

# THE NCAHF BULLETIN BOARD

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER, 1996

*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.*

## NEW AREA NETWORK COORDINATORS

**Los Angeles & Orange County** (Zip codes 90000-91899; 92600-92899)

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## MD HATERS UNITE

Oregon's medical doctors succeeded in getting a 30-cent-per-pack cigarette tax increase placed on the November ballot. It was the only major tobacco-related ballot measure in the USA this election year. The tobacco industry retaliated by providing most of the funds required to gather the signatures needed to place on the ballot a state constitutional amendment compelling insurers to reimburse *all* state-licensed health care providers including acupuncturists, chiropractors, massage therapists, and naturopaths, because it knew that those same doctors have long opposed sharing scarce health care dollars with alternative medicine practitioners. The "alternative medicine" bill's supporters spent \$760,137 to obtain the necessary signatures to get it on the ballot. \$752,219 came from two groups, Government Direct and Oregon Executive Committee both of which are funded by the Tobacco Institute. (Noah T. "Election unites acupuncturists, tobacco lobby," *The Wall Street Journal*, 10/29/96, p.B1). We are pleased to report that the alternative medicine measure failed with 58% voting against, and the cigarette tax passed with 56% voting in favor.

**ERRATA:** The National Institute of Nutrition Education was mistakenly called the National Association of Nutrition Education. Order Raso's list from PO Box 1747, not 1795, Allentown, PA 18105.

## WILL HEALTH FOOD COMPANIES HAVE IT

### THEIR WAY ON GOOD MANUFACTURING PRACTICES?

Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs) are procedures that manufacturers must follow to ensure quality control and assurance. Until now, manufacturers of dietary supplements (vitamins, minerals, herbs, etc) have been subject to the same standards as conventional food products. Pharmaceutical manufacturers must conform to much more stringent standards. Section 9 of the 1994 Dietary Supplements Health & Education Act authorizes FDA to establish new GMPs for dietary supplements based upon the GMPs used for food processors. Four health food industry groups (American Herbal Products Association, Council For Responsible Nutrition, National Nutritional Foods Association, Utah Natural Products Alliance) got together to develop the GMPs they propose to follow. Dietary supplements have a terrible record of quality control. Consumers cannot be sure they are getting what the label says is in the product; the strength of the dose varies significantly; contamination is a big problem; identifying batches and tracking adverse effects, and more. The industry has a dismal record of protecting the health and safety of their customers. Nevertheless, the FDA is allowing the industry to control its own destiny. When the GMPs are published in the *Federal Registry*, there will be a 90-120 day period for public comment. Readers who have concerns about this matter may wish to contact product liability attorney Christopher Grell, The Monadnock Building, 685 Market St, Suite 540, San Francisco, CA 94105; 415-541-9866; fax 9869.

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.

**THE MAIN OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED DEC 19 to JAN 6.**

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## GIFT SUBSCRIPTION NCAHF NEWSLETTER

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*Happy Holidays*

**\$700,000 CHALLENGE ISSUED TO  
DEMONSTRATE THERAPEUTIC TOUCH**

The James Randi Educational Foundation, in conjunction with the Philadelphia Association for Critical Thinking (PhACT), is offering a \$700,000 prize to the first Registered Nurse (or anyone else) who can demonstrate that the fundamental tenets of Therapeutic Touch (TT) exist. Underlying the practice of TT is the notion that the physical body is merely a manifestation of an individual's "energy field." TT theorists claim that an empathetic TT practitioner can detect disturbances in the alleged "energy field," smooth out the "energy field," and transfer "energy" from the practitioner to the patient. In a 1994 report, a scientific jury for the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center declared, "There is virtually no acceptable scientific evidence concerning the existence or nature of these energy fields. There is no ongoing research, nor even any ideas about how such research might be conducted." Despite the fact that TT advocates--many of whom are Registered Nurses with advanced degrees--have not figured out a way to test TT, professional magician and renowned psychic investigator James Randi has devised ways of testing the alleged ability to detect "energy fields." "This is something they claim to be able to do every day in their practice, so why not come to Philadelphia and show us?" Asks Randi. For more information contact Robert Glickman, RN of PhACT at 215-533-4677; James Randi, e-mail: 76702.3507@compuserve.com; or, Linda Rosa, RN, Box 7117, Loveland, CO 80537; 970-667-7313, fax 669-7194.

**GERMAN PHARMACIST SUED FOR BASHING PRODUCT**

A German pharmacist who places unproven medical products in an area with a sign that reads "Shit of the month. Preparations that we cannot recommend to you," has been sued for 300,000DM by a shark cartilage company for displaying its products there. The judge in the case is asking questions on a "fair trade" rather than a "health and welfare" basis. A verdict is expected by the end of the year and the German skeptics fear for the worst. They are preparing an appeal to the Supreme Court. This case shows what happens when business law overshadows science-based health consumer protection standards such as those encoded into the U.S. Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act and those like it. Those who believe in buccaneer entrepreneurialism seem to have won the hearts of Congress. The next step in this degradation of health consumer protection will be a so-called "Access to Medical Treatment Act" that will open the public purse to all licensed health care providers, including those with no scientific basis (eg, acupuncturists, ayurvedic medicine, chiropractors, Christian

Science Practitioners, homeopaths, naturopaths). NCAHF favors establishing evidence-based performance standards that all providers must meet. This would provide incentive for improving clinical performance.

**NIH OAM LEADER PROFILED**

Gary Stix described the background and thinking of Wayne Jonas, MD, the head of the NIH's Office of Alternative Medicine in the *Scientific American* (9/24/96). From the report, and Jonas' performance thus far, it appears that Jonas is the perfect man for the job--which is not good news, because the job is political. Jonas pays appropriate lip service to science, but "is more of a true believer than he lets on." Just how much of a true believer Jonas is will be revealed in his new book *Healing With Homeopathy: The Complete Guide*, Warner Books, 1996, which was written by Jonas and Jennifer Jacobs, MD, MPH, who conducted a seriously flawed, by widely touted, study of homeopathic remedies on children with diarrhea in Nicaragua. In his writing, Jonas describes his medical school experiences where he was rebuffed by his professors. His supervisors asked him to repeat his rotation in medicine after he suggested a homeopathic remedy for a patient with severe, antibiotic-resistant pneumonia. He complains that the open-mindedness required for using unconventional therapies is not taught in medical school! He believes that discovering the mechanisms of homeopathy might revolutionize our understanding of biology and medicine. It also appears as if Jonas' research capabilities have been overstated. His main research training came during a one-year stint at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research. Carol Nacy, executive vice president for the research firm EntreMed, who supervised the Walter Reed laboratory in which Jonas worked, stated that "One year in a laboratory does not a researcher make." At Walter Reed Jonas performed a study that supposedly showed that a homeopathic solution of pathologic bacteria produced immune response in mice, but his colleagues declined to have their names listed on the report, and his paper was rejected by 3 immunology journals. Stix believes that Jonas' attraction to unconventional healing practices stems from nostalgia for a more compassionate interaction between physician and patient--the antithesis of the managed care ethos. This would be consistent with an attraction to homeopathy which emphasizes that a great deal of time be dedicated to the patient (recommended: 45 min. on the first visit, and 30 min. on subsequent visits), careful attention to the patient's emotional needs, and extended time for care giving as only one remedy at a time is tried.

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*Seasons Greetings*