

Spider vein removal provokes controversy

By Alicia Gano
Of the Emerald

Confusion arose Thursday about the legality of a Eugene electrologist's practice of performing spider vein removals in the state of Oregon.

Ruth Briggs, whose office is located in the Eugene Medical Center, has been removing spider veins for customers since February. Spider veins, sometimes confused with varicose veins, are small broken capillaries under the skin that leave minute purple lines.

Briggs, an electrologist of seven years, began removing spider veins under the false assumption she had been granted permission to do so by the Oregon Board of Medical Examiners. She was shocked to discover she possibly was violating the law.

Briggs first contacted the OBME last fall about the possibility of providing spider vein removals for her customers. She received a letter from the board Feb. 12 which stated "the electrolysis treatment of spider veins is a recognized medical treatment modality."

The letter went on to say the board would be responsible for investigating any complaints arising from the removal of spider veins by electrolysis.

Briggs interpreted this to mean the board had given her permission to remove spider veins.

Dave LaDuca, the chief investigator for the OBME, said this was not the case, however.

According to LaDuca, Briggs was practicing medicine without a license, a Class C misdemeanor, and could be subject to conviction, fines or a maximum one-year jail sentence.

LaDuca said the letter was meant to notify Briggs that the procedure was a medical practice and therefore not

something she was qualified to do.

"Any procedure that involves the cardiovascular system would be considered the practice of medicine," LaDuca said, citing Oregon Revised Statutes.

Briggs learned the procedure at the Arizona Institute of Electrolysis at Scottsdale last fall.

Removal of spider veins by an electrologist is legal in Arizona due to an attorney general opinion allowing it there, LaDuca said. In Oregon, the procedure falls within the practice of medicine, however, LaDuca said, and the attorney general has not issued an opinion to change this yet.

LaDuca advised against having spider veins removed by anyone other than a licensed medical practitioner.

If a complaint from a citizen does arise, LaDuca said, the police would be notified, a complaint filed and the attorney general then would issue an opinion.

Briggs, who spoke with her attorney after learning of the possible misinterpretation of the letter, has ceased practicing the procedure but still contends she was given permission by the OBME to remove spider veins.

Since February, Briggs has removed spider veins from three customers, she said.

According to LaDuca, however, Briggs said she had not practiced the procedure on

any customers.

Spider veins are removed by inserting a fine, electrically charged electrolysis needle under the skin at the end of the vein. The electrologist then "taps" along the broken vein, which contains "dead" blood, with the charged needle. This causes the vein to explode, allowing the dead blood to be carried away through healthy veins as waste, Briggs said.

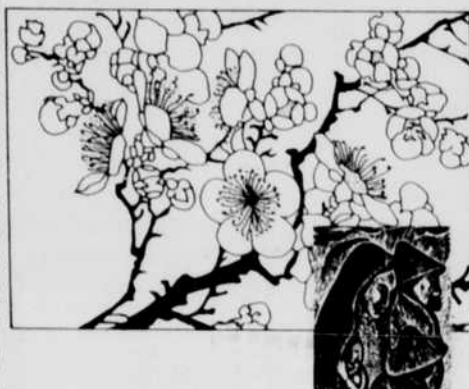
Causes of spider veins range from excessive skin exposure to hot or cold temperatures, to use of support hose or from childbirth. Pressure on legs, in particular, causes the small veins to burst, but high blood pressure and alcoholism also may contribute, she said.



Ruth Briggs

Creativity and Culture: A Folklore Symposium

Free and Open to the Public
April 8-11, 1987
University of Oregon
Eugene, Oregon



Wednesday, April 8

3:30 p.m., Room 129 Law Center
"Creativity and Culture: A Folklorist's Assessment." Keynote Address, Robert A. Georges, Professor of English and Folklore, UCLA. Professor Georges is the author of numerous books and articles including *People Studying People: The Human Element in Fieldwork*, *Greek-American Beliefs and Narratives*, and *Studies in Mythology*.

8:00 p.m., Room 129 Law Center
Film: *A Country Auction: The Paul V. Leitzel Estate Sale*. Discussion will follow.

Thursday, April 9

3:30 p.m., Room 204 Condon Hall
"At Home No Women are Storytellers: Identity, Role, and Creativity in Cochito Pueblo." Barbara Babcock, Professor of English, University of Arizona. Professor Babcock will speak about Helen Cordero, a Pueblo potter. The talk, illustrated with slides, centers on how women creatively become storytellers through pottery.

8:00 p.m., Room 129 Law Center
Film: *Style Wars*. Discussion will follow.

Friday, April 10

3:30 p.m., Room 129 Law Center
"Fiddle Tunes of the Old Frontier: Some Thoughts on the Nature of Folk Creativity." Alan Jabbour, Director of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. Mr. Jabbour, a well-known fiddler in his own right, has directed the Folklife Center since its inception.

Saturday, April 11

10:30 a.m., Room 129 Law Center
"Creativity, Culture, and Performance: Theories and Models." Panel Discussion.

2:00 p.m., Room 129 Law Center
"New Directions in Folklore Studies." Panel Discussion.

The symposium is sponsored by the UO Folklore and Ethnic Studies Program and the College of Arts and Sciences. It is available for 1 hour of academic credit as ENGL 407. For more information call Sharon Sherman, Symposium Director, 686-1966, or the Folklore and Ethnic Studies office, 686-3539.



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IFC

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Baldwin said it seems to him the board was telling voters "if you want child care, you'll give us these other programs."

IFC member Katy Howard said she could see the logic of Baldwin's argument, but also could see where Gaffney and Romano were coming from in wanting to present the measure as part of a cohesive EMU budget and wanting it to pass.

ASUO President Steve Nelson, speaking for the Executive, recommended the IFC not place the measure on the ballot.

"How many groups, major or minor, have a portion of its budget placed on the ballot?" he asked the committee. "Either the entire EMU budget should be placed on the ballot or it should all go through the IFC."

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