doesn't mince words. "The first way to live longer is to not go near a health-food store," she says. "They can do more damage to you than anything. The second is not to take drugs of any kind. If an M.D. gives you a prescription, you've got to ask about its side effects. The third is to watch what you eat. No Twinkies."

Oh, yes. She does recommend regular chiropractic care. "It loosens up your nervous system and alleviates stress. That alone can increase the span of your life."

MISCELLANY

In her wide-ranging book *The Complete Book of Longevity*, author Rita Aero carefully notes up front that "the techniques and methods for prolonging life presented in this book are in no way endorsed by the author." She goes on to present plenty of hypothetical antiaging ideas, facts and tips, such as:

Garlic: It is consumed by long-living



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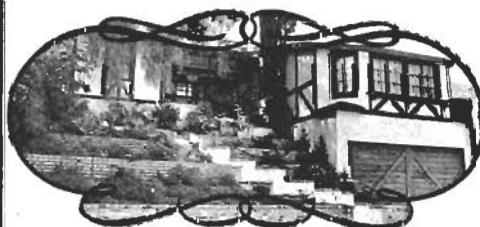
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Rubbing of the skin: A doctor in Paris reportedly has devised a system of rapid, light circular rubbing that he says will keep the body fresh and young for over 100 years.

Then there's USC's Dr. James Birren, dean of the Leonard Davis School of Gerontology and executive director of the Andrus Gerontology Center, who's been studying an unusual way to add to the quality—if not also the quantity—of life. Every summer at USC's summer institute, ISOMATA, in Idyllwild, he teaches a course that requires students—who range in age from 20 to 85—to write their autobiographies.

"Writing your autobiography serves several purposes," he says. "First, it helps to integrate your life. You can't know where you're going unless you know where you've been. This shows you where you've been so you can tackle where you're going. People who have lived full lives sometimes lose track of the details; they forget their successes. They don't realize how many crises they've met successfully. Realizing this gives them the courage to face whatever situation they find themselves in.

"For example, one man was facing retirement when he took my course. Through his writing he began to appreciate himself, all his different facets. It allowed him to contemplate the upcoming changes in his life."

Last but not least in local longevity lore is Dr. Robert Martin, a vaudevillian-gymnast-turned-physician, who has come up with what he thinks is a revolutionary way of "turning the aging process upside down." It's his Gravity Guiding System (used, believe it or not, by Richard Gere in *American Gigolo*). Martin's hypothesis is that you can last only eight minutes without oxygen, three days without water, a week without rest—but not a minute without gravity. He wants to turn us all upside-down for a while every day, preferably in his equipment (which can cost anywhere from \$100 for just the boots to \$500 for the entire system), and thereby reverse the process of aging.

"We sit all day long," says Martin, "and one of the great needs of the body is to be stretched out and elongated to counteract the compressive effects of sitting, standing and conventional exercise. Inverted situps and squats strengthen the muscles without compressing the spine.

"We do lose about a half-inch a year," he adds.

Dr. Sidney Messer, who established the first committee on gerontology for the L.A. Medical Society and is chairman of

the Los Angeles New Hospital Gerontology Committee, wonders from his readings in the Old Testament what kind of God it is who exiles Adam and Eve from Eden not for taking of the Tree of Immortality but for taking of the Tree of Knowledge.

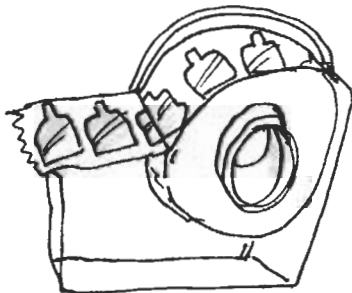
Messer speculates, somewhat dejectedly, that "our minds are liquid-based computers. We have now created mineral-based computers that work thousands of times faster than our minds. It's a theory of mine that we are here to replace ourselves."

