

WARREN CLEMENTS

Jimmy Stewart was elected leader of the Progressive Conservatives over the weekend.

Well, Joe Clark, actually. But it was a good impersonation. The same boyish grin, the same shrugs, the same drawl. You could almost see the neon sign "Underdog" emblazoned across his chest. Mr. Smith Goes to Washington. Except that Mr. Smith won the Ontario Liberal leadership, so the Tories had to settle for a Mr. Clark. Too bad Ed Broadbent took over the NDP — we could have had a Lewis and Clark. (Did it ever strike you that the initials of Ontario's three leaders spell out LSD? Just a thought.)

If Clark's wife resembled a distant cousin of Margaret "Sarah Binks" Trudeau, Wagner's wife resembled Lady Macbeth. Chain-smoking in the back of the platform, eyeing Joe Clark as though he were tomorrow's luncheon entrée, she provided a perfect counterpart to Claude Wagner's Bela Lugosi grin.

One could imagine them riding home after the convention. "It's all right, dear, tomorrow you can run for the SoCredits." "But they're all washed up." Lady Wagner thinks about this for a moment. "Is nothing SoCred?" she asks. Ho ho ho. Exit Giselle, pursued by a bear. Meanwhile, Maureen McTeer, travelling incognito as the wife of Joe Clark, broke up the delegate assembly with her impersonations of Margaret Trudeau singing You Turn Me On, I'm a Radio.

A highlight of the convention was the presence of Maclean's editor Peter Newman acting as a CBC commentator, when he wasn't down on the floor autographing the also-ran's flesh wounds. "I'm Peter Newman," he smiled dourly. "I'm writing a book about this. Do you want to be in it?" In honour of his appearance, McClelland and Stewart announced a sale of rare collector's items: copies of The Canadian Establishment not autographed by Mr. Newman. (An old joke, but maybe someone hasn't heard it.)

George Hees turned up in his "Gerda Who?" T-shirt, wearing shirt studs, garters, and the index from What Every Well-Dressed Man Should Know About Fashion. Lloyd Robertson was his usual relaxed self, laughing at punchlines two minutes after the jokes had been told, and graciously informing his co-hosts that "Joe Clark is coming up here for an interview in five minutes so one of you will have to leave." As it turned out, Peter Newman was the one. The camera picked him up scurrying around the floor beating Diefenbaker in his attempts to autograph copies of One Canada.

The Toronto Sun reacted to Clark's victory with typical understatement. Columnist Lubor the Dink blew his brains out, but fortunately this didn't keep him from turning out his usual incisive column.

Meanwhile, the Sun's man for the job, Paul Hellyer, announced plans to form a Bluenose Party to wrench the country out of the hands of "creeping conservatives". Joining Leonard Jones and Jack Horner in an ad hoc triumvirate, Hellyer announced that his first plan was to secede from reality.

A surprise note entered the political arena when it was learned that Brian "Buddy Can You Spare a Dime" Mulroney had purchased the Prime Minister's office and won the position by a technicality.

In other news, CTV announced that one of its cameras had blanked out during Saturday's delegation coverage. The PC party immediately informed its members that the convention would be restaged this weekend, with the original cast.

Mantras for millions

You don't have to live on brown rice to find true happiness through meditation

By OAKLAND ROSS

Lawyers are practising it; so are professors, professional athletes and several prominent American politicians. At cocktail parties throughout North America, business executives and their wives are chanting their secret mantras in furtive whispers. The more dedicated among them periodically jet off to Switzerland, Spain or France to meditate in the presence of the roaming missionary of joy, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. In a cover story last October, Time magazine itself reported in glowing terms on the North American establishment's adoption of transcendental meditation.

TM has come of age. And, appropriately, the man who presides over Toronto's chapter of the Students International Meditation Society looks far more like a refugee from the financial district of London than he does a guru.

His name is Stephen Kirkegaard. He's 24 years old; his blond hair is cropped well above his ears; there's not a wrinkle in his animated face; he wears conservative three-piece suits — and when he talks about TM his eyes glint in the manner of a seasoned salesman slipping the clasp of his briefcase.

"Ninety per cent of the people who try TM will experience a change in their lives in the first few days or the first few weeks," he promises. "One hundred per cent, as of their first meditation, will experience a new feeling of relaxation and peacefulness."

Kirkegaard, who administers the Toronto chapter of the SIMS from his headquarters in a modern office building on Merton Street, will outline the miracles of meditation in two lectures at York next Wednesday.

He describes TM as a means of "locating that which is beyond the deepest level of consciousness — the unfounded, infinite store of energy and intelligence — the essential self."



Maharishi Mahesh Yogi

He claims that in Toronto, TM is gaining 1,000 new adherents each month and that it has an annual growth rate of 100 per cent. However, he says, in spite of its buoyancy, TM is still widely misunderstood and unfairly maligned.

For example, TM is often confused with such movements as Esalen, Arica, Est, Yoga and the Divine Light mission, most of which stress self-realization through control rather than through release, as in TM.

