



*Massage Today*

September, 2004, Vol. 04, Issue 09

## **Of Cabbages and Kings**

By Ralph Stephens, BS, LMT, NCTMB

The whole aim of practical politics is to keep the populace alarmed - and thus clamorous to be led to safety - by menacing it with an endless series of hobgoblins.

- *H.L.*

*Mencken*

The elections are coming, the elections are coming! Once again, a majority of the minority who vote will decide our fate for another few years. The candidates say it is the most important election of their lifetimes. Well of course they think that! How often does one get to run for president of the United States? They are trying to make this a very emotional election. Voting should never be emotional; it should be logical and rational. I want to share an e-mail I received from my 93-year-old Aunt Lynnette. She's not a "spammer." She sent the following bit of philosophy:

"While the 13 colonies in America were still struggling to establish the constitutional republic, Scottish historian, Professor Alexander Tyler, circa 1787, wrote about the fall of the Athenian republic in Greece, which occurred over two thousand years previous to that time. Here is what he observed:

'A democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of government. It can only exist until the voters discover that they can vote themselves money from the public treasury. From that moment on, the majority always votes for the candidates promising the most money from the public treasury, with the result that a democracy always collapses over loose fiscal policy, followed by a dictatorship. The average age of the world's great civilizations has been two hundred years. These nations have progressed through the following sequence:

1. From bondage to spiritual faith,

2. From spiritual faith to great courage,
3. From courage to liberty,
4. From liberty to abundance,
5. From abundance to selfishness,
6. From selfishness to complacency,
7. From complacency to apathy,
8. From apathy to dependency,
9. From dependency back to bondage.'

- Alexander Tyler

Where do you think we are now? My guess is number six or higher. You have the opportunity to make things better. Get involved in the upcoming election - vote. If you don't vote, don't complain. Better yet, get out and meet the candidates. Let them know that alternative-providers vote. Try to get them to promise to protect our right to practice and the people's rights to come to us, especially in any government-care program.

If you believe in herbs and supplements, you might want to urge the candidates to keep the government (the Food and Drug Administration) out of the supplement business, and protect our rights to purchase supplements and remedies freely. If you don't agree with me, urge them to do whatever you desire - just get involved. And remember, legislators write and pass laws; governors and presidents just sign them. Legislators are much easier to meet and talk to.

Both presidential candidates have their proposals to solve the "health care crisis." Neither of their proposals address the 700,000-plus people killed by the current "health care" system each year. Both candidates' proposals will increase this number by making more people dependent on the existing "traditional medical system." Only alternative health care providers offer true health care, and this will be lost if we are "integrated" into the traditional medical monopoly, either voluntarily (as is happening now) or by some government program.

If you think health care is expensive now, just wait until it is free. The government that controls the health of its people controls its people. Politicians will never bring about peace or health - they benefit from neither. Both peace and health begin in the heart of the individual and spread from there. Peace and health

are individual responsibilities (not rights). Politicians are a reflection of the state of our society. Until individuals change, society and its politicians will not change, and violence will rage on.

So do not put much hope in any politician or party. Have faith in yourself and your fellow man. Study health (not sickness) care, and implement its principles. Learn the ways of peace and live them. Your example to those you touch can change your community; community by community, the world is changed. A yearly conference to help facilitate this movement has been organized. For information about it see:

[www.himalayaninstitute.org/slconference](http://www.himalayaninstitute.org/slconference). Unfortunately, the ways of peace take time, so in the meantime, get out and participate! First think, and then vote.

### **The Medical Massage Debate**

The term "medical massage" has become a popular subject lately. What I have seen recently in the pages of *Massage Today*, with the exception of Vivian Madison-Mahoney's excellent column in the July issue ([www.massagetoday.com/archives/2004/07/09.html](http://www.massagetoday.com/archives/2004/07/09.html)), is nothing more than individuals trying to gain control of the current "hot term" for their own individual gain. They are either trying to catch the wave or steer it. It's all about money and ego, and a form of "King of the Hill." Don't buy into it. What's the big deal about using the term "medical" in front of massage anyway? Could it be that massage doesn't kill enough people to be worthy of the term?

The last thing we need right now is another lowest-common denominator certification program. Therapists who are studying advanced techniques to better serve their patients do not need to be impeded by the political agendas that accompany every certification program I have seen in this profession. They do not need to have fear put into them, they need to be encouraged and commended. Further, other than a state license where available/required, nothing should be promoted as a credential for insurance billing. Whoever wants to work for an insurance company should be allowed to. They will more than earn their money. Anyone who tries to restrict access to insurance reimbursement by promoting phony-baloney credentials and certifications does not have the interests of massage providers or patients in mind. That's it in a nutshell.

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**Try This:** The densely innervated fascia, which also has imbedded smooth muscle fibers, is really an actively adaptive organ, very much alive and quite responsive to massage techniques. Anatomy Professor J. Staubesand, University of Freiburg, Germany, states, "Any intervention on the fascia is also an intervention on the autonomic nervous system."

Last time, I suggested you add tangential pressure to help release a stubborn tender point or trigger point. In addition to the Ruffini endings that are responsive to lateral stretch, the fascia also contains Pacini and Paciniform mechanoreceptors (nerve endings), which respond to vibration. Their response is a Parasympathetic, or relaxation, response to the vibratory stimulation. So, if sustained pressure does not bring about the desired response in your patient's tissue, try adding vibration, either subtly while you hold the point, or as a separate stroke (stimulus) between applications of sustained pressure. See you in November.

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Click [here](#) for more information about Ralph Stephens, BS, LMT, NCTMB.



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