

# performing Arts



Larry Hartmann

## SENIOR MOMENTS

# Diving champ at 83

What's it like to be a senior diving champ at 83? "I'm always sore!" joked Bob Sherman, U.S. 1-meter, 3-meter and tower diving champ. After getting a tip from my daughter, Kim, about this 83-year-old senior diving champion and retired college diving coach, I checked out his You-tube video showing him diving off a 10-meter tower, backwards. I called Bob immediately to talk to him and find out his secrets to extreme health and fitness.

- Bob, what's a typical day in your life?

"I wake up and do about 10 minutes of exercise. Leg raises, step-ups on a raised platform, and I do surgical rubber band stretches and curls with the bands attached to my door knob. Breakfast is always a cereal with bananas and blueberries. Lunch is a half sandwich with milk, and dinner is normal, my wife's a great cook! I play nine holes of golf five times a week and practice my diving about four days a week. I also love to play bridge.

- Do you feel any fear going off that 10-meter tower?

"Yes, but there's a new ruling that if you're over 55 you have to hit the water feet first. The bubblers under the pool surface

help lessen the impact.

- Any advice for seniors? "Keep moving and stay active. Don't turn into a couch potato. I'm naturally hyperactive. Get a motivated friend if need be."

Just talking to Sherman was motivating to me. Bob has the characteristics of many of the athletes and seniors who are fit and active. He noted that at 5 feet 7 inches and 130 pounds his weight is important to his successes. We can all appreciate that carrying extra weight can have negative implications for our activities.

Some of the happiest seniors I know have projects going on, whether it be planting a garden, joining a club or activity group, or volunteering. Bob's activity schedule has always been full. He has owned his own swim school, coached hundreds of champion divers, and been a renowned diving authority. Bob mentioned his son now coaches him — quite a switch.

Bob said that in the future he will continue to compete. He is currently training for a diving meet in Florida. In spite of being a national record holder, Bob says one of his "claim-to-fame moments" was when he moved out of his age grouping and competed and won against divers young enough to be his children.

Sometimes the fetes of super athletes can be intimidating to the rest of us. You don't have to be champion caliber to lead a healthy and fit life. Getting off the couch and going for a walk is a step forward. Visiting or chatting with a friend is socially stimulating. Learning a new skill or language can help the memory. Even controlling what and how much you eat can encourage a sense of accomplishment.

Thanks, Bob, for the good advice and fine example you have set.

*Larry Hartmann is a longtime Ojai resident and a senator in the California Senior Legislature.*