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# MWSHS Newsletter

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Winter 2008-2009

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## Student Profile: Jennifer Swedberg

In her lifetime, massage therapist Jennifer Swedberg has encountered a wide range of people suffering from various illnesses or conditions, most of which were being managed with drugs prescribed by physicians. "Yet," she observes: "I've always felt that there must be a better way to deal with health issues than with pharmaceuticals and all their harmful side effects."

"Of course, too, I've always had an interest in improving my own health. So when I discovered the Master-Herbalist Diploma Program offered by MWSHS, I saw a lot of potential there for increasing my herbal and nutritional knowledge to help both myself and my family as well as to share with clients to help them to improve their own lives."

Describing in detail why she enjoys and benefits from the M.H. program, Jennifer points out: "The program is structured very well: You start out with history in some different modalities and then proceed to the breakdown of nutrients, herbs, their chemical make-up, and the effects that they have upon the body. Then you get into the different conditions and which herbs are used, which makes sense after all of the prior information." She adds here: "I like the fact that you can work through it at your own pace, even though there are some recommended time frames. I've also enjoyed the workshops sponsored by MWSHS that I've attended. The format is great: There are usually three or four different presenters who budget their time to lecture and then to carefully guide the students through practice sessions."

Offering her thoughts on what she feels is the wide-ranging appeal of the program, Jennifer observes: "The knowledge to be obtained from this program is amazing! If you are a technical or scientific type, you will have certainly have that information. On the other hand, the program also exposes you to the practical side of using plants, including how the different herbal healing modalities look at them."

As the founder and owner of Guiding Hands Massage in Shoreview, MN, Jennifer states that her "goal is to offer my massage clients in-depth services. We currently offer a variety of massage techniques, ranging from *(Continued on Page Five)*



Jennifer Swedberg,  
Senior Student in  
the M.H. Program

## Congratulations to Our Fourth-quarter, 2008 Graduates!

Congratulations to our Fourth-quarter, 2008 graduates of the Master-Herbalist Diploma program, who have each worked so very hard to earn their diploma! These graduates are:

Erica Allen, M.H.

Kelley Hagenbuch, M.H.

Marlene McKenzie, M.H.

We look forward to hearing more from these and other graduates as they apply their accumulated knowledge to their own lives and in an effort to enlighten others to the wonders of herbal healing!

## Our New Mailing Address

The post office recently changed our mailing address from P O Box 120845 to P O Box 120096, New Brighton MN 55112. Please make a note of our new address in your records. (However, mail sent to the old address will be forwarded to the new address for 365 days.)

## New Items Available from Our Store

Aside from the hundreds of individual herbs offered through our retail store (Midwest Herbs and Healing, 612-781-3006; mwhrbs@aol.com), we now stock a laminated, 13¼-inch-by-10¾-inch "Herbal Energetics Chart" (from the Ayurvedic perspective) describing the energetics of 53 different herbs, for \$5.95 + \$1.50 P&H, and a "Medicine Bear" (the Native-American animal symbol of healing) Window Decal, for \$6.95 + \$1.00 P&H. Of course, our registered students receive 20% off of these retail prices.

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## Inside This Issue

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- |   |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| 2 | Workshop Credit Options--Nationwide! |
| 3 | A Long and Healthy Life--How?        |
| 4 | Building An Herbal Reference Library |
| 5 | Book Reviews                         |
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## WORKSHOP CREDIT OPTIONS

Except where noted, all of the below-listed events qualify as Workshop credits toward the Master-Herbalist Diploma Program. Each hour of *verified* attendance counts toward an equivalent hour of Workshop Category #3 credits (up to the student limit of 20 hours), unless another category is specified or unless one attends a particular workshop at one of these events that is *strictly* in one of these other categories.

