



The Doctor is in
 a weekly column by
Dr. Jim Ferguson

AI

"It's spring son, and it's coming in like a lamb." I remember that line from one of Laura Ingall's Little House books that I read in grammar school. I think about it each spring when March comes quietly like a lamb or with lion-like blustery wind, as it did today. Our balmy weather also tells me that spring is near, as do the birds whom I heard singing for the first time last week. Spring is upon us despite what that Yankee groundhog, who obviously knows little about southern birds, says. I've been thinking about why people get sick. I'm not talking about a strep throat

that you get from a kid at school. For more than a hundred years we've known that a strep throat is caused by a bacterial (germ) infection and can now be cured with an antibiotic. These curing chemicals have made a huge difference in all our lives. As an example, before Alexander Fleming's discovery of penicillin, Woodrow Wilson's son died as a result of a boil that arose from a blister on his foot. And twenty years later, FDR's son was cured of an abscessed tonsil with a sulfa antibiotic. In ancient times people were thought to be righteous if they were

successful and healthy. When Job lost everything including his health, his friends gathered around him and theorized that his misfortunes must be the result of sin and rebellion against God. These "wise guys" expressed the common wisdom that innocents don't suffer, so Job must be guilty and needed to confess and repent.

Things are much more complicated than the simplistic explanations of Job's erstwhile friends. I don't know anyone who believes people get cancer because of their sins. Nor do we believe we are held accountable for our parents transgressions, though the modern scourge of drugs destroys families and the soul of anyone it touches.

We moderns believe that an illness like cancer occurs because of exposure to toxic substances like tobacco, or certain industrial carcinogens like benzene and of course radiation. Obviously, personal choices impact our health, but sometimes we inherit a genetic predilection to diseases like coronary artery disease, lupus

and even certain cancers. There are well known genes for hereditary breast and colon cancers, but the ultimate cause of these and most malignancies remain a mystery. Medical care is somewhat like playing gin rummy or poker. In these card games the players try to maximize the odds to improve their hands. In other words, you don't try and draw to an inside straight. As an internist, I try to maximize a patient's chance of good health. I use counseling and hopefully persuasive arguments based on science to maximize my patient's chances of good health.

In medical school we were taught that if you didn't have a pretty good understanding of your patient's diagnosis by the end of your examination you and the patient were in trouble. Yes, I use technology, but I still rely on my clinical skills including a careful review of a patient's family history to maximize my diagnostic and prognostic skills. In fact, your family history may be as important as your own smoking

history, and is a lot less expensive than a high tech genetic analysis.

I only need my clinical skills to tell you that our country is sick and the prognosis is grim though not hopeless. At one time our government was "by the people" and "for the people." I don't believe this any longer. Our government has become a self-sustaining entity with a cadre of workers and acolytes who service the beast.

I'm a reader of science fiction, but even if you're not, most of you will be familiar with the frequently used concept of artificial intelligence (AI) as depicted in the Terminator movies with Arnold Schwarzenegger. In these dystopian movies the infamous AI known as Skynet works to destroy humanity. I see analogies in our government whose desire for self preservation and power expansion is usurping the freedom of its creators. You say this is apocalyptic and pessimistic; I say it's realistic and happening before our very eyes. But thinking free men still have a chance to

turn off our equivalent of Skynet before it's too late. Heck, I help patients quit smoking every day before cancer or a heart attack strikes them down. And giving up nicotine is really tough. All we citizens have to do is pull the plug on this monster called Big Government. We'll get one last chance at the voting machine in November, before our liberties are replaced by the nanny state and the American Dream is added to the ash heap of history.

Doctor Ferguson is accepting new patients. His office is next to Fort Sanders Hospital.

For appointments call Keesha at 865-522-0326.

Do you have a question for Dr. Ferguson? Please e-mail him at jferguson@summithealthcare.com.

Medical librarians to travel to South Africa

UT Graduate School of Medicine Librarians will Train Oversea Counterparts

Medical librarians from the University of Tennessee Graduate School of Medicine travel to South Africa later this month to train public librarians there how to find the best online health information available to share with families in their communities. The trip for the librarians with Preston Medical Library at The University of Tennessee Medical Center in Knoxville is sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in South Africa in partnership with the Library and Information Association of South Africa. Cynthia Vaughn and Martha Earl will conduct numerous workshops throughout South Africa to help community librarians successfully navigate and access the wealth of quality online health resources. The workshops are patterned after those utilized in a successful study, called A Simple Plan Extended, in which Vaughn and Earl participated and taught librarians throughout the state of Tennessee about health information.

"I'm humbled and honored to have this opportunity," said Vaughn, a clinical information librarian and assistant professor with UT Graduate School of Medicine. "Finding medical information is my passion and having the chance to share this knowledge with public librarians in South Africa is something I never dreamed possible."

