Life in These parts

Dream Chaser: For the past decade, Honolulu psychiatrist Robert Marvit, 60, has been trying to ease his way out of his medical practice into a total life as a jazz musician. He has succeeded to a certain degree... On Mondays, he is a full time sax player, devotes the day to the sax and has a regular afternoon gig at the Waikiki Community Center. Bob had worked his way thru college and medical school as a musician --- playing everything from bar mitzvahs to sweet 16 parties...


Richard Miller became interested when a proposed HMSA participating physician’s agreement "was as close to an agreement for slavery as any I’ve seen with virtually no rights for the physician. HMSA could virtually terminate physicians at will." Subsequently HMSA made some significant changes in negotiations with the Coalition, HMA and the Hawaii Federation of Physicians & Dentists, but with only a two-year agreement.

Miller felt that only by getting some legislation can the Coalition deal effectively with the problem. This led to the discovery that HMSA is a mutual benefit society that isn’t subject to the insurance commissioner’s scrutiny except for solvency. The new patient rights bill remedied that...through the political forces of the Coalition and the American Association for Retired Persons (AARP).

The coalition was formed with three directors and 38 consultants and now has 950 members. It maintains a hotline -- 622-2655. The coalition and AARP provided information on the patient rights bill and help people through the appeals process. The coalition also started a monthly one page publication called “Health Tip” with 8,000 copies distributed by Longs Drugs and Costco. (From Helen Altonn’s feature in the Honolulu Star Bulletin Oct 16 ‘98)

In Remembrance: Internist Thomas Min, 81, who practiced 50 years until the last 2 months of his life died September 24. Thomas was private physician to the late Dr. Syngman Rhee, former president of the Republic of Korea.

Appointed, Elected, & Honored

HMA Officers for 1999: President: Patricia Chinn; Immediate Past Precedent: Len Howard; Secretary: Phillip Hellreich; Treasurer: Charles Kelley. AMA Delegate: Allan Kunimoto; Alternate Delegate: Stephen Wallach.

HMA Physician of the Year: This year’s award recipient was Arleen Jouson-Meyers who finished her law degree at the U of Hawaii while practicing pediatrics in Wahiawa. She formed the Hawaii Coalition for Health, which focuses on advocacy for patients. The Coalition addressed such issues as insurance contracts and patient’s rights -- a bill which was passed by the State Legislature.

Rush Award: Pediatrician Calvin Sia was the 1998 Benjamin Rush Award recipient at the AMA interim Meeting held on December 6 in Honolulu. The prestigious award is given for outstanding contribution to the community for citizenship and public service as a practicing physician. George Mills was the first from Hawaii to be so honored.

Soroptimists International of Waikiki: Elected S. Kalani Brady as its 1998-99 president.

Francis Wong Dedication Ceremony: On September 25, a special dedication program was held at Wong Stadium in Hilo to unveil a bronze plaque memorializing Francis Wong MD, Hilo physician who was a sports leader on the Big Island...

Women of Distinction Award: The Waikiki Soroptimists awarded Patricia Blanchette for her role as founder of the Geriatrics Medicine program at the U of Hawaii and her staff positions in medical centers on Oahu.

State Ethics Post: OB-Gyn man Carl Morton is one of two candidates to fill the post.

Rehab Hospital Board: Endocrinologist Laurie Tom was appointed to the board by chairman Michael W. Perry.

Physician Moves

Oct: Surgeon Hiroji Noguchi joined the Surgical Associates Inc. (i.e. Livingston Wong; Fong-Lieng Fan; Whitney Limm; Alan Cheung; and Linda Wong) as an associate in the practice of general surgery, vascular surgery and transplantation.

Pediatrician Mathew Ho joined the Maui Medical Group Inc.; pediatrician Doreen Ueoka joined the Ohana Physicians group clinics in Wailuku and Pukalani Square; and Pediatrician Ric Custodio joined the Bay Clinic Inc. Family Health Centers as medical director.

Tina P. Chun MD opened her new OB-Gyn practice at Queens Med Center POB I. FP Kim Chi Nguyen joined the team of Helen Percy and Carcel Gilbert at the Lahaina Clinic of the Maui Medical Group.

Board eligible orthoped Darren Egami joined the Maui Medical Group in Wailuku. Darren was chief resident in orthopedics at Queens Medical Center and the U of Hawaii Orthopedic Trauma Service and recognized for his excellent performance.