### Workshops, Conferences, Lectures, & Events in Herbal Studies Across North America

**Apr. 4-5, 2009.** "Southwest Conference on Botanical Medicine," **Tempe, AZ**. Cost is \$225 (if registered by March 3rd; \$295 otherwise). Featuring presentations by renowned herbalists and naturopaths and herb walks in the desert! Call (800) 252-0688 or see [www.botanicalmedicine.org](http://www.botanicalmedicine.org) for more details.

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***Reminder!*** Earth Day is ***April 25, 2009.***

Please set aside some special time for prayer, meditation, and activity on behalf of our dear, beleaguered Earth!

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**May 3, 2009.** "Wild Foods of Oxbow's Old Growth Forest," **Sandy River Gorge, OR**, 1-5pm. For further info or to register, call (503) 775-3828, email [mail@wildfoodadventures.com](mailto:mail@wildfoodadventures.com), or see the website at [www.wildfoodadventures.com](http://www.wildfoodadventures.com).

**May 22-25, 2009.** "Native Shores Wild Food Rendezvous" at **Lincoln County, OR** near the Ocean, \$280 + site fee. This is a 4-day intensive on wild sea vegetables, coastal wild plants, and seashore animal foods. For further info or to register, call (503) 775-3828, email [mail@wildfoodadventures.com](mailto:mail@wildfoodadventures.com) or see the website at [www.wildfoodadventures.com](http://www.wildfoodadventures.com).

**May 30-June 1, 2009.** "Medicines from the Earth: 19th Annual Symposium on Herbal Medicine," Blue Ridge Assembly, **Black Mountain, NC**. Featuring presentations by renowned herbalists and naturopaths, as well as herb walks! For further info and/or to register, call (800) 252-0688 or see the website at [www.botanicalmedicine.org](http://www.botanicalmedicine.org).

**MWSHS' own Workshops** resume again in **Late-Spring to Early-Summer, 2009!** Watch our website ([www.midwestherbalstudies.com](http://www.midwestherbalstudies.com)), under "Events," for forthcoming details.

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# A Long and Healthy Life – How? (Part One)

by Matthew Alfs

Those of us over forty no doubt remember the long-running, television exercise show starring Jack La Lanne. Dressed in black leotards, La Lanne lead countless throngs of folks at home in daily calisthenics and stretches—for some *thirty-four years* (from 1951-85)! I have fond memories of watching La Lanne's show at my grandma's house, but I especially became a fan of his when I learned of his life-long devotion to *strength* training, a longtime interest of my own. At age 40, for instance, La Lanne did a staggering *1,033 push-ups* in 23 minutes, on national TV! At age 70—when most folks are content to pass their time in the nearest easy chair—he swam across Long Beach Harbor towing two large boats by a neck collar... *handcuffed!*

Now 93 years young, Jack still vividly embodies the healthful lifestyle and can often be seen on late-night infomercials with his wife, Elaine, promoting the latest incarnation of his fruit-and-vegetable juicer. Just a few years ago, I watched him crank out a series of chin-ups on yet another TV show. Now, friends, *imagine being as fit as Jack La Lanne* in your *eighth or ninth decade of life!*

However, such a state of health can be more than mere imagining. How so? Well, much of Jack's sage philosophy on health can be found in his book, *The Jack La Lanne Way to Vibrant Good Health*, which is one of many treasures in my several-thousand-volume home library. In this book—and in the many interviews with him I've watched or read—Jack attributes his health to four chief factors: Vigorous exercise, a whole-foods diet, a lifetime of not smoking, and plenty of clean living!

Now, none of those things are beyond most of us. But, having detailed the many benefits of a whole-foods diet in a previous issue of this newsletter ("Protein, Fat, & Carbs—The Paleolithic Way!" Spring 2004), I would like to focus now on the incomparable benefits of exercise. Let me begin by presenting a round-up of recent research testifying to what Jack La Lanne has already demonstrated by his life-long devotion to physical fitness....