He could, in a sense, be right. It could be that immortality is an impossibility and against our genetic programming. All that current evidence really indicates is that through diet, exercise and attitude we can increase the quality of our lives—but not necessarily the quantity. But in that sense we can truly "live" longer—regardless of the number of years allotted to each of us here. ■

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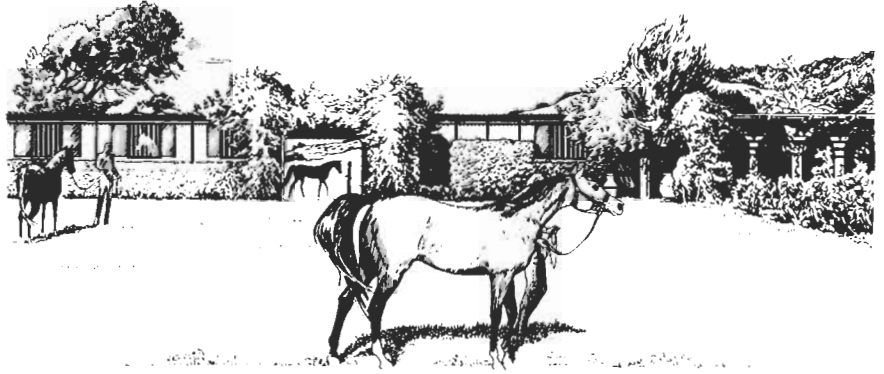


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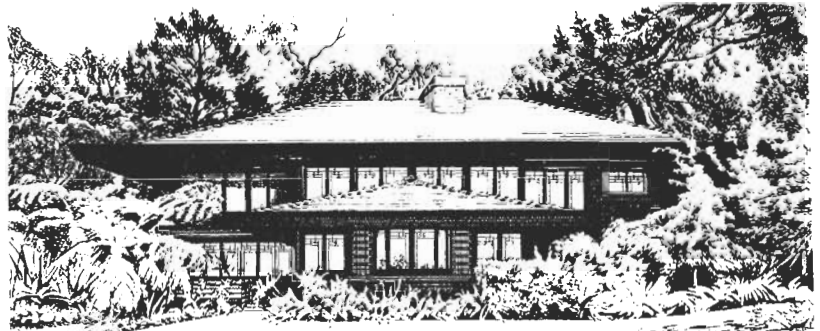
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A FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH... INSIDE A SHEEP?

BY SALLY OGLE DAVIS

It is 6:30 a.m. I am dressed in medical greens and white clogs. I haven't had my morning coffee yet, and last night I had rather too much of a fine Swiss wine. I am feeling anything but youthful. The operating room I find myself in is chilly and tiled in green; the scene taking place in front of me is by no means pleasant. Two orderlies have just brought in a steel tray; resting on it is the fat uterus of a healthy sheep.

Dr. Bernard Bovet, an octogenarian Swiss surgeon of distinguished credentials and South African upbringing deftly slits open the uterus and removes from it an almost fully developed lamb fetus, which he lays gently on the draped operating table. I feel like a combination abortionist and mass murderer—and I'm merely

To luxe Geneva in search of longevity through cell therapy

watching. The doctor senses my discomfort and glances at me and smiles over his mask. "I will first go to work on the placenta," he says.

What am I doing at this unearthly hour in a clinic on the shores of Lake Geneva watching a couple of Swiss doctors carve up the innards of a sheep? Quite simply, I am engaged in that most popular and persistent of all human quests: the search for the Fountain of Youth.

Nowhere has this search been pursued more feverishly than in Southern California, as our legions of plastic surgeons, living here like oriental potentates, can

attest. Recently, however, there have been second thoughts about this search for eternal beauty: Of what use is taut skin if the muscles underneath it are as old as the hills? Of what purpose is the unblemished cheek if the fire below has long gone out? Is it enough simply to *look* young?

So it is not surprising, then, that we have been besieged of late by an endless stream of European doctors and their agents from the rarefied climes of the Swiss and German Alps, who come into our midst like modern-day Pied Pipers, enticing us to share their particular sources of immortality.

The men I'm watching believe they've found *their* source—in a sheep that earlier this morning was happily munching on the good green grass of a valley near Mon-



Clinic's Rossel (left) with Barnard.



Niehans: Aristocratic rejuvenator.

treux. It has now been sacrificed so that the hopes and dreams of the men and women who lie sleeping peacefully in their beds two floors above us might live.

The work I'm seeing can be said to have begun in 1931 when a woman was sent to Swiss endocrinologist Paul Niehans for a parathyroid gland transplant. Niehans discovered that his patient was dying of tetanus. The gland transplant could not be performed, but Niehans, in an attempt to save the woman's life, cut up into tiny pieces a cow's parathyroid gland (intended for transplanting), added them to a saline solution and injected the fluid into the patient's chest.