"Meditation is a form of deep rest," says Kirkegaard. It releases us from the stress and strain that rob us of our natural vitality."

To an extent, TM has to be defined, not in terms of what it is, but in terms of what it is not. "It is not a religion," says Kirkegaard. "It involves no faith or belief; it is as appealing to atheists as it is to staunch Christians. It is not a diet; you don't have to live on brown rice or peanut butter sandwiches. It involves no change in lifestyle."

CONSERVATIVE DRESS

In fact, most TM instructors deliberately dress conservatively just to offset the impression created by the identification of TM with more exotic oriental sects.

Kirkegaard concedes that TM doesn't have a distinct moral objective. If a child rapist takes up meditation, he may well continue to be a child rapist — albeit a happier and more creative one. However, Kirkegaard maintains that "wrong behaviour comes from stress" and that studies conducted in prisons have correlated meditation with an improvement in moral behaviour.

Meditation is taught by certified instructors, each of whom has studied under the direct supervision of the master, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. Initiation fees for TM in Canada range from \$50 for high school students to \$115 for adults. University students pay \$60. In return for his money, the initiate is provided with his own mantra and preliminary instruction in its use.

MYSTERIOUS MANTRA

The mantra is the most basic and the most mysterious component of meditation. It is a word which, when repeated, induces the meditative state. The instructor has a limited number of mantras at his disposal and, based on a secret formula, he chooses the appropriate mantra for each of his students. Revealing one's mantra is severely frowned upon.

Reciting the mantra sets off a pattern of sympathetic vibrations in the mind of the meditator which, according to Kirkegaard, draws the mind toward the well of



Stephen Kirkegaard, 24 year old president of the Toronto chapter of the Students International Meditation Society, has studied with the master and is currently selling TM to T.O.

pure energy which is at the root of consciousness. Meditating twice a day for 20 minutes at a time is all that is required and all that is recommended.

It is extremely important, he says, to recite only the one mantra which is correct for oneself.

"Maybe 'hooble-dooble' will do part of the job. It will turn the mind inward, but it won't necessarily have the right effect. "One fellow I knew simply decided to recite the word 'Om'. He spent three weeks at it and at the end of that time he was in a terrible mess."

Adherents of TM report that meditation reduces tension, increases concentration span, improves memory, cuts down on consumption of drugs and cures a wide array of personal and interpersonal problems. Scientific studies, most conducted under the auspices of the TM organization, have indicated that meditation lowers blood pressure, reduces

oxygen consumption and broadens the flow of alpha waves (generally associated with relaxation) in the brain.

Kirkegaard predicts that if one per cent of the world's population practices TM, it will work a profound change in manners, attitudes and behaviour. The guru Maharishi Mahesh Yogi predicts that if five per cent of the population closes its eyes and chants its mantras each day, we will have the ideal society.

That's just one of the many selling points that Kirkegaard will be presenting when he proclaims the wonders of TM in S129 Ross next Wednesday at noon and again at 5 p.m. Two TM films will be shown in the Bearpit at noon on Tuesday.

It's all part of The World Plan of the TM organization. The objective is to develop until there is one teacher per 1,000 population throughout the world.

Harbinger's column

Mercury poisoning is a myriad disease

There has been a fair amount of controversy lately concerning methyl-mercury poisoning or Minimata disease. Some people may be surprised to know that there are other forms of mercury that may be dangerous other than the one being discussed today.

Mercury bichloride is often used as an antiseptic either in solution or in tablets. Doses as small as five grains, the same as ASA, may be lethal and three times that amount is always fatal. Mercuric chloride, used in photo processing, and ammoniated mercury, in some bleaching creams, are very

often accidentally ingested by children.

The soluble salts of mercury contained in vaginal douches have caused many other cases of poisoning. Dentists were often the unwitting victims of mercury poisoning from contact with the amalgam used to fill cavities.

Mercury is also used industrially in the pulp and paper industry. After use, it is discarded. For example, Dryden Chemicals, owned by Reed International of Great Britain, dumped approximately 20 pounds per day into the Wabigoon River in NW Ontario

between 1962 and 1970.

It is still being metalized by microbes and converted into, among other things, methyl-mercury. This is consumed by the fish, which are then eaten by humans (mostly natives). A concentration of methyl-mercury in the blood of 100 parts per billion is considered by doctors to be dangerous, even though no symptoms may be apparent at that point.

Sensory disturbances, constriction of the visual field, loss of motor co-ordination, auditory and speech disturbances, vague men-

tal disturbances, increased hypertension and heart, liver and pancreas disease are among the symptoms presented in individuals exposed to dangerous levels of methyl-mercury.

Furthermore, children born to mothers eating poisoned fish show slight mental retardation in mild cases and symptoms of cerebral palsy and severe retardation in more extreme cases. If you have ever seen films of the Minimata patients or met them, it is difficult not to be appalled at the situation since it is entirely preventable.