The National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NN/LM) developed the classes Vaughn and Earl will teach during the trip. The schedule includes presentations to librarians in major cities such as Johannesburg, Cape Town, Pretoria and Durban, as well as in the areas of KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga.

"Wherever we go, whether rural or in urban Tennessee or South Africa, people want to learn about the most reliable sources for health information for themselves, their communities and their families," said Earl, assistant director of Preston Medical Library and an assistant professor with UT Graduate School of Medicine. "Health information empowers consumers the world over. I feel blessed to

Continued on page 2



Martha Earl

Get the Facts About Surgical Weight Loss

Tuesday, March 20 or 27
5:30 p.m.

Turkey Creek Medical Center
Johnson Conference Center
 10820 Parkside Drive

Space is limited. Call 865-694-9676 to register.



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I was just thinking

How'd I get to this?

The day started well. With others from the Knoxville Writers' Guild, I visited Pellissippi State's campus on Magnolia and read to a class of students. They were polite and listened as we read. In fact, they endeared themselves to me when a smattering of laughter edged across the room at some of the lines I read. Add to that the fact that Catherine Nance, the minister at Beaver Ridge United Methodist in Karns, made the trip across town to listen, and my day was filled with good cheer.

Then I reached home sometime in the afternoon and things went south, all because of one thing. Davy Jones died. He was sixty-six and succumbed to a massive heart attack. All of a sudden, a dark pall of emotional clouds descended on me, as well of millions of unbelieving fans.

How is it possible that Jones died? Wasn't he just horsing around and singing the latest hits on television with the rest of the Monkees? This "vertically challenged" guy with a British accent entertained fans with a variety of songs. "Daydream Believer," "I'm a Believer," and "Last Train to



By Joe Rector

Clarksville" were just a few of the tunes that propelled him and the group into stardom.

No, not all are stunned by Davy's passing. People who are old enough to remember the heyday of the Beatles, Rolling Stones, the Kinks, and other bands are sad today. Those who weren't around don't understand what all the fuss is about. They are more or less immune to the heart-breaking news.

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Davy Jones' demise rings the reality bell all too loudly. How did he get so old? More to the point, how did I get so old? Only a little while ago I was in high school and college and listened to Monkee music and other songs from the top artists. In the blink of an eye, I've aged more years than I care to think. How did I become 60 so quickly? The things that make my age

real to me are aches and pains in every joint and a medicine chest filled with prescriptions for everything from high blood pressure to Restless Leg Syndrome.

Another upsetting fact is music by the Monkees and others from my youth are now considered "out of date." I'd argue that

they are still popular with plenty of people across generational lines, but one thing snuffs out that argument. Much of the music that I love so well and that played in the background of my youth is now piped into elevators, doctor office reception rooms, and even some department stores. Those songs are part of Muzak. Ouch!

Even more unsettling, this singer's death brings our own mortality to mind. My generation is looking at the short end of the life stick. Most of our years on this planet are in the rearview mirror. In fact, we've reached the top of life's hill, and now we seem to be gaining speed on the way down the other side. Once we felt invincible. Quickly remembered are those dumb stunts we pulled off and survived. Now we are much more selective about what we do because the last thing needed is a broken hip or slipped disc. Living carefree is replaced with existing carefully. The truth is simple: the children of the 60s are now the senior citizens of today. We are on the list of most likely to die soon. It's shocking, scary, and sobering.

It's a sad day for Monkee fans. We've lost a star who brought joy and optimism to our lives. Davy Jones'

passing emphasizes two things. First, none of us knows the time of our end; it can come suddenly or after a protracted illness. Second, because we don't know when the final minute

of life will come, we must live each one of them to the fullest.

For me, it's time to stop fretting and worrying about my end and to continue enjoying my being.

Still, I think I'll forego any crazy stunts that could bring about injury or harm. I don't deal as quickly as I used to.



Cynthia Vaughn

Medical librarians to travel to South Africa

Cont. from page 1

have this opportunity to share and learn from our colleagues in South Africa." Portions of the visit will coincide with

South African Library Week, celebrated March 17 - 24. Earl and Vaughn have been invited to participate in the inaugural ceremonies to mark the opening of the observation.

Faith

Inward Spiritual Discipline #2: MEDITATION

Last week we looked at the spiritual discipline of prayer. In this article, I want us to focus on the discipline of meditation. The main purpose or desire in meditation is to hear more clearly the heart and mind of God.



By Mark Brackney, Minister of the Arlington Church of Christ

The intent is to connect the head with the heart. Like prayer, this discipline requires us to find a quiet place in order to be silent before God.