According to the accepted medical knowledge of the time, the patient should have died of shock within 10 minutes of being injected with the foreign protein. But according to the story, she not only survived but prevailed—living for many more years. And Paul Niehans had discovered his life's work.

The doctor himself was a somewhat mysterious figure. The son of a Swiss father and a German mother, he was rumored to be the nephew of the Emperor Kaiser Wilhelm of Prussia (through his mother, the Kaiser's half sister) or, following the more popular scuttlebutt, the Kaiser's illegitimate son. In any case, he did indeed bear a striking resemblance to the Prussian monarch and was perfectly at home among members of the European aristocracy, who were soon beating a path to his door for treatment.

Over the next 34 years Niehans' techniques didn't change much. He started his own farm and raised a special variety of

OR YOU COULD TRY THESE

Seldom does a month go by without a European apostle of rejuvenation coming to Southern California in pursuit of disciples. And the apostle is, of course, hardly averse to dropping a famous name or two to help his or her cause.

Yugoslavian-born Dr. Theodore Bruck operates clinics in Paris, London and Weissbad-Appenzell, Switzerland. Bruck is one of the most vociferous critics of the Niehans fresh-cell method, which he claims can cause everything from abscesses to leukemia. His own method involves the development of a serum taken from the spleen and sternum of young accident victims mixed with thymus glands of human fetuses, stillbirths or babies who died in the first few days of life. The serum is then injected into laboratory rabbits; the rabbit develops antibodies to the serum, and these antibodies are extracted from the rabbit and injected into the patient.

Bruck emphasizes that in Paris, Vienna and other European medical centers there is a solid base of scientific research on his method and traces his work in a direct line from that of Europe's top immunologists.

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brown sheep that were found to be particularly resistant to cancer and other diseases, and from then on he restricted his "fresh cell therapy" to those cells taken from the fetus (adult cells, he found, were rejected by the human body) of this particular type of sheep.

As claims for Niehans' cell treatment grew, the Clinique La Prairie, which he opened in the district of Clarens, a suburb of Montreux, announced success in treating a range of ailments from aplastic anemia to hypertension, arteriosclerosis, diabetes mellitus, skin cancer and other skin diseases, rheumatism, arthritis, Hodgkin's disease, even leukemia. It also claimed to be successful in the treatment of children suffering from Down's syndrome.

But what really brought the world in droves to Niehans' door were not such dramatic "cures" as the above; it was the fact that, once injected with the sheep cells, patients began to report feeling renewed youth and vigor. Men talked of regaining sexual potency, women of losing the symptoms of menopause and of having their menstrual cycles restored. Their skin, they said, regained its youthful elasticity; they were, they reported, looking and feeling years younger. Niehans, they said, had stumbled across the Holy Grail—the Fountain of Youth.

It was the kind of word-of-mouth publicity that money couldn't buy, as Marlene Dietrich, Charlie Chaplin, Konrad Adenauer, Winston Churchill, Gloria Swanson, Somerset Maugham, Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso were added to the list of apparently satisfied customers (also rumored to include Charles De Gaulle,

continued on page 270

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FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

continued from page 155

Greta Garbo and Bernard Baruch). Kings and princes joined them. King Ibn Saud once flew in with 200 of his intimate friends to take the "cure" and presented Niehans with a Saudi title for his pains.

The clinic's biggest and most publicized coup, though, came in 1954 when the Vatican invited the professor to visit Pope Pius XII, then a very sick pontiff. Niehans' therapy apparently did the trick, and the pope, whose own physicians had given up on him, survived to pontificate for another four years. The grateful pope sent an autographed picture of himself to Niehans, signed in impeccable German with the words, "in deep appreciation."

Niehans retired from active participation in his clinic in 1965 and died six years later at age 89, working to the last—a tribute, perhaps, to the fact that he had been practicing what he preached for years. His clinic lives on without him—as I am witnessing.

Bovet starts with the placenta. He carefully cuts from it each of the individual glands and places them in a covered glass container. Then he turns his attention to the lamb: Every usable part of the fetus, from testicles to brain, from rib cage to leg muscles, from liver to heart, is carefully removed and placed in a separate glass dish until virtually nothing but the outer skin of the poor beast remains. Around the perimeter of the operating room sit nine medical technicians, including the director of the clinic's lab, Gerard Fontaine. In front of them is a list of patients currently residing in the clinic's 28 bedrooms and the particular piece of the sacrificial lamb each will be requiring.

