

To Your Health!

By Judy Hargis, P.A., and Audeen Wagner



"I would rather know the person who has the disease than know the disease the person has." Hippocrates said that, before the time of Christ! And it seems to sum up what we've been saying in this column lately – his writings back then mention the importance of prevention ("prevention is preferable to treatment"), and of treating each patient individually and holistically. Hippocrates, born in 460 B.C., is known as the Father of Medicine. That ancient philosophy of medicine is still going strong today, and we are blessed in modern times with an amazing base of scientific knowledge which results in longer,

healthier lifestyles.

There is an organization called Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM), which addresses a wide scope of issues having to do with practices, products and health care systems which either complement conventional medicine (used together – sometimes called integrative) or use alternative medicine (used in place of conventional practice). CAM describes them this way: an example of "complementary medicine" is using massage or aromatherapy to lessen a patient's discomfort after surgery, while "alternative medicine" is using a special diet or therapy that is different from that recommended by conventional caregivers.

Mind-body medicine. Mind-body medicine uses a variety of techniques designed to enhance the mind's capacity to improve body and symptoms. CAM says that this kind of medicine "focuses on the interactions among the brain, mind, body and behavior, and on the ways in which emotional, mental, social, spiritual, and behavioral factors can directly affect health." They also report that in 2002 mind-body techniques, including relaxation, meditation, imagery, biofeedback, and hypnosis, were used by about 17 percent of the adult U.S. population. There is evidence that mind-body treatments are useful in heart disease, pain management, improving quality of life for cancer patients and relieving their treatment-related symptoms of nausea and pain. And much more information is available on their website – ncam.nih.gov – than we can fit into this column!

Here are a few of these mind-body methods that have been researched and recommended by CAM:

- Meditation is mental exercise intended to focus or control attention. It is rooted in religious or spiritual traditions, for the purpose of reaching a heightened level of spiritual awareness. Today, meditation is sometimes used outside of this traditional setting as a medical therapy, as a way to lower blood pressure, help people with asthma or angina, relieve insomnia, and generally relax the everyday stresses of life. There is evidence that shows its value in improving health and wellness. It may sound complicated, but you might find that meditation can be as simple as finding a quiet, comfortable place with subdued lighting where you can let your body and mind relax. Just breathe and close your mind to the outside world.

Research is ongoing in this field; there are studies to find out more about meditation's effects, how it works, and how it may be used to help patients with diseases and conditions. While there are many types and methods for meditation (prayer is one), they all have the same intent: they focus on "quieting the busy mind," aiming at a feeling of calm and peace. A great way to relieve stress, right? Again, the CAM webpage is loaded with information.

- Yoga is a system of exercises for attaining physical or mental control and well-being. It is said that yoga is an ideal form of exercise for every body. From childhood to advanced age, it is a way to stay limber and energetic, a gentle way to exercise with little stress on the body (forget "no pain no gain," it doesn't apply here!) and it can help people become more relaxed and focused. Yoga is best known as "a set of physical practices that include gentle stretches, breathing practices, and progressive deep relaxation." While yoga is an ancient practice, dating back at least 3,000 years, it is still remarkably modern, scientific, and appealing to people today. It teaches us that a healthy person is a harmonious unit of body, mind and spirit.

- Reiki is an eastern technique designed to help with handling stress and promoting relaxation, which also promotes healing. The word "Reiki" is really two Japanese words: Ki is "life force energy," Rei means "spirit." Reiki is "energy work," administered by "laying on of hands," and is based on a "life force energy" flowing through us. If this energy is low, we are more likely to feel stress, and if it is high, we are happier and healthier. There is evidence that Reiki works in conjunction with other medical or therapeutic techniques to promote recovery; a feeling of peace and relaxation and well-being are often the results of the Reiki technique. CAM is finding out more about Reiki's effects, how it works, and how it might be targeted to specific diseases. Most massage therapists use elements of Reiki in their massage work. "The energy flows through, not from, the therapist," says Marie Krahn, who offers Reiki to her massage patrons.

It's easy to see that the above activities are interrelated – it's all about the mind-body focus on relaxation, mental control, allowing your body to be quiet and calm, and natural self-healing. The advantages of these practices are such things as lowering the blood pressure, improving the immune system, and relieving stress.

For more information on many of the alternative medicine areas we've explored, you may contact Deborah Steffen, a Vernonia resident with a broad background in yoga, holistic medicine, hypnotherapy, and more. Most impressive is her study with the Chopra Center Lifestyle Program, a very prestigious program. She can answer questions you may have about the health issues we've been talking about as she provided some of the information. Her phone is 503-429-2103. Email: info@CedarMistStudios.com.

Please feel free to contact us at our email: health@the-Independent.net. You could also contact Judy Hargis direct at Jettapac@aol.com. Or write to us To Your Health, c/o The Independent, 725 Bridge Street, Vernonia OR 97064.

Send in picture wearing lifejacket to win

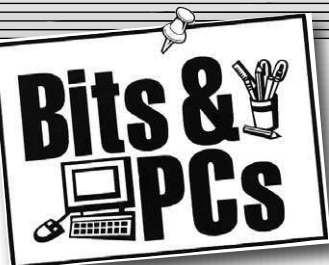
BoatU.S. Angler, which offers services and information for boat-owning fishermen, encourages anglers to wear a life jacket this fishing season. From now until September 30, anglers can submit photos of themselves, friends or family

fishing while wearing a lifejacket to enter the "Get Hooked on Safety" contest at <http://www.BoatUSAngler.com>.

One winner each, selected from four categories, will receive a Mustang inflatable life vest valued at \$150. The categories include: fishing photos; holding a catch; family photos; and the best fishing story that accompanies a photo. Everyone in a photo must be wearing a life jacket.

Pellerin said the biggest complaint from anglers about wearing a life jacket is that they are uncomfortable. "But if you haven't taken a look at the new inflatable or sports-style vests, you're missing out. You can bait a hook, cast with ease and stay cool and comfortable all day long," he added.

No purchase is necessary to enter the contest. For complete details and contest photos, see <http://www.BoatUSAngler.com>.



**We do
VHS to DVD
Transfers**

- **PC Parts & Service**
We Build New Computers
 - **Office Supplies**
 - **Ink & Toner Refill**
 - **Cell Phones**
Sales, Repairs & Accessories
 - **Office Supplies**
- Open: Mon - Fri 10 am - 6 pm & Sat 10 am - 5 pm**
Tel: 503.429.8324
866 Bridge Street, Vernonia

**Terry's
Gym**

A COMPLETE
CO-ED GYM
FACILITY

(503) 429-0501
16720 Noakes Rd Vernonia, OR

New York Life Insurance Company

Life Insurance - Long Term Care Insurance - Retirement
Planning - Fixed Annuities* - Mortgage Protection
Mutual funds - Business Insurance - IRA/SEP/TSA

**Jim Presley, Financial
Services Professional**
Vernonia, Oregon
Office: 503-429-0747
Cell: 503-929-3455



The Company You Keep®

*Issued by New York Life Insurance and Annuity Corporation (A Delaware Corporation)