

MEDICAL
BRIEFS

Prostate study

The University of Michigan Health System, Section of Urology, is seeking healthy males to participate in the Selenium and Vitamin E Cancer Prevention Trial (SELECT). If you are a White male (age 55 years or older) or an African-American male (age 50 or older) and interested in participating in a research study for prostate cancer prevention, please call the Cancer Answer Line at (800) 865-1125 for more information.

Grief teleconference

Saint Joseph Mercy Hospice of Washtenaw, Muehlhig Funeral Chapel of Ann Arbor and Hosmer-Muehlhig Funeral Chapel of Dexter will sponsor "Living With Grief: Loss in Later Life." This live via-satellite teleconference will be held 1:30-4:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 24 at Washtenaw Community College, 4800 E. Huron River Drive, Ann Arbor in the Morris Lawrence Building, Room 105.

The program will be moderated by Cookie Roberts, ABC News, and will feature a panel of experts who will examine the needs and barriers faced by our aging population in coping with the range of losses found in later life.

For more information, please call Saint Joseph Mercy's Hospice of Washtenaw at (734) 327-3409.

Adoption

Lutheran Adoption Services will hold a workshop dealing with parent-adopter attachment issues 12:30-5 p.m. Saturday, May 11 at the Providence Park Medical Center, 47601 Grand River (at Back Road), Novi.

Adoptive parents, adults adoptees and professionals will learn how attachment develops, why it can fail, and how it affects families and marriages.

The fee is \$20 per person or \$30 per couple, and advance mail-in registration is highly recommended. Individuals can register at the door for \$25 if space is available. Contact Tina Caudill at (248) 423-2770 or e-mail: tcaud@lasm.org

American Cancer Society

The American Cancer Society needs volunteers for its Road to Recovery program to drive cancer patients to and from treatment at Henry Ford Hospital in downtown Detroit. All volunteers need is a reliable means of transportation and a few hours during the week.

"Sadly, patients everyday are canceling and postponing their cancer treatment simply because they do not have a ride," said Jessica Pott, Quality of Life director, American Cancer Society. "Right here in the metro-Detroit area, 10-20 percent of newly diagnosed cancer patients are not getting the treatment they need simply because they do not have transportation. It is our job to help them get back on the road to recovery."

To learn more, call the American Cancer Society at (248) 557-5353.

We want your health news

There are several ways you can reach the Observer Health & Fitness staff. The Sunday section provides numerous venues for you to offer newsworthy information including Medical Database (upcoming calendar events), Medical Newsletters (appointment when hires in the medical field), and Medical Briefs (medical advances, short news items from hospitals, physicians, companies). We also welcome newsworthy ideas for health and fitness related stories. To submit an item to our newspaper you can call, write, fax or e-mail us.

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Time for
Tai Chi!

Seniors gain balance, flexibility and strength through ancient form of Chinese martial arts

BY SANDRA J. CAMPBELL
SPECIAL WRITER

Baby boomers across the nation are recognizing the many health benefits that Tai Chi, an ancient form of martial arts, brings to their aging bodies. This preventative maintenance exercise is made up of slow, graceful movements that flow from one position to another. Tai Chi has been found to improve memory function, provide better balance and greater flexibility, and produce an overall sense of well-being.

Bob Correll of Dearborn is a sifu, or instructor, who teaches Tai Chi Chuan classes in many metro-Detroit areas, including the Redford Community Center in Redford Township. His interest in Tai Chi dates back to 1987 when he was a young army officer stationed in Vietnam. He recollects: "One morning I saw a tiny elderly man moving in what appeared to be a slow-motion dance of incredible beauty and continuous flowing movement. This was my first exposure to Tai Chi Chuan."

In the early 1990s Correll experienced a serious health condition that required surgery. As part of the healing process, he incorporated his knowledge of Tai Chi to design his own rehabilitation program.

"My recovery was rapid and continuous," he said.