Herr M. from Munich has a liver that is not what it might be. The Honorable Mrs. S. from London needs an infusion of hypothalamus. Mrs. R. from San Marino is having trouble with her memory; some brain cells are on the menu for her today. With the meticulous care of an expert barman mixing a Manhattan, the cells are passed through a fine sieve to extract fibers and sinew fragments and then added to a sterile solution that closely resembles human-body fluid.

Each patient is assigned a tray that holds anywhere from six to 12 formidable-looking syringes. Each syringe is filled with the appropriate fresh-cell liquid, and Bovet and his assistant, Dr. Eli Eddé, fan out from room to room, rushing to inject the cells while they are still fresh.

Mr. and Mrs. R. from San Marino, who share a room on the third floor of the red-roofed clinic—which is surrounded by a flower garden on the edge of the lake and looks like a charming Swiss pension—take one short, apprehensive look at their trays before turning on their stomachs and re-

ceiving six injections in each buttock. Mrs. R. does not find the process congenial. She rather lets down the stoic American spirit by being the only patient of the morning to *ooh* and *ouch* quite audibly.

In less than 30 minutes, all the needling is over. The cells have gone to work, and the elite group of patients, paying in the region of \$6,000 for their three-day clinic stay and treatment, are resting more or less comfortably. For the next three days rumps may be tender and there may be some local reaction in the form of reddening, swelling and itching. But there should not, say the doctors, be anything more drastic than that. Allergy tests and a full physical prior to the treatment have determined that the patients will tolerate the medicines well. They will, say the doctors, feel unusually tired and sluggish for a few days, but after a month they should be back to normal; within three months they will feel ready to climb Mount Everest.

The 10 minutes of shots—the *total* treatment—must have seemed to the patients anticlimactic in view of what they've gone through to get here (not to mention that \$6,000 fee). First there was the decision to come here in the first place against the advice of the medical establishments in almost every country in Europe and certainly in the U.S., which says there is no medical evidence whatsoever to suggest that the treatment is beneficial. Then there is the trip itself: a flight to Geneva, from there an hour and a half by train to Montreux, followed by a taxi ride to the clinic. (There is no limousine pick-up, even for VIPs.)

The clinic itself is scarcely Cedars-Sinai. Though the view over the gardens to the lake and snow-capped mountains beyond is stunning, the pretty, Swiss-chalet front masks an interior that is hospitallike and sterile. The rooms are comfortable and certainly superior hospital rooms, but still a definite comedown from the Grand Hotel in Montreux where the more well-heeled of the patients spend the two preliminary days of testing before entering the clinic itself for treatment. (More modest accommodations can also be arranged in town.)

These patients have joined an exclusive fraternity, a worldwide club whose members believe they have been able to buy themselves two precious gifts: health and longevity. But have they? Will their memories improve? Their mental agility perk up? Their aches and pains lessen? Their hearts pump with renewed energy? Their sex lives return to what they were before age 35?

Unfortunately, in the half-century of its existence, the clinic—though it has collected testimonials from satisfied patients all over the world—has neglected to conduct any of the clinical research that might have proved what thousands of patients claimed they al-

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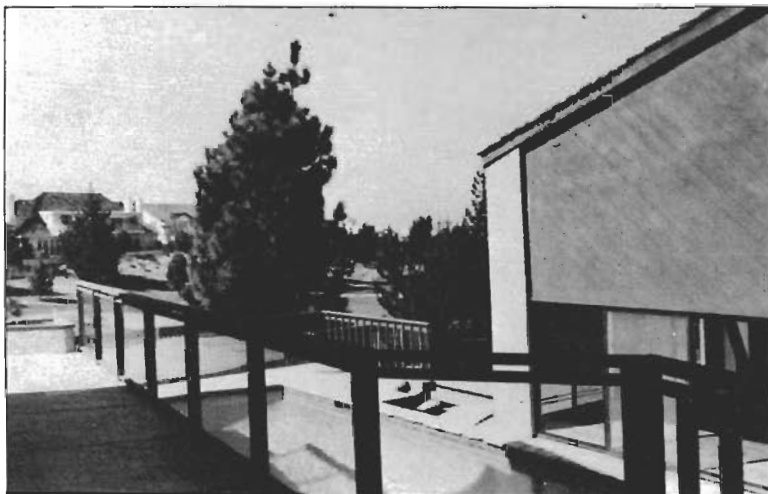
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ready knew: that fresh-cell therapy works. And Nichans himself could take the name-calling from the medical establishment because he was a charismatic personality and knew that his disciples—the very rich and the very prominent—didn't give a tinker's curse for medical-establishment approval anyway. His successors, on the other hand, have had to face a very different world. With the path to the Fountain of Youth, like the route to the plastic surgeon, no longer the exclusive territory of the rich, the clinic is trying for a more mass-market approach. It is no longer enough to simply distribute privately published books full of testimonials from gilded patients—the therapy has to be seen as legitimate.

