

# THE NCAHF BULLETIN BOARD

MARCH / APRIL, 1995

*The NCAHF Bulletin Board* is sent to NCAHF members and complimentary media *NCAHF Newsletter* recipients only. It is intended to stimulate and aid in activism against health fraud, misinformation and quackery at the local, state & national levels.

## NCAHF BOARD AND GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The Annual General Membership Meeting will be held at 9:00 am on April 23, 1995, at the Holiday Inn (formerly Seapoint Hotel) on Harbor Drive, in San Diego, California. The Spring meeting of the NCAHF Board of Directors will follow at 9:30 am. Members are invited to observe at the meeting of the board. The San Diego Chapter will hold a dinner meeting on Saturday night at 6:30. Those planning to attend the dinner meeting should notify Harold Loeffler at 619-453-3722.

## ELECTION OF OFFICERS / BOARD OF DIRECTORS

If you are a paid-up member, this mailing includes a ballot of officers and board of directors for 1995-96. Like many other nonprofit organizations, NCAHF does not conduct competitive elections. Nominees are selected by the Nominations Committee based upon their expertise and willingness to serve. We urge as many members as possible to return ballots.

## 1994 FINANCIAL REPORT

### INCOME

Contributions	10,108.01
Member dues	22,827.30
Newsletter subscriptions	5,882.00
Royalties	356.75
NCAHF Books Sales share	999.40
Reprint service	754.81
Interest & Dividends	1,107.88
Other miscellaneous	<u>1,232.89</u>
Total Income	42,161.15

### EXPENSES

Occupancy	18,000.00
Accounting contractor	1,100.00
Secretarial contractor	8,550.00
Computer data services	1,935.00
Printing	3,599.11
Postage & shipping	4,582.30
Directors Expenses	2,953.02
General Operating	<u>4,378.76</u>
Total Expenses	45,098.19

1994 Gain / (Loss)	(2,937.04)
Net Cash Assets 12/31/93	35,517.89
Net Cash Assets 12/31/94	32,580.85

## CORRECTIONS / REVISIONS

Corporation Professionnelle des medecine du Quebec fax# changed to 514-933-3112.

## NCAHF Directory

Area Network Coordinator Rockland County, NY, Ira Milner  
210H Kearsing Pkwy, Monsey, NY 10952; 914-356-3341 [h]; 914-352-9000 [w]

## CLINTON ADMINISTRATION PROPOSES FDA REFORMS

The FDA presents proposals being made by the Clinton Administration to streamline the agency. Changes are aimed at improving the regulation of drugs and medical devices without diminishing consumer protection. Two *FDA Backgrounder* reports, "Streamlining Food and Drug Administration" (2-pages) and "Reinventing Drug and Medical Device Regulation" (1-page) were issued on March 16. Copies of the two reports may be obtained for \$1 and a stamped, self-addressed, business-sized envelope.

The McNeil/Lehrer News Report featured a hearing on the FDA on March 28. There was general agreement that Dr. Kessler has done a great deal to improve the FDA including speeding up the agency's drug and medical device approval processes without sacrificing safety or efficacy standards. The interviewees noted that there were more people in the hall calling for downgrading the FDA than there has been for any other legislative agenda item. The reason was that so many companies stand to profit from a lowering of FDA standards. A congressman held up a bottle of natural remedy snake oil manufactured in Las Vegas, Nevada as an example of a product of the kind of people who want to see FDA curtailed. The Democrat repeatedly emphasized the importance of maintaining standards of both *safety* and *efficacy*. The Republican spokesman mentioned the importance of *safety* standards a number of times, but never uttered the word *efficacy*. This seemed deliberate. This will bear watching.

## FAMILY PRACTICE-HOMEOPATH TO HEAD NIH OFFICE OF ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE

Wayne B. Jonas, MD, a family physician who utilizes a wide variety of "alternative" modalities, including nutrition, herbs, mind-body medicine, and homeopathy. According to an article in *Homeopathy Today* (March, 1995) Jonas attended the National Center of Homeopathy's introductory summer course in Millersville, PA, in 1978 and continued his interest in homeopathy while stationed in Germany with periodic visits to the clinic of Dr. Pierre Schmidt of Switzerland. Dr. Jonas has been director of the Research Fellowship at Walter Reed Army Institute of Research in Washington DC prior to being named Director of the NIH OAM. We will be watching carefully to see if the pro-quackery element has succeeded in finding someone who will make a pretense of science while using the NIH OAM as a public relations forum, or if the new director will insist upon sound scientific methodology.

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 909-824-4838. Provide clear (not Fax) copies suitable for photocopying, and complete references for citation purposes.

## CONSUMER PROTECTION UNDER ATTACK—HOW MUCH IS POLITICS; HOW MUCH IS TRUTH?

In a March 15 keynote address to the Consumer Federation of America California Senator Barbara Boxer said the Republican Contract with America represents a hidden war against the health and safety of consumers. Named by Boxer as the most troubling examples of legal changes that will diminish consumer protection and redress were the \$250,000 cap on punitive damages for negligence, and total immunity from punitive damages against those who gain FDA approval for their product. These reductions in consumer redress are coupled with congressional attempts to weaken the FDA's authority—including Newt Gingrich's idea of privatizing the agency—constitute a double-whammy with consumers losing on both ends. Another example of consumer protection being diminished on both ends that Boxer cites is attempts to lower meat inspection standards while placing the punitive damage cap which would impact such events as the fast food hamburger *E. coli* deaths. She also chided the Republicans for wanting to lower environmental standards charging them with putting economics ahead of safety. She raised the specter of dirtier air, more polluted water, unsafe food and automobiles if the Republicans have their way. Senator Boxer was introduced by former Senator Howard Metzenbaum who will be devoting his full-time to consumer issues. A copy of her 9-page speech is available from NCAHF for \$1 and a double stamped, business-sized, envelope. A survey of the nation's consumer leaders conducted by the University of Wisconsin Dept. of Consumer Science (March, 1995) found that 71% believe that "economic vitality" (?) will be worse under the Republican leadership in congress. NCAHF leaders have not been impressed by the response of most consumer leaders to the problem of quackery despite its being named the most harmful consumer fraud aimed at the nation's elderly.