Internist Thu H. Vu joined the Kiluaea Medical Associates on the Big Island. FP Ernest Bade and FNP Jackie Gardner relocated to Waiakea Villas, 400 Hualani St. Ste. 191B, Hilo, Hawaii.

General and vascular surgeon Leonard Kiehm who practiced 21 years in Kailua, Oahu moved to the Maui Clinic Medical Center.

Miscellany

George looked like a golf pro in his designer outfit, but he sliced his first drive deep into the woods. Rather than accept a penalty, he decided to try an iron to get back on the fairway. But his ball ricocheted off a tree and struck him on the forehead, killing him. When he arrived at the Pearly Gates, St. Peter greeted him. "Oh, you look like a golfer. Are you any good?" George replied, "I got here in two, didn't I?"

Smith goes to see his supervisor in the front office. "Boss," he says, "we're doing some heavy house cleaning at home tomorrow and my wife needs me to help with the attic and the garage moving and hauling stuff."
"We're short handed, Smith," the boss replies, "I can't give you the day off."
"Thanks, boss," says Smith. "I knew I could count on you."

An attorney was on his death bed in the hospital. A friend came to visit and found the lawyer frantically leafing through the bible. "What are you doing?" The visitor asked.

The sick lawyer replied, "Looking for loopholes."

**Hors De Combat**

**Herbal Treatments:** Drs. Marcia Angell and Jerome Kassirer of the New England Medical Journal, in an editorial, cited the hazards of poorly tested herbal remedies and recommended that alternative medicines should be subjected to the same rigorous standards as mainstream treatments.

Herbal remedies sold as dietary supplements have proliferated since 1994 when Congress exempted them from regulation by the Federal Food & Drug Administration.

"There cannot be two kinds of medicine; conventional and alternative. There is only medicine that has been adequately tested and medicine that has not... Medicine that works and medicine that may of may not."

"Alternative treatments should be subjected to scientific testing no less vigorous than that required for conventional treatments."

**Potpourri I**

For more than an hour, a scrawny guy sat at a bar staring into his glass. Suddenly a burly truck driver sat sown next to him, grabbed the guy's drink and gulped it down. The poor little fellow burst out crying, "Oh, come on pal," the trucker said. "I was just joking. Here, I'll buy you another."

"No, that's not it," the man blurted. "This has been the worst day of my life. I was late for work and got fired. When I left the office, I found that my car had been stolen, so I walked six miles home. Then I found my wife with another man, so I grabbed my wallet and came here. And just when I was about to end it all, the guy said sobbing, "you showed up and drank my poison."
I’ll Just Check the Sample Cupboard

(Condensed version of medical humor from STITCHES Sep ’98)

by Dr. J. P. Caldwell

One of the great advantages of being a family doctor is that you always have a large supply of free drug samples to give away to your patients and friends even though they’re often not exactly the drug of choice for the particular problem... Only on very rare occasions do I prescribe for myself - only in emergencies - but I had this really ugly toenail that I just had to treat. My wife has this habit of stomping on my foot with her high heels at dinner parties, and my poor battered toenail was rising up like a creature From the Green Lagoon in my Hush Puppies.

I don’t have a lot of time to wait in line at the drugstore like patients do and I knew we had these samples in our drug cupboard, so I took two or three of them a day. They were in a little pill bottle with a bright blue happy face on it.

Within two days my yellow toenail fell off! Unfortunately, so did my toe. In addition, the rest of me turned yellow - oddly enough, the exact same color as the old toenail!!

My internist says he’d love to know the name of the pills I was taking, the ones with the bright blue happy face on the bottle. We’ve been over it 100 times - I tell him every time that they’re white and then I describe them to him using the back of my little fingernail and my thumb to show the exact size - but he never recognizes them. He doesn’t see drug reps. Though I did react to the pills, after three months my disability plan clicked in like a charm and I did get to meet a lot of nice young doctors, some of them whom are very kind and caring, though they’re a little short on experience, especially with drugs. I particularly appreciate the surgeon who’s the head of my liver transplant team.

He’s very caring and compassionate and treats me more like a friend or colleague than a patient. He was once a GP himself, so he knows that I don’t have a drug plan and whenever I need any medicines - say one of those anti-rejection pills - he just excuses himself for a moment to see if he has a “little something” for me in his drug cupboard.