Enter Armin Mattli, a Zurich banker who was seeking a respite, he says, from the "cold, impersonal world of banking" in a "people-helping business": rejuvenation. Mattli, who is nothing if not practical, bought the Clinique La Prairie in the mid '70s. He knew he had a credibility problem, and he saw the solution in the well-known and much promoted figure of Dr. Christiaan Barnard. Barnard, the heart-transplant pioneer from South Africa, recently joined the clinic as an honorary member of the medical team; from his base at the University of Capetown, he will undertake a research project in the field of fresh-cell transplantation.

Barnard, in other words, will seek to prove that the clinic treatment works—and he does not believe it will be difficult. "We can see the life of any cell by growing it in a culture and observing the number of times it multiplies before it dies," he says. "If we then add fetal lamb cells to it and observe that it multiplies more than the set number of times it is genetically supposed to, then we have shown that fetal lamb cells actually do revive the life of the human cell."

Doctors at the Clinique La Prairie have always believed that the cells work by migrating to the area of the body where they belong and taking the place of dead or dying cells. Thus brain cells go to the brain, liver cells to the liver, and so on. Barnard disagrees; he believes the lamb cells work by releasing something into the organism in general, some further genetic information that increases the cell's life.

But Barnard does not belittle the clinic's long track record. "Helping people feel better is what medicine is all about," he says. "But if I am to get involved in any major way, I need some scientific evaluation to show me that it works." ■

CELL THERAPY

continued from page 155

Bruck's son Ralph operates a travel service based in Tujunga (Therapy Travel, Inc., 7708 Grove St., 352-4304) that provides information on the clinic and will make travel arrangements for those wish-

ing to visit any of his father's clinics.

Then there is Dr. Claus Martin, who calls himself "the youngest Niehans doctor in Europe" although he has no connection with the Niehans clinic. He runs his own spa and clinic, the Four Seasons, at Rottach-Egern near Munich (Farberweg 3, Box 244, D8183 Rottach-Egern, West Germany). Martin uses "live-cell therapy" as distinguished semantically from the Niehans clinic term "fresh cells." Martin also dabbles in procaine treatments and THX, the thymus extract used in Europe in the treatment of cancer.

All of the established youth spas will be getting some healthy competition from a new \$75-million luxury casino/resort/clinic that will be built in Marrakesh, Morocco, next year by International Health Resorts, a West L.A.-based company offering "stress management" techniques and Kronos therapy, a combination of treatments that includes heavy injections of vitamins, Gerovital, gamma globulin, minerals, amino acids, enzymes and raw gland extracts.

There already are smaller clinics in Paris, London and Monaco, and similar ones are planned for Westwood and New York. The Marrakesh resort will offer plastic surgery by Beverly Hills surgeon Dr. Mel Bircoll and will include live-cell therapy. The top-security complex is 70 per cent financed by the Moroccan government and will, it is believed, principally attract a Middle Eastern clientele, with doctors recruited chiefly from Southern California.

As for Clinique La Prairie, its U.S. representative is one-time European opera singer Richard Van Vrooman, who can be reached at 1102 Grand Ave., Suite 1900, Kansas City, Missouri 64106; (800) 821-5718. ■



Doesn't Steve Martin know you are what you eat?

HOW THE FAMOUS KEEP FIT

Really now: Exercise doesn't have to be humorless—even if the joke's on you. And sometimes exercise doesn't even have to involve much movement. Take Steve Martin, for example. He's aware that his jaw gets a good workout on certain kinds of junk food, a fact that tends to minimize the food's junkiness. And Dudley Moore knows that without sleep you can't do such a good job exercising anyway.

