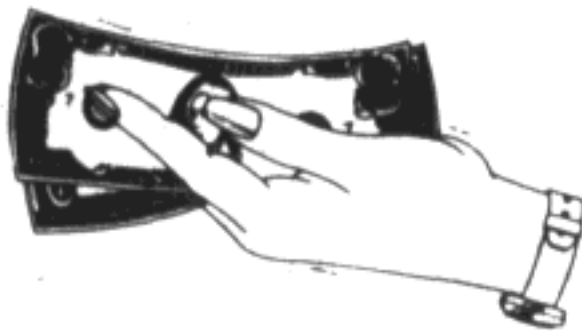


# Good health practices, education start at home

Health education. Does it really exist? People are beginning to wonder. Recently, in two of the leading "health" journals, there have been articles on research that shows that mass media and health education programs do not change people's health behavior. The conclusion is that health education isn't working. Prevention is not effective. Should we keep the system of getting sick before you try to get better? "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" is not a truism. Or is it?



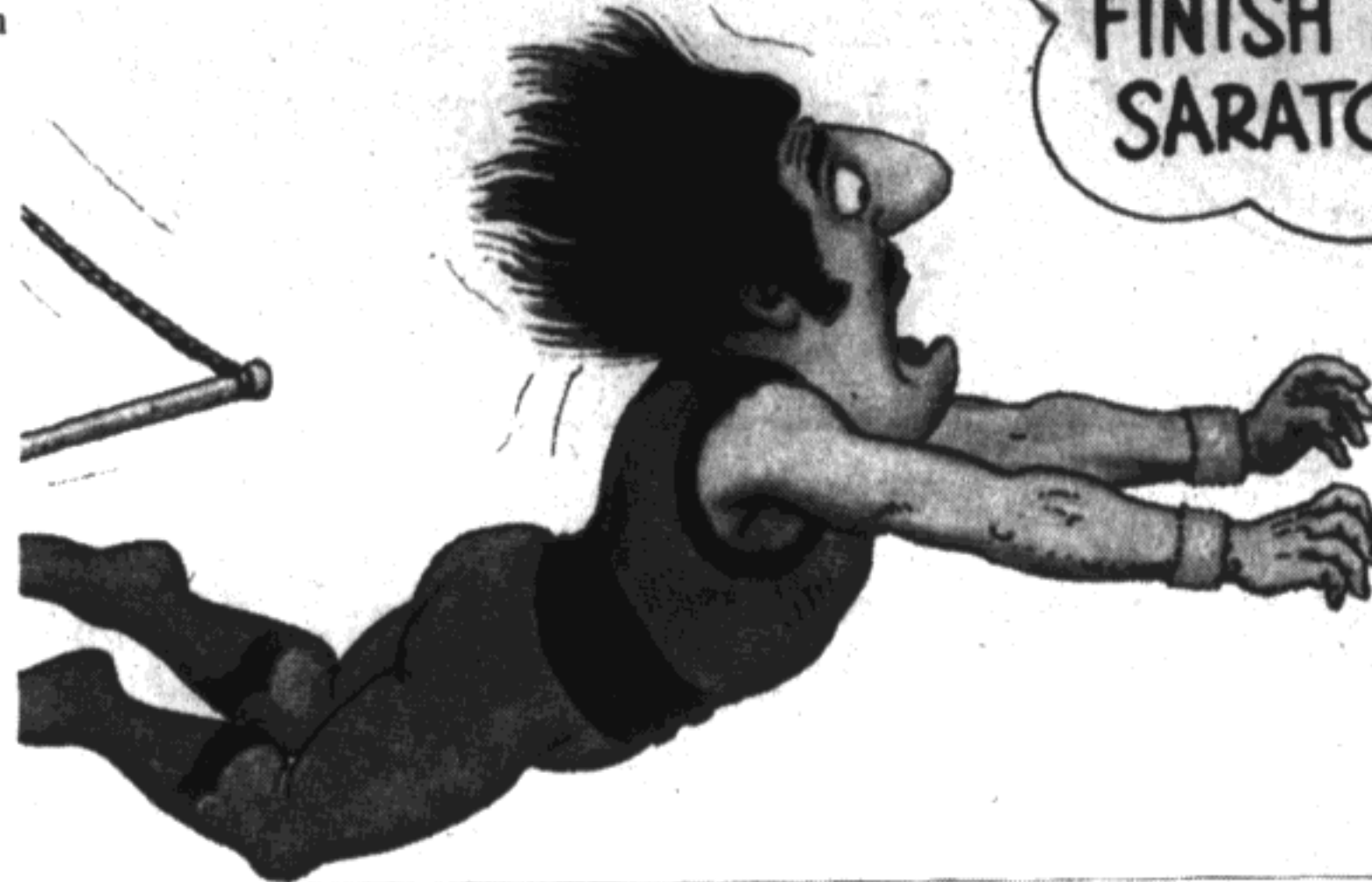
Wait a minute, I know I've seen some health attitudes and behaviors change. Let's see. When advertisers pushed cigarettes in the 1920's, millions of dollars were spent to encourage men to be men and smoke. More men smoked. In the 1940's women were encouraged to do what men did to help the war effort. Women started smoking then and when they saw ads that showed smoking as a "class" thing to do. Tough guy actors and sexy dames all modeled smoking as a good or attractive thing to do. Sure enough, thirty years later in the 1950's, rates for

lung cancer in men went up. In the 1970's, rates for lung cancer in women went up and will soon be matching men. Oh, well, "ill-health" education

works.

In the 1940's, Clark Gable was the hero of the movies. In the movie "It Happened One Night," he took off his pajama tops and exposed his bare chest. The summer following that movie men all over the country went topless on the beaches of America for the first time. Social revolution, new dress codes, new laws, court cases — all because one man took his shirt off. This started to change people's attitudes. People stopped hiding their bodies as much and began the popularization of the movement for body acceptance. That trend is still going today as dress codes have been relaxed in most areas, and people are accepting their bodies, themselves and others. "I'm o.k., you're o.k." Attitudes change and there is mental health "education."

Well then, let's see. "Ill-health" education works as shown by cigarette sales and cancer rates. Mental health "education" works as shown by role model action, social change and new attitudes, for good or bad. Then health education should work.



The research reports do not do a cost analysis. That is how much is spent by the cigarette companies, tobacco industry and the U.S. government to encourage the consumption of tobacco. What is the value of the models, baseball players with chew, actors with cigarettes who have been supportive of tobacco? How many years have young people seen tobacco consumption modeled by adults? Now compare how many dollars have been put out for healthy activities in regards to tobacco. How many famous people have come out against tobacco? How long have programs about non-smoking been

run?

It seems that there is quite an imbalance in this comparison. I know health education works. If we had the budget, "staff" and time to mount a campaign against the national advertisers and movie industry people who support unhealthy activities we'd all be a lot healthier.

Start at home.

Start with yourself.

What behaviors do I model? Do I support the American Lung Association, Cancer Society or other health supportive agency?

Do I or could I take my

shirt off and help a movement?

*"Far better it is to dare mighty things,  
To win glorious triumphs, even though*

*Checkered by failure, than to take rank  
With those poor spirits who neither  
Enjoy much nor suffer much because*

*They live in the grey twilight that  
Knows not victory nor defeat."*  
Theodore Roosevelt

Let's start something,  
Naturally,

Carl M. Hild