## The Life-extending Benefits of Exercise

- ◆ A study at the Harvard School for Public Safety (Sesso et al, 1999 *Am J Epidemiol* Aug 15; 150[4]:408-16) showed that middle-aged women (mean age of 45.5 yrs), free of heart disease, who walked ten or more blocks a day cut their risk of getting heart disease by a whopping 33% over women who walked less than four blocks a day!

- ◆ In a related Harvard School of Public Health study (Tanasescu, 2002 *JAMA* Oct 23-30;288(16):1994-2000), men who walked briskly for 30 minutes daily were 18% less prone to experience heart disease than controls. The same study showed that men who lifted weights for thirty minutes or more weekly had a 23% lower risk of heart disease than those who did not do so. (This may at least partly be so because weight-lifting has been shown to raise HDL, the so-called "good" cholesterol associated with heart health-Ullrich, 1987 *South Med J* Mar;80[3]:328-31)
- ◆ A recent study (Wueve et al 2004 *JAMA* 292[12]: 1454-61) showed that regular, long-term physical activity, inclusive of walking, enhances cognitive function and reduces decline in older women.
- ◆ An excess of 100 published studies have demonstrated an *antidepressant* effect for exercise! (This is at least partly attributable to the endorphins released by such activity) One of the studies (Partonen et al, 1998 *Psychol Med* 28[6]:1369-64) powerfully demonstrated that exercise in full-spectrum lights improved mood in even *chronic* cases of depression, as well as increased *vitality*.

While these studies highlight just a few of the many benefits of regular, vigorous exercise, research and experience also show that "sloughing off" into a sedentary lifestyle *counters* the good effects accrued from exercise, and that in a *very pronounced* and *rapid* way, even as astronauts can testify: After a mere month in space, they typically lose a staggering *33% of their muscular strength* and the earthly equivalent of over *four years of bone!* In fact, over *half* the good results of six months of muscle building from weight lifting can be lost in just *three months* of inactivity! Or as Bob Hoffman, one of the pioneers of weight-lifting in twentieth-century America, used to say: "Muscles don't wear out—they *rust* out!"

So, then, let's always bear in mind, *and exemplify* in *our own lives*, the benefits of vigorous exercise. But, we must also remember that, even as is true of our herbal studies, *willpower* and *routine* are crucial to maintaining progress and its many benefits. Milo of Crotona, the legendary founder of weight-lifting, put both of these principles into play by initially lifting a newborn calf above his head and then continuing to lift it, *each and every day*, until it was a *full-grown cow!* This *methodic devotion* to his newfound sport made him the strongest man of the ancient world, proving that *diligence* pays off—in spades! (*Continued next Issue!*)

# Building An Herbal Reference Library

## (Part One)

by Matthew Alfs, R.H.

Good herbalists appreciate that the science and art of herbalism has been shaped over many centuries by countless practitioners, all of whom were granted various degrees of insight into the remarkable healing powers of the many plants covering earth's surface. Of course, the chief way that this wisdom has been passed on to succeeding generations has been by way of the printed word—that is, in the form of books. In view of this, a good home library on herbal medicine would seem to be a necessity for the present-day herbal practitioner! Understandably, then, the School has gotten frequent requests for an article detailing the more important herbal books that a serious herbal student would do well to acquire. Below, then, appears the first installment of just such an article, outlining the "best of the best" books available on medicinal plants!

### General Herbal-Reference Works

Some of the most treasured and trusted works in this category include Andrew Chevallier's *The Encyclopedia of Medicinal Plants* (London: Dorling Kindersley, 1996, 336pp.), James Duke's *CRC Handbook of Medicinal Herbs* (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 1985, 704pp.), and R. C. Wren, *Potter's New Cyclopaedia of Botanical Drugs and Preparations*, rewritten E. M. Williamson & F. J. Evans (London: Saffron Walden and New York: C.W. Daniel Co., 1988, 400 pp.) These books not only serve as a wealth of information on the historic uses for each of the many medicinal plants that they cover in encyclopedic fashion, but also provide phytochemical data and summarize a wide variety of scientific studies, for which they provide the references.

