

Health & Fitness

HEALTHWISE

Water, water everywhere

■ Sure you can get it from the tap. But how boring when you can savor the waters of the world. And in Arthur von Wiesenberger's *H2O: The Guide to Quality Bottled Water* (Woodbridge, \$11.95) you get a chance to vicariously sample the best.



What goes into perfect spring water? First it must come from an environment free from contamination — someplace out in the country where the air is fresh and where rolling hills or mountain peaks protect springs from the onslaught of civilization.

Then it needs to be more than pure. Instead, the water must have a balanced analysis.

Finally, it must be within reach.

And that's why Caddo Valley Spring Water, Mountain Valley Water and Crystal Drinking Water (Ozarka Water Co.) were chosen to appear in this book that also is a historical study.

Doing laps without the water

■ Get in step. One lap around the first level of the redone University Mall equals .28 miles. Go four laps and you've clocked 1.12 miles.

Trot up to the second level and one lap gets you .17 miles — six laps and you've gone 1.02 miles.

And if you join the InStep Club, sponsored by the mall and Baptist Medical System, there are benefits besides feeling better. For a \$5 joining fee you also get a T-shirt that says "I Brake For Shoppers," as well as a chance to participate in a "walk for the gold" program, free monthly health screenings and discounts with mall retailers.

A similar program is offered at McCain Mall. There one lap on the first level is .25 miles. One lap on the second level is .42 miles.

Hours at both malls are 5:30 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Cold turkey for Thanksgiving

■ "Puff, puff, puff, and if you smoke yourself to death..."

Or kick the habit this Thursday. Join the American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout.

The Smokeout is an upbeat, good-natured effort to encourage smokers to give up cigarettes for 24 hours. And though that may not sound like much time, it is when you're addicted.



Last year more than 19.5 million of the nation's 50 million smokers tried to kick the habit for the day. Of 5.8 million smokers able to stay off cigarettes for 24 hours, 3.7 million were still not smoking one to three days later.

So trash that pack of lies and take a breather.

Tough words on tipping

■ And now that we're used to warnings on cigarette packages, Congress recently passed legislation warning about the dangers of drinking — alcohol, that is.

By December 1989 — more than a year away — all containers of beer, wine and liquor will for the first time be required to bear a warning label reading:

"Government Warning: (1) According to the Surgeon General, women should not drink alcoholic beverages during pregnancy because of the risk of birth defects. (2) Consumption of alcoholic beverages impairs your ability to drive a car or operate machinery, and may cause other health problems."

Sex in the '80s

■ Lima beans are lively for your love life.

And so are avocados, nuts and egg yolks. All are important foods for an active sex life at any age, according to Dr. Richard Kunin in November's *Longevity* magazine.

As sources of vitamin A, manganese, vitamin B6, zinc and vitamin E, these are among the readily available dietary means for men and women to keep themselves ready, willing and able for an active sex life well into their 90s.

Nutrients Sources & Benefits



Vitamin A: Found in vegetables, fruits, butter, egg yolk and liver, it helps produce sex hormones.

Manganese: Found mainly in nuts, whole-grain cereals, dried beans or peas and tea, it assists in the production of dopamine and acetylcholine — neurotransmitters that tend to heighten sexual arousal.