Meditation reminds me of an example I read from Richard Foster. He wrote, "Have you ever watched a cow chew its cud? This unassuming animal will fill its stomach with grass and other food. Then it settles down quietly and, through a process of regurgitation, reworks what it has received, slowly moving its mouth in the process. In this way it is able to fully assimilate what it has previously consumed, which is then transformed into rich, creamy milk" (Prayer, 143).

This is a perfect description of meditative prayer. You allow the truth you are meditating on to flow from your mouth to the

mind and then into the heart. You contemplate (regurgitate if you will) over and over and you find yourself being changed from the inside out as you grow in love and faith.

A way to practice the discipline is to take some time (begin with 15 minutes) to dig into a text. Your goal is not information or just understanding the meaning of a text. You want to engage the text and find out what God's Word is saying to you. An important question to ask after reading a text is, "Did I experience God in my reading?" If not, you need to spend more time in the text. Let the text sink into your life. May we be able to say like

the Psalm writer that our "delight is in the law of the Lord, and on His law they meditate day and night" (Psalm 1:2).

There is a difference between Bible study and meditation on Scripture. In Bible study you exegete the text (technical study and analysis), while in meditation you internalize the text and make it personal. The Bible becomes a living Word addressed to you. I remember taking a Bible once and writing on the front cover, "To Mark Brackney." On the back page of the Bible I wrote, "From God."

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, one of my favorite theologians, founded a seminary at Finkenwalde,

Germany. Each student practiced thirty minutes of silent meditation on Scripture a day. What a wonderful practice this would be for each of us. The goal is not to rush through Scripture, but to slow down. You may take an entire week on one passage of Scripture before you internalize it.

While it is important to understand Scripture intellectually, if you do not connect with it at the emotional level, you have not fully understood it. As you read, do your best to put yourself there. Experience God in Scripture as you reflect and meditate upon His wonderful words.

Church Happenings

Grace Baptist Church Seymour

Grace Baptist Church is starting an exciting week of events with a Men's Prayer Breakfast on Saturday, March 10 at 8:00 a.m. All men, young to old and

guests are invited to hear a special guest speaker and enjoy a great breakfast prepared by our Chef, Pastor Cotton Kelly.

Carson-Newman Coach Ken Sparks will be our speaker for the morning service of March 11. Coach Sparks has a long career with Carson Newman winning his 299th game this year. More importantly, he is a strong Christian and has led many of his athletes to God. Sparks was elected Christian Athletes

National Coach of the Year just a few years back.

Coach Sparks is an East Tennessean born in Knoxville. He has coached high school football and has been at Carson-Newman since 1980 and is the winningest football coach in NCAA Division II history. His Carson Newman Eagles have won five NAIA Championships and runners-up in the NCAA Division II playoffs three times.

REVIVAL TIME with Evangelist Dwight Singleton

starts Sunday evening, March 11th at 6:00 p.m. The revival will continue through Wednesday evening starting at 7:00 p.m. "and longer as God directs," says Pastor Kelly. The community is invited.

KFL Outreach

Ministry Presents

The Knoxville Fellowship Luncheon (KFL) will meet March 6, 2012 at the Golden Corral on Clinton Highway, at noon. John Griggs will be the guest

speaker. You may view John's complete Bio at <http://kfl-luncheon.com>.

Faith United Methodist Church

The United Methodist Men of Faith UMC will host a tamale dinner on Saturday, March 17, 2012 from 5-7 p.m. Everyone is welcome to join us for dinner starring the best tamales in town. Don't forget to wear your favorite green outfit. The mission of the United Methodist Men is to help me grow in Christ so others may know Christ. Tamales are also available for purchase at \$12 per dozen.

The Young at Heart at Faith UMC meets the 1st Tuesday of each month from 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. We have an exciting meeting coming up on March 6. Susan Long of East Tennessee Personal Care Attendants will

be talking about Saving Seniors Money. A potluck luncheon will follow the speaker. Everyone is welcome. Faith UMC is located at 1120 Dry Gap Pike. For more information you can visit our website at www.faithseekers.org, e-mail at info@faithseekers.org and also call at 865-688-1000.

Seymour First Baptist Church

Seymour First Baptist Church is pleased to announce that its giant spring auction for missions will be held on Saturday, April 21. Seymour area residents have the opportunity to donate items that benefit purchasers and raise money to support the church's worldwide mission projects. Those with early donations may call the church office at 577-1954.

Come worship with us
New Beverly Baptist Church
 3320 New Beverly Church Rd.
 Knoxville, TN 37918
 Rev. Eddie Sawyer, Pastor
www.newbeverly.org
 856-546-0001

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 Sunday Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.
 Sunday Evening Worship 6:00 p.m.
 Wednesday Evening Prayer 7:00 p.m.
 Wednesday Evening Youth 7:00 p.m.
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