Be aware, however, that while many books have been published over the last decade or so along the theme of "herbal medicine for health-care professionals" (meaning, in this context, physicians, physician's assistants, nurse-practitioners, registered nurses, and pharmacists), most of these have been only selectively researched (often lacking reference to the rich historical testimony on the efficacy of the respective plants) and are often laced with unsound conclusions. Moreover, most of them reflect a lack of genuine clinical experience with herbs on the part of their authors (ironically so, in view of their titles!). In this category, I would place books such as the *PDR of Herbal Medicines*, Varro Tyler's titles *The Honest Herbal* and *Herbs of Choice*, and Fetrow and Avila's *Professional's Handbook of Complementary & Alternative Medicines*.

### General Histories of Herbal Medicine

One of the most widely appreciated books on the history of herbal medicine has been Barbara Griggs' *Green*

*Pharmacy*, first published in the U.K. in 1981 and recently updated, which discusses the history of medicinal plants from ancient Egypt up until the present day. Another goodie is Edith Wheelwright's *Medicinal Plants and their History*, publ. by Dover Publications in 1974

### Ancient Greco-Roman Herbals

A very readable English translation of Hippocrates' writings by J. Chadwick is still in print as an inexpensive paperback edition by the Penguin Classics (as *The Hippocratic Writings*). Dioscorides' famous herbal of the first century C.E. was translated by John Goodyear in 1655 and edited by Robert Gunther and published in Oxford in 1959. However, as the English in this translation is quite out-of-date and difficult to understand for a modern reader, one can be thankful that a more modern rendition is said to be in the works.

An English translation of second-century Greek physician Soranus' interesting writings on gynecology (in which he discussed many herbal remedies) was made by Owsei Temkin in 1956 and published as *Soranus' Gynecology*. A paperback edition was published by the Johns Hopkins Univ. Press in 1991, which is still in print.

An English translation of Celsus' *De Medicina* ("On Medicine") was made by W. G. Spencer in 1938 and has been in print by the Loeb Classical Library for some time. (It was also reprinted in 1989 by the Classics of Medicine Library in a beautifully bound form, with a raised spine, of which I am a proud owner!)

Pliny the Elder's extensive encyclopedia of natural history was translated into English by W. H. S. Jones in 1938 and has long been available from the Loeb Classical Library in the form of the English translation facing the Latin text, but may have recently gone out of print (as far as I can tell). (Note that only Books 24-27 of the *Natural History* discuss medicinal plants in any depth.)

A fine resource on ancient Greco-Roman herbalism in general is *A Pompeian Herbal*, by W. F. Jashemski, published in 1999 by the University of Texas Press, which covers individual plants used by Greco-Roman herbalists by way of monographs, each of which quotes choice selections from the ancient Greco-Roman authors.

*(The next installment in this series will cover English translations of early-European and Arabic herbals and other works on herbal medicine that were first published from 500 C.E. to 1800 C.E., followed by an installment on Modern-European works, then an installment on books on Native-American plant medicines, then an installment on herbal-related books produced by the Physio-medicalists, Eclectics, and American folk herbalists, and finally an installment on the works of modern-American herbalists.)*

## BOOK REVIEWS

Thayer, Samuel. **The Forager's Harvest: A Guide to Identifying, Harvesting, and Preparing Wild Plants.** Ogema, WI: Forager's Harvest, 2006, softcover, 360pp., illus. in color. \$22.95

In this most welcome addition to the corpus of books available on edible wild plants, noted wild-foods forager Sam Thayer has collated and presented a wealth of foraging wisdom culled from a lifetime of experience in the field!