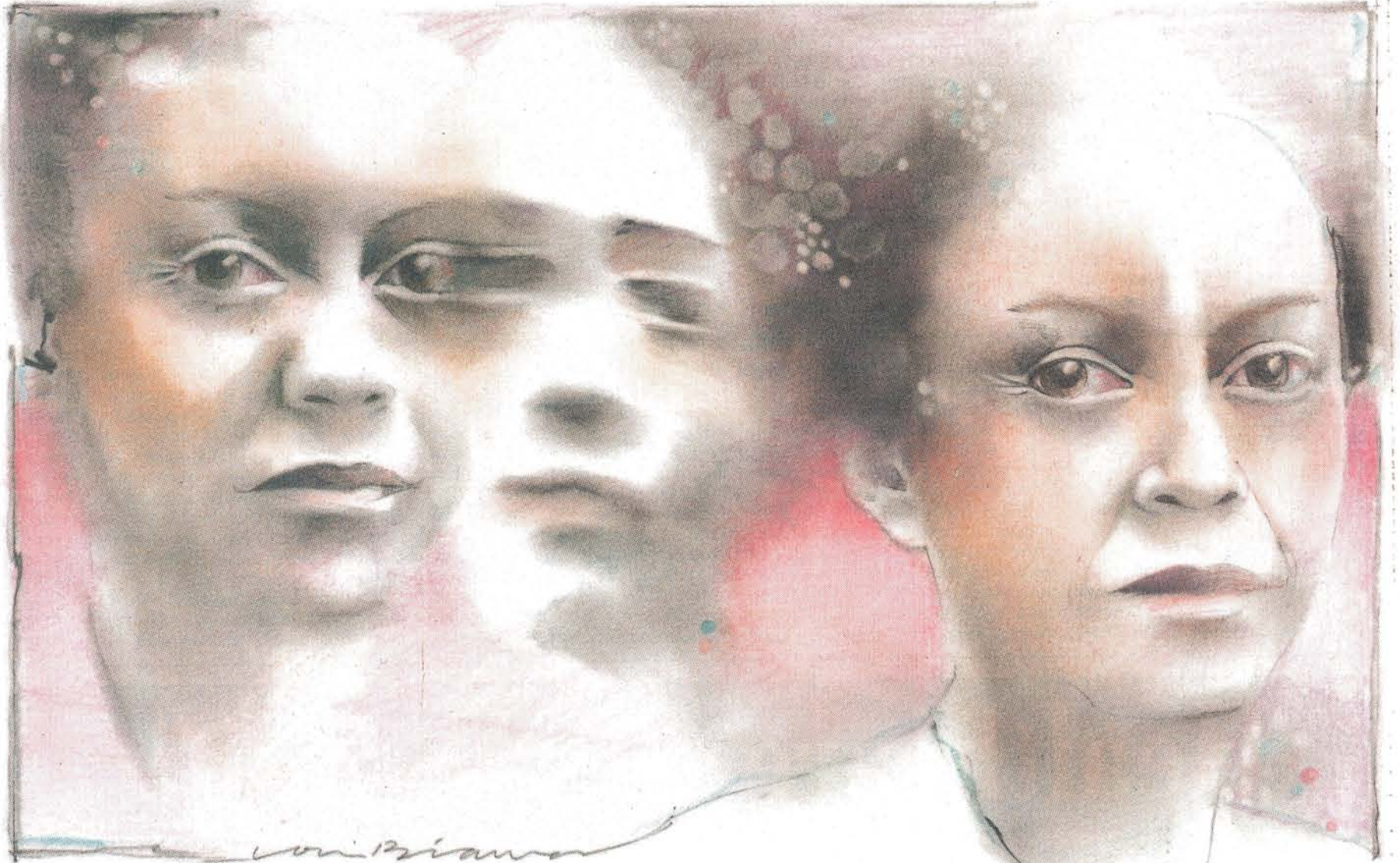
Vitamin B6: Also known as pyridoxine and present in whole grains, liver, kidney, fish, yeast, avocados, it decreases prolactin, a hormone that diminishes a woman's sexual arousal. It increases the hormone in men that regulates testosterone.

Zinc: Abundant in foods such as oysters, wheat germ, cashews, beef, lamb, green beans and lima beans, it stimulates the formation of the male sex hormone testosterone.

Vitamin E: Found in green vegetables, whole grains, seeds and nuts, it improves vascular circulation by acting as an anticoagulant.

—Source: *Longevity*, November issue.

Menopause



CHANGING VIEWS ON THAT CHANGE OF LIFE

By Marilyn Myers
GAZETTE STAFF

My mother doesn't know when her sisters went through menopause. It just wasn't something they talked about.

But women are beginning to blab now. Asked about menopause stories, a local gynecologist — a woman in her mid-30s — had a marvelous one to share about a patient.

