

Life in the Sun

by Edwin Wollenberg, Retired Supt.

Bob Breen's fine article on this subject in the May issue of the **Bull Sheet** was excellent. I hope everyone read it.

The superintendents, who chose the vocation they did, are subjected to this risk daily. It's outdoor work and precaution should be exercised by those who feel they may be susceptible, and maybe should return to their office whenever they see their shadow — sort of ala groundhog way.

Of course we know that the warnings by the dermatologists isn't going to stop sunbathing, swimming and the likes, because it's something we're going to do. And some weeks ago the Associated Press released an article saying a Dr. Russel J. Reiter, professor of some sort of neurology department at the University of Texas, said exposure of the sun is good for everyone. Sooo, here we go again, and we have to weigh the pros and cons.

Dr. Reiter is an internationally-known expert on the pineal gland, which produces the hormone melatonin in the brain. The hormone is found mostly during darkness and too much of it can lead to depression, he said. The answer, he suggested, is more exposure to sunlight.

"Certainly sunlight justifiably has gotten a bad rap in terms of its effect on skin cancer", Dr. Reiter said. "Positively, however, sunlight generally seems to improve mood, sexual performance, possibly, and general attitudes".

Well, ever since I retired I have been taking it easy. I only do the things I like to do, and forget about the things I had to do before. I sleep and nap a lot, because I read several months ago that this was an easy way to burn calories, instead of the way that leaves you weak and exhausted. And I draw the shades when I take my naps, to keep it cool, dark and restful. Gosh, I thought I had my life pretty well together.

It was about a week ago that I first noticed that something seemed out-of-whack with me, physically. I seemed depressed and lethargic, and my sex drive didn't want to slip into over-drive. I seemed to be a mess and wondered if it could mean the end of the trail.

I was about to make an appointment to see a doctor, when I remembered Dr. Reiter and his suggestion to get more sunlight. "Light can be used as a drug in various types of depression. What is more convenient, and what is more non-invasive than light? You don't have to take anything internally", he added. Yep, it had to be I wasn't getting enough sunshine, and it was causing me to have a melatonin build-up. What the hell, it was worth a try, I figured.

So, I started taking my naps in the backyard on a lounging chair in the sun, and believe it or not, my depressive moods and sluggish feelings have left me, and a quiver has returned to a portion of my body considered dead a few weeks ago.

Dudley Smith coersed me into going with him to the Field Day at Purdue, July 22nd. It was sunny, sultry and very hot. Dudley knew how to cope with the elements and wore a Sam Snead hat. Not only was he shielding the sun rays, he was also the epitome of sexiness.

I didn't wear a hat, because I was burning off too much melatonin — but I thought I looked pretty sexy too.

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