NCAHF is nonpolitical so we don't want to get into a hassle over which party is the worst for consumerism. Experience has proved that the issues of health misinformation, fraud and quackery which concern us are in as much jeopardy from people in both political parties. Democrats such as Harkin, Richardson, Daschle are as much a threat to responsible health practices as are Hatch and Gingrich. We also have mixed views on regulation. We have been critical of the influence of radical environmentalists on the Environmental Protection Agency which leads to excessive regulatory action just as we believe that the FDA has been too lax on homeopathic and herbal medications. NCAHF members must look past the political rhetoric and demonizing of political parties to the specific issues. We must not compromise on the safety and efficacy requirements of medications and devices, but we also must not support the over regulation of industry or legal liability to the point that companies are not willing to take some risk in their efforts to move technology forward. NCAHF does not believe in scapegoating industry as the Naderites are fond of doing, but North Carolina Senator Jesse Helms and Virginia Congressman Thomas Bliley scare us with their outspoken sympathy for the tobacco industry. We do not buy the democratic propaganda that the Republicans are out to harm children anymore than we buy the Republican rhetoric that the Democrats are incompetent with no useful ideas. These are significant times politically, and we will try to present the issues that are important to NCAHF in a bipartisan fashion.

NCAHF president William Jarvis, a registered Independent for more than 25 years, has expressed his views on the reason why government needs to regulate medications in the Point/Counterpoint forum of *Priorities*, Winter, 1993. A copy of the 5-page discussion is available for \$1 plus a SSAE.

## FETZER INSTITUTE PROMOTIONS

**Harvard Medical School CE course.** Mar 29 - Apr 1 the Fetzer Institute (FI) sponsored a course at the Sheraton Hotel & Towers entitled "Alternative Medicine: Implications for Clinical Practice" under the direction of David M. Eisenberg, MD (FI Fellow at Harvard). Among the topics covered were chiropractic / manipulation, Chinese medicine, homeopathy, self-regulatory (mind/body) therapies, vitamin therapies, dietary regimen, herbal therapies, alternative medical therapies for cancer, pain management, and HIV infection, and administrative issues such as advising patients who seek alternative therapies, legal implications and health care policy implications. Dr. John Renner attended the course and will provide a critique to be published in *Priorities*.

**PBS satellite conference.** On April 12 FI sponsored "a doctor's seminar" entitled *Mind-Body Health* on the PBS Adult Learning Satellite Service and The Business Channel. Featuring Rachel Naomi Remen, MD and Martin L. Rossman, MD. Remen is Medical Director of the Commonwealth Cancer Help Program in the San Francisco area. It is listed in Fink's guide to off-beat cancer care *Third Opinion* as "an educational program, not a cancer therapy." It utilizes yoga, meditation, deep relaxation and imagery, massage therapy, work with sand trays, and vegetarian meals. Participants must be under the care of an oncologist or other standard physician. Commonwealth's Michael Lerner, PhD, told his audience at the Fetzer sponsored Harvard Medical College C.E. course mentioned elsewhere in this issue that alternative cancer treatments have never cured a case of cancer to his knowledge. He said that Commonwealth's focus is upon the quality of life of patients and that it makes no claims regarding cure or life extension. Although we judge this approach to be well-intended and of potential value, we have to wonder whether cancer patient care is enhanced or hampered by its "feelgood" approach. The feelgood approach can divert patients from facing the harsh realities of effective cancer care. Cassileth\* found that the main reason for choosing "unorthodox" therapy was to avoid the adverse side-effects of standard care, and that 40% of cancer patients who used both standard and unorthodox care eventually abandoned standard care. (\**Annals Int Med*, 1984) Rossman's Collaborative Medicine Center, a self-help agency for cancer patients, is also listed in *Third Opinion*. The program's brochure says that in his private practice Rossman emphasizes "non-drug medicine and patient participation" in his practice, and is said to have taught clinical guided imagery to over 4,000 health professionals since 1982. Both are billed as "noted experts in the field of Mind-Body medicine," but their credentials make them appear to be fringe practitioners working in isolation from the scientific community. FI promotional literature says that "the idea that our emotions played a key role in our personal health seemed 'mystical' or 'outside the norm' of medical practice." This basic premise is false. Conversion illness has long been recognized and researched by standard medicine. What FI is selling is the existence of an ethereal "soul" and its alleged function in health and disease. In fact, scientists have searched for the soul many times. Christopher (Mediums, Mystics & the Occult. Thomas Crowell, 1975) describes attempts to weigh and photograph the soul at death. Scientists do not reject the existence of a soul simply because it is *invisible* (hydrogen atoms used in linear accelerators are invisible) or *mysterious* (radiation is mysterious). Science rejects the exist of a soul because it cannot be demonstrated. Until the health and disease of such an entity can be measured can research be done on whether or not specific practices or procedures are beneficial or harmful to it.