It seems this North Little Rock patient came to see the gynecologist because she wanted relief from vaginal dryness — a problem that made intercourse so difficult that she and her spouse were only "doing it about twice a week now."

The gynecologist, recognizing this change-of-life symptom, prescribed estrogen replacement therapy to help restore the moisture and thickness of the woman's vaginal walls.

And the 81-year-old patient is doing just fine now.

Gazette readers also shared their experiences

(See MENOPAUSE on Page 4E.)

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE

In the menstrual cycle, estrogen is produced in increasing amounts until it peaks (about mid-cycle), triggering ovulation (the release of an egg from the ovary).

At that point both estrogen and progesterone are produced to prepare the lining of the uterus for pregnancy.

If a fertilized egg doesn't attach to the lining, the hormone levels drop — causing the lining to be sloughed off as the menstrual period.

When estrogen reaches a low ebb, the hormonal system kicks in gear and the whole process starts over.

And then somewhere around age 45 — when only a few eggs remain — this carefully orchestrated hormonal cycle begins to break down. Signals get confused and the body begins producing more or less hormones than normal, often triggering menopausal symptoms.

By the time a woman reaches menopause all her eggs have been used up, explained Dr. Michael

(See PROCESS on Page 4E.)

ESTROGEN REPLACEMENT THERAPY IN A NUTSHELL

Why?

One-third of women have an easy menopause, one-third will have a more severe menopause with irregular bleeding and hot flashes, and one-third will be severely disabled with all the symptoms, according to Dr. Judy McDonald, a Little Rock obstetrician/gynecologist.

Estrogen replacement is given to relieve symptoms like irregular periods, loss of libido, hot flashes and night sweats — which can lead to sleep loss, chronic fatigue, mood swings and depression.

Hormone replacement also is given to prevent vaginal dryness and osteoporosis.

"One of the main benefits of estrogen replacement is it will protect against development

(See ESTROGEN on Page 4E.)

Healthfest happenin' in Hot Springs

By Marilyn Myers
GAZETTE STAFF

Hot Springs should be jammin' this weekend. Healthfest '88 starts Thursday evening with a volunteer meeting and ends Sunday afternoon with a bike race.

There's a little something here for everyone. But if you're looking for the Spa 10K, look again. On Saturday, it gets officially christened the

Mountain Valley Water 10K, in honor of one of the sponsors and a nod to the corporate headquarters building located right past the finish line.

Kids also can win running ribbons in the Pat and Lenny Spa Squirt. This has groupings for those 4-and-under all the way through 12 years of age.

Cyclists can choose to pump to the top of Hot Springs Mountain, peddle a nearly flat course with hairpin turns or ride all the way to Hot Springs from Little Rock — and back again.

But all isn't running and riding. Other activities include aerobic exercising, gymnastics and racquetball.

And there are also — according to the sponsors — health workshops, family fun and friendly good sportsmanship among leisure-sport lovers.

Should your muscles get sore, the advantage of being in Hot Springs is that you can ease the pain at one of the baths. And don't forget the massage.

For information call 1-800-272-2081.

Oysters can be risky business

By Anne Byrn
COX NEWS SERVICE

—ATLANTA.

The old wives' tale about eating oysters only in months with an "r" in them may have some credence, seafood experts say.

Those are the chillier months when the oyster's appetite lessens, which means it doesn't eat many of the harmful organisms that flourish in oyster bays and estuaries nationwide. And the levels of toxic bacteria tend to decrease when the water gets colder.

A name such as PSP may sound like a wartime missile, but in reality it is one of the mysterious microorganisms waging war on the oyster industry.

PSP stands for "paralytic shellfish poisoning," caused by toxins that block nerve impulses, paralyze the respiratory muscles and extremities and sometimes are fatal to humans. The toxin that causes shellfish poisoning is produced by microscopic plankton that bloom in such large numbers they color the water red — thus the name "Red Tide" has been coined to describe them.