*Kirk, Ali,
Britt and Steve open up
their regimens*

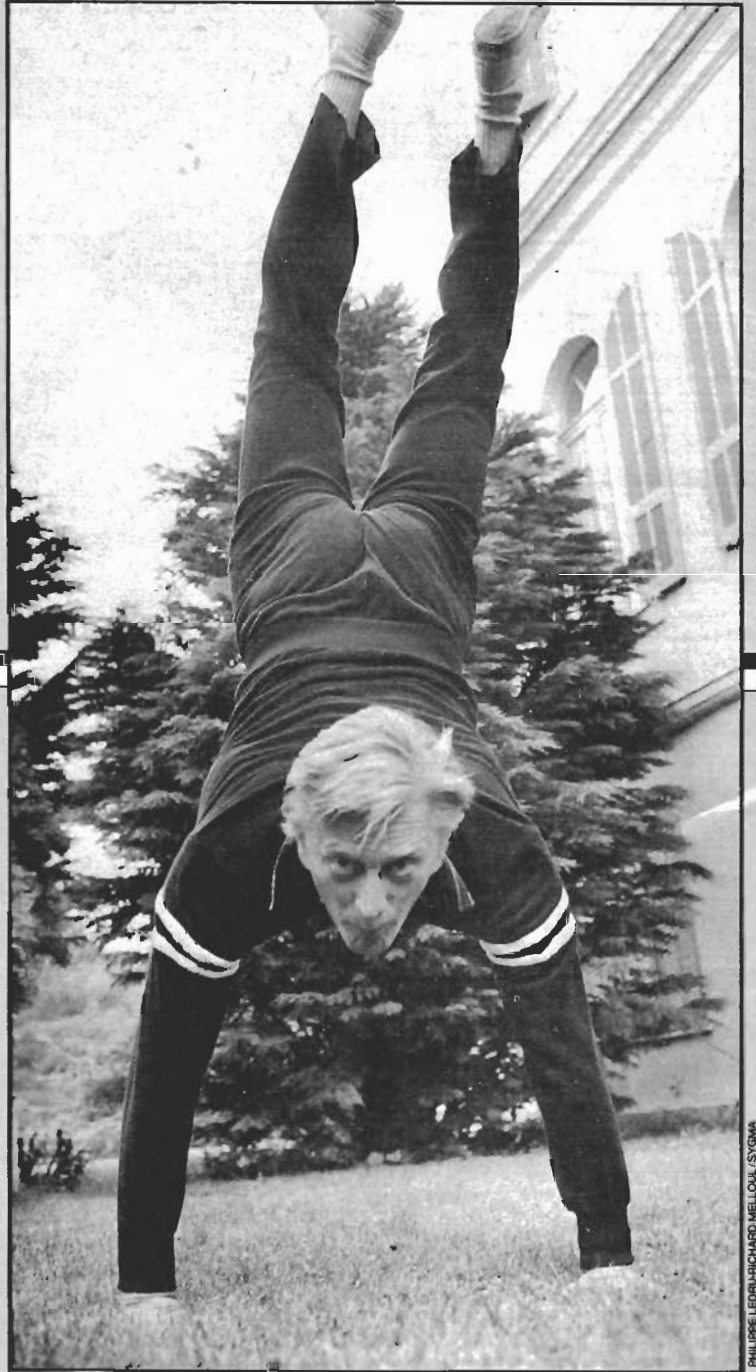
Some people, though, are a little more traditional about the matter, as the following pages will attest. Others, such as our cover subject, Mariette Hartley, simply absorb exercise through the osmosis of daily life. "I get a lot of it by lifting my children or by bending down looking for stray objects on the floor," Hartley laughs. "In fact, everything I do is an exercise—sometimes in futility."