I cherish my personally inscribed copy not only because it is extremely well written, illustrated (with over 200 full-color photos!), and presented, but because it details the edible uses of many plants not normally covered in the foraging literature, such as wood nettle (*Laportea canadensis*; its cousin stinging nettle [*Urtica* spp.] getting the lion's share of treatment in other foraging manuals), basswood (*Tilia* spp.), carrion flower (*Smilax herbacea*), swamp saxifrage (*Saxifraga pennsylvanica*), black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), and nannyberry (*Viburnum lentago*). Special coverage is given to one of Thayer's own favorites, groundnut (*Apios americana*), which treatment details his dogged investigations into, personal experiences with, and stories concerning sharing this curious plant with foraging novices. Another gem is the detailed chart on p. 299 distinguishing the features of edible milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*) from the toxic dogwood (*Apocynum cannabinum*), including the interesting observation that the latter's leaves squeak when rubbed together, in contrast to the former's!

Perhaps most exceptional about this delightful book, however, are the extensive and highly practical introductions on how to harvest, prepare, and store wild foods, which material is replete with photographs of various foraging implements and devices—some of which Thayer himself appears to have designed.

There can be no doubt that the acquisition of this book would be a most rewarding investment for any wild-plant enthusiast!—Reviewed by *Matthew Alfs, M.H., R.H., Director, MWSH*

Fallon, Sally. **Nourishing Traditions: The Cookbook that Challenges Politically Correct Nutrition and the Diet Dictocrats,** Rev. & Updated 2d ed., Oversize Softcover, New Trends Publishing Inc., 1999, 688pp., \$25.00

This fascinating cookbook appears to be quite unique: I am not aware of any other cookbook that combines over 700 different recipes with a history of traditional foods, lessons on macro- and micro- nutrition, tips for navigating around the kitchen, and wise words from a plethora of spiritual leaders!

Author Sally Fallon is president of the Weston A. Price Foundation—a non-profit organization devoted to providing accurate, but not necessarily popular, information on diet and health. Her contributor, Mary Enig, has long promoted the use of healthy fats and has been a crusader in the fight to ban the use of trans fats. Side by side, they deliver a masterpiece that questions the accuracy of popular diet dictums such as the Government-proposed, ideal breakdown of food groups via the well-known "Food Pyramid," which recommends 6-10 servings of grains that are often disguised as refined and processed—or "junk"—foods! The Food Pyramid, too, recommends only a small amount of protein and fat, but Fallon challenges that animal fat and cholesterol are necessary in larger amounts in our diet to enable proper functioning of the nervous system.

However, *Nourishing Traditions* is not just another plug for an Atkins-style diet. It also discusses ingredients and procedures plentiful in traditional diets that are largely missing from our present-day diet and explains how this has affected us to our detriment. For example, the traditional method of soaking grains, beans, nuts and seeds before consumption enables their nutrients to be more easily digested and made bioavailable than occurs with processed versions of these foods as sold in today's grocery stores. Then, too, traditional fermented foods such as sauerkraut and homemade yogurt, which are so seldom prepared and eaten today, have shown benefits to both the digestive system and the immune system. As yet another example, raw milk purchased from a good farmer commends itself as a better option than does the pasteurized and homogenized—in essence, "dead—version resting on present-day grocery shelves.

With its numerous and varied recipes, this book would seem to offer enough to satisfy every one—from the raw-foods vegetarian to the meat-and-potatoes lover! —Reviewed by *Kara Carper, M.A., Assistant Student Coordinator, MWSHS*

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### Jennifer Swedberg Profile (Cont. from Page One)

light massage to deep tissue, myofascial work, and prenatal massage. We also offer ion therapy and ear candling. However, mastering the material in the M.H. program will allow me to offer suggestions about nutrition and to set up programs for safe and effective herbal therapies."

Jennifer is one of many MWSHS students who are health-care professionals—a diverse family of healers that includes medical doctors, pharmacists, nurses, chiropractors, and a variety of other healing professionals. You can learn more about Jennifer's training, specialties, and current offerings by visiting her healing center's website at <http://guidinghandsmassage.massagetherapy.com/>

## In Coming Issues

*\* Student Profiles*

*\* Student Articles*

*\* News & Views*

*\*Book Reviews!*

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