The most recent villain is a bacterium called *Vibrio vulnificus*, which is found in the salty water of the Gulf of Mexico, and in higher concentrations in warm weather. Those at highest risk of being affected by the bacteria are people with liver disorders, cancer or AIDS, said Dr. Dan Rodrigue, medical epidemiologist for the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta.

In addition, a variety of illnesses — from diarrhea to hepatitis A to cholera — can occur if oysters are harvested from waters contaminated with human sewage.

Because of the increasing number of toxins in the

water, eating raw oysters on the half shell, no matter what time of year, is "very risky," Rodrigue said. "You really should cook them."

But not all methods of cookery, such as grilling or steaming, effectively reduce bacterial levels. The longer they are cooked, the better, and frying, sauteing, baking and boiling are recommended.

An oyster gets food and oxygen from its surroundings by pumping about 100 gallons of water a day across its gill system. It also takes in whatever bacteria, viruses, impurities and chemical contaminants are in the water.

Ironically, the bacteria that cause gastroenteritis and cholera, the virus that causes hepatitis A and the toxin that produces paralytic shellfish poisoning are dangerous to humans but not oysters.

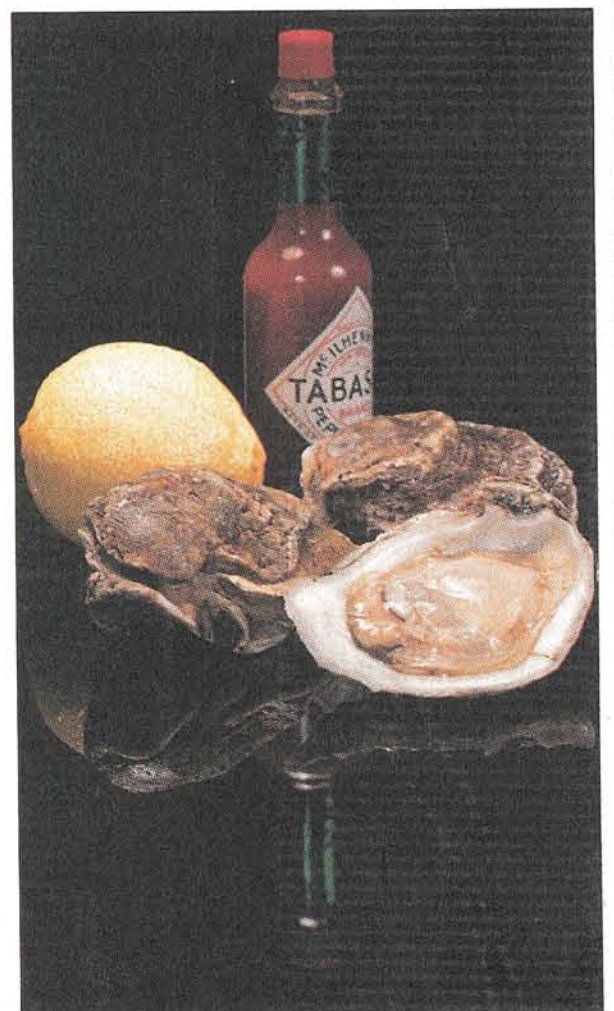
What's even worse, said Carol Ballentine of the Food and Drug Administration, is that the oyster is able to filter and concentrate these microorganisms at higher levels than they are found in its habitat.

The best way to avoid sickness and yet to enjoy raw oysters is to eat them in cool months and to purchase them from reputable retailers who buy from safe, pollution- and parasite-free areas, Ballentine said.

Oysters are shipped with a tag that reveals where they were harvested, by whom and on what date. This is an FDA regulation and one that local health departments are supposed to enforce during routine inspections.

Restaurants are supposed to keep the tags for 90 days, so that if a customer gets sick from eating raw oysters, the source can be traced and the bay or estuary closed.

If you believe you have become ill as a result of eating contaminated raw oysters, contact the regional office of the FDA, your local health department and your doctor.



—Staff Photo by W.L. "Pat" Patterson

"Why, then the world's mine oyster/ Which I with sword will open" (Shakespeare) ... and don't forget the lemon juice and hot sauce.