

THE BULLETIN BOARD

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER, 1991

[The Bulletin Board is sent to NCAHF members only. It is intended to stimulate and aid in activism against health fraud, misinformation and quackery at the local, state and national levels.]

PARENTS TO BE TRIED A THIRD TIME

The parents of Lorie Atikian, the 17-month-old Canadian girl who died as a result of misguided vegetarian malnutrition and herbal health care will be tried for a third time. The first trial which resulted in their conviction of child neglect and a 2-year jail sentence was overturned. The second trial ended in a hung jury (*NCAHF Newsletter*, Sept-Oct, 1991). The Crown has decided to try again for a conviction. Those of us who are familiar with the case believe that the domineering herbalist who controlled the actions of the parents by his charismatic style and misinformation is the real culprit in this case. The remorseful parents are not likely to ever commit such folly again, but the demagogic herbalist is, in our view, a mad-dog quack who will bite again. William Jarvis and Stephen Barrett will aid the defense in hope of seeing justice done in this tragic affair. The Atikian case is described in the July-August, 1990 *NCAHF Newsletter*.

MAVERICK DDSs FILE LAWSUIT AGAINST AMERICAN DENTAL ASSOC

17 dentists have filed a \$12 million lawsuit against the American Dental Association charging "breach of contract breach of warranty, fraud, harassment, invasion of privacy, malicious interference and negligence." Plaintiffs alleged that ADA has misrepresented facts about the safety and effectiveness of fluoridation and the safety of dental amalgam, and that ADA's sanctioning of members who remove amalgams is unlawful. The case *Kennedy, et al v ADA* will be heard before Judge Herbert Dixon in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia on December 12, 1991, at 10:00 am.

HAL HUGGINS SEMINAR REPORT

The October, 1991, Canadian Dental Association *Journal* presents a description of a 3-day seminar on the treatment of chronic degenerative conditions featuring maverick dentist Hal Huggins, DDS, titled "The Silver Mercury Connection" held in Vancouver last May. The piece will be of interest to anyone who follows the claims and style of anti-amalgamist Huggins.

DALLAS-FT.WORTH AFFILIATE TO CONTINUE AS INDEPENDENT

Following the 1984 Pepper Committee Report "Quackery: A \$10 Billion Scandal" there was a rekindling of interest in combating quackery at the FDA. Even the Association of Food & Drug Officers (AFDO) got involved which indicated a personal commitment by individuals who lead state and federal food & drug agencies. Several FDA regional offices became actively involved in grass-roots community antiquackery efforts. Leading the way in this regard was the Dallas-Ft.Worth area office which budgeted about \$1500 per year to finance a consumer health information hot-line and pay some out-of-pocket expenses for keeping alive a community-wide Council Against Health Fraud coordinated by the FDA Regional Medical Officer. Unfortunately, there was a change at the top of the regional office and the new director was philosophically opposed to FDA being involved in grass-roots community activities and cut the group's funding. Concerned about its survival, the group considered merging with NCAHF, but at its September meeting voted to continue as an independent and elected

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NEWS MAGAZINE IGNORES CRITICAL LETTER

Members have no doubt been appalled by the loose treatment and irresponsible publicity given to quack medicines by news magazines recently. *U.S. News & World Report* published a naive tribute to pseudomedicine in its Sept. 23 issue and *Time* did a similar public disservice in its Nov. 4 issue. The problem seems to stem from a failure to take pseudomedicine seriously by editors. Reporters who are ignorant of science and consumer protection are assigned to write feature stories with a "golly, gee whiz" style, and an attitude that if people are so silly as to believe in New Age medicine they deserve whatever harm that comes their way; a kind of social Darwinism that evokes the survival of the fittest principle in the modern health care marketplace. John Dodes, DDS, president of NCAHF's New York affiliate wrote a courteous, thoughtful letter to the editor of *U.S. News & World Report* which was completely ignored. Only favorable letters to the editor on the article were published in a follow-up issue. The only redeeming feature of such articles is that it may shake some health professionals from their complacency about quackery when they see it treated so uncritically by the leading national news magazines.

LONGEVITY MAGAZINE TAKES UP THE CASE FOR MAVERICK MEDICINE

The July, 1991, issue of *Longevity* carried an article that was sympathetic to the plight of medical mavericks who have been the target of legal action by consumer protection agencies. "The New Medical Inquisition" pleads the cases of Garry Gordon, Warren Levin, and Robert Jay Rowen all MDs. The piece is the polemic of Monica Miller and the Foundation for the Advancement of Innovative Medicine which recites the same old lines of anti-science and consumer protection dressed in a new package. The piece provides educational material for quackbusters to know the enemy.

HISTORY OF "APPLIED KINESIOLOGY"

Members who follow the pseudoscience of muscle-testing as a diagnostic tool will find a historical account of the origin and development of "Applied Kinesiology" in the Sept-Oct, 1991 *Digest of Chiropractic Economics* worth reading. The article provides insight into the way chiropractors think as they leap from uncontrolled observation to theoretical "truth."

PROXMIRE STILL PUSHING VITAMINS

Former U.S. senator William Proxmire, the man whose 1976 legislation prohibiting FDA from regulating dietary supplements on the basis of "nutritional rationality or utility" (that only leaves irrationality and uselessness) did more to set back consumer protection than any Amendment ever added to the Food, Drug & Cosmetic Act (FDCA), is not only still a true believer in the value of vitamins, he pushes them in his newspaper column. In the October 16, 1991, *Kenosha News* Proxmire tells his readers that "we are digging our graves with our teeth," and misinforms his readers by stating that "cancer and heart disease continue at about the same grim pace" (untrue, both heart disease and cancer have been showing steady declines for many years). The prime reason, Proxmire says, is that "Americans aren't eating enough foods that provide the vitamins and minerals that scientists say can prevent us from dying before our time" (such a statement belies Proxmire's fixation on vitamins and minerals omitting other nutritional factors such as fiber). He continues by chiding the FDA saying that it "still pursues the illusion that the only way to improve American consumption of vitamins is to eat 'plenty of fruits and vegetables.' The FDA has closed its eyes to a far more practical approach." His solution is to take supplements.

Members should know that Proxmire wrote a book (*You Can Do It*, Simon & Schuster, 1973) in which he extolled Adelle Davis as a nutritionist and gave other personally tainted misadvice. It's appalling to realize that this man used his influence as a senator to advance his own personal agenda which was founded upon nutrition misinformation to erode the FDCA, which is the cornerstone of consumer protection in America. The tryptophan-induced EMS tragedy to a great degree is attributable to this misguided Amendment. Proxmire's personal commitment to health is admirable, but his massive ego dealt American consumer protection law a blow from which it still has not recovered.

Please send items of possible interest to NCAHF members for *The Bulletin Board* or for readers of the *NCAHF Newsletter* to NCAHF, P.O. Box 1276, Loma Linda, CA 92354; FAX 714-824-4838. Provide clear (not FAX) copies suitable for photocopying, and complete references for citation purposes.

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