SELF-IMPROVEMENT



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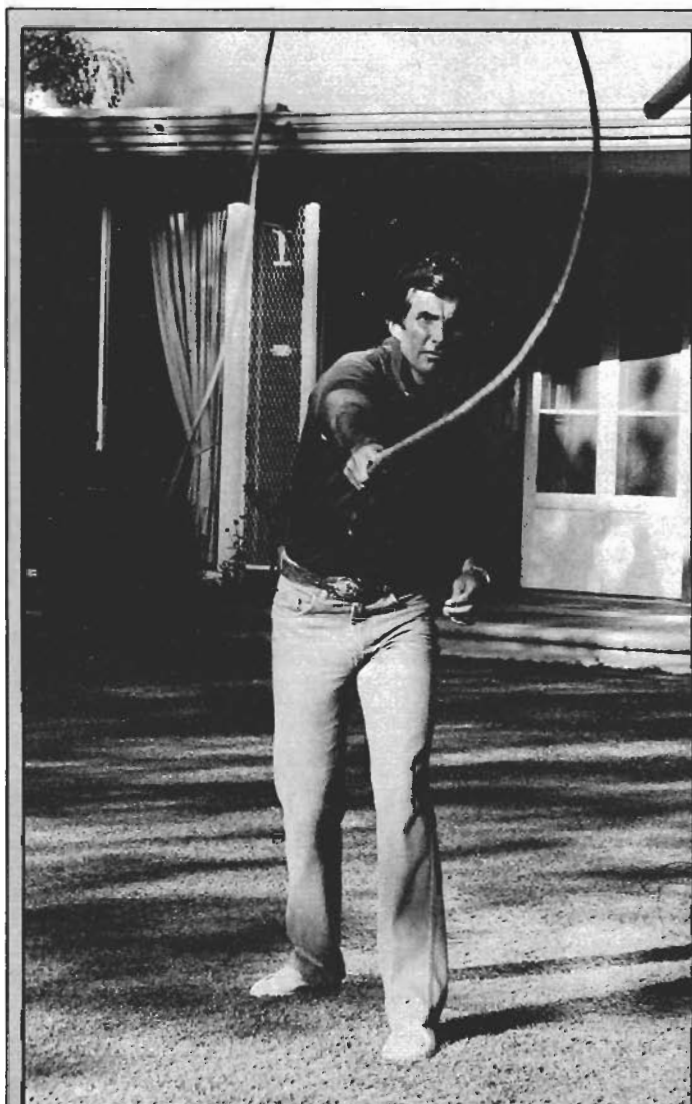
BRITAIN HILL

KNXT's Melody Rogers: Some call it dancing.



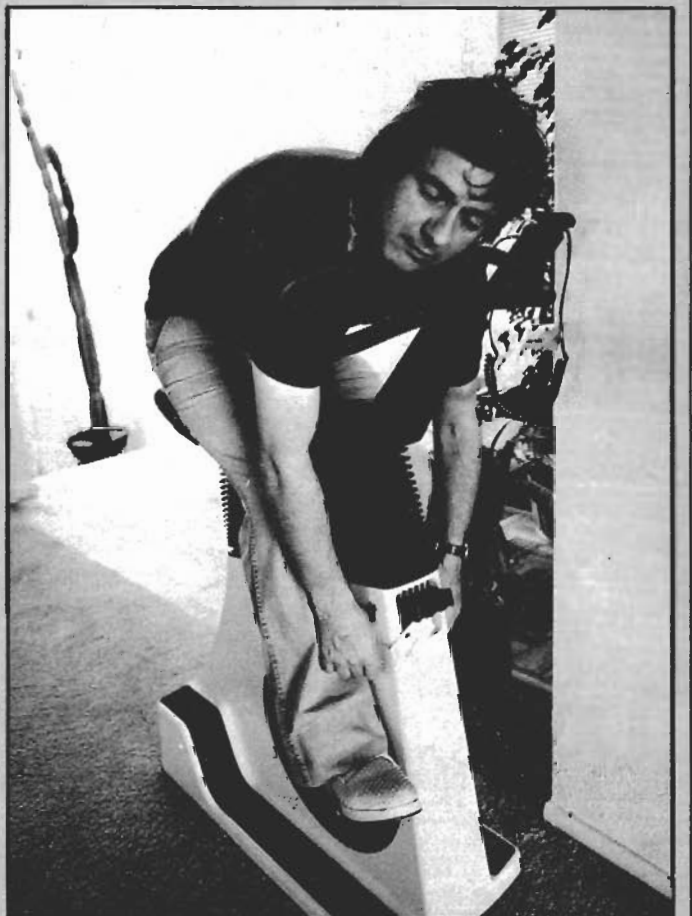
TOMY COSTA/SYGMA

So this is the real true Britt . . .



STEVE SCHAPIRO/SYGMA

George (call him macho) Hamilton, with bullwhip.



Asleep at the wheel with Dudley Moore.