He currently is negotiating a plan to introduce his Yang style of Tai Chi Chuan as part of the rehabilitation program offered through Oakwood Health Systems. The slow, graceful movements can be easily adjusted to any fitness level, he said.

Happy students

Correll has designed a special modified form of Tai Chi for senior citizens. His students are thrilled

with their own physical and mental health improvements. Anna LaCombe, a retired math teacher from Wayne, said of Correll: "He is a gentle soul who has adapted the traditional form and teaches us the mechanics of Tai Chi. He breaks each position down into four or five separate steps and then its practice, practice, I try to do the warm-up exercises and the Form about three times a week."

Betty Gabrielli of Westland went through extensive back surgery and was forced to take an early medical retirement. "My physical therapist at the University of Michigan Medical Center in Ann Arbor suggested that I should take Tai Chi and stick with it for life," she said. "My involvement in the class has made me feel more hopeful of my future and in my ability to remain functional."

Tai Chi gives a disabled person hope for a better physical tomorrow. Since starting the class, Gabrielli's pain from osteoarthritis has been relieved through greater joint flexibility. Correll explains: "During the warm-up exercises we rotate every major joint in the body. This circular movement brings extra fluid to help lubricate the joints."

Seventy-nine year old Nadean Malosh of Wayne says the lessons have improved her memory and her ability to concentrate. "You have to learn a new posture each week and then remember it for next class," Correll offered an explanation for Malosh's improved memory: "The nucleus of Tai Chi is the 'form' or series of postures. They are never held in a static position but are flowed through using transition moves. Each posture is learned in sequence much as in a choreographed dance."

Lower cholesterol may be another benefit of Tai Chi. "I went to my doctor for an annual check-up and my cholesterol was down," said Ann Leonard of Wayne. "He asked me what I had been doing different and I told him, 'Tai Chi!' I love this so much, I just can't quit coming!"

Health benefits

Caroline Smith is the health program coordinator at Botsford Hospital in Farmington Hills. She has been taking Tai Chi for five years to

help alleviate symptoms of Reiter's Syndrome, an autoimmune disease that attacks her joints and muscles. "Tai Chi helped me to slow down, relax and lower my resting blood pressure. The deep breathing exercises increased my lung function," she said.

Sally Rich of Bloomfield Hills is president and volunteer instructor for the Taoist Tai Chi Society, a nonprofit organization that promotes the health benefits of Tai Chi. The health of many of her students has improved, she said. An elderly man who has cancer told her his energy level has increased. He has less pain and is able to sleep better at night. In addition, a woman with muscular sclerosis who came to the first class in a wheelchair now goes through the one-hour class with just her cane, thanks to special leg strengthening exercises.

Research studies reported in *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise* showed Tai Chi gave a 10 percent increase in cardio-respira-

Please see TAI CHI, C10



Working out: Tai Chi instructor Bob Correll leads his class of seniors through a series of postures Friday morning at the Redford Community Center.

Quadruple bypass survivor runs in local race

BY JENNIFER KENNEDY
SPECIAL WRITER

Tom Dempster is living proof that exercise, a proper diet and a positive outlook on life can do a body good.

Dempster, a project coordinator in roofing for R.E. Graham Construction in Livonia, recently participated in the Livonia Family YMCA's annual St. Pat's Fun Run on March 16 along with 280 other runners. His goal was to finish the three-mile race in 36 minutes, but he finished in 32:13, much faster than he had imagined. To some avid runners, this may not seem a significant accomplishment, but to a 51-year-old man who

THE
HEALING TOUCH

experienced two previous heart attacks in 1996 and 1997 and quadruple bypass surgery on Feb. 14, 2001, this is like winning a marathon.

On Feb. 6, 2001, Dempster visited his doctor for a routine appointment, but she would not let him return home. He was diagnosed with a 60 percent block-

Please see EXERCISE, C10



In good health: Tom Dempster joined the Livonia Family YMCA and exercises regularly, after undergoing a quadruple bypass in 2001. He even ran in the St. Pat's Fun Run last month.