

# Outlook on Lifestyle

## Treat gallstones with surgery, diet

### DR. GOTT



Peter Gott, M.D.

**DEAR DR. GOTT** — While running some tests for an ulcer, the doctor discovered that I have gallstones and recommended gallbladder surgery. What are the symptoms of a gallbladder attack?

**DEAR READER** — Gallstones typically cause sharp, colicky pain in the right upper abdomen after meals that are rich and greasy. However, this is not always the case. Some patients with gallstones have burning mid-abdominal pain — resembling the discomfort of peptic ulcer. Other people with gallbladder attacks experience shoulder or chest pain, jaundice, gas, bloating and digestive abnormalities.

If your doctor suspected that you had an ulcer and found gallstones instead, your symptoms probably will be relieved by gallbladder surgery. If you choose to postpone surgery, follow a strict fat-free diet and see what happens. Sometimes such a diet will reduce inflammation in the gallbladder and, therefore, reduce symptoms. The technique of dissolving gallstones with chemicals is still experimental and not yet available to the public.

**DEAR DR. GOTT** — I would like to know the facts about pinworms. How do you get them and what do they do to your system? What is the cure?

**DEAR READER** — Pinworms are white worms, about a half-inch long, that can inhabit the large intestine. When the female worms are ready to lay eggs, they migrate to the anus, where they deposit their eggs. This causes intense itching. The eggs are then transmitted back into the person's mouth (or from person to person) on the hands. The eggs are swallowed, hatched in the small intestine and then mature in the large intestine, where the life cycle starts anew.

Although adult pinworms can sometimes be found in the anal area, the diagnosis usually is made by the cellophane-tape test. The sticky side of a piece of cellophane tape is pressed against the anus, placed on a glass slide and examined under a microscope. The eggs are readily visible.

Pinworm eggs are easily spread from person to person; therefore, pinworm infestation is common in institutions, schools and day-care centers. The affliction is usually harmless but extremely bothersome. It is treated with either pyrantel pamoate, pyriminium pamoate or mebendazole.

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### DEAR MEG



Meg Whitcomb

### Husband erodes her self-esteem

**DEAR MEG** — Ernie and I have been married three years and have a 9-month-old son. Ernie earns a good salary. I don't work because Ernie doesn't trust baby sitters.

Whenever I ask for money, I get the third degree, so I've stopped asking and have nothing new for myself. Ernie claims I have no responsibilities because I don't work, but I have plenty of responsibilities. One is 9 months old, one is 5 years old, and the rest is housework.

Ernie has destroyed my self-confidence. He's constantly making me

feel inferior because I don't have a college education. But the reason I didn't finish college is that I quit to marry him! What do you see for us in the future, Meg? He's always been a difficult man. — LUCY IN THE SKY WITHOUT DIAMONDS, PA.

**DEAR LUCY** — Not much, I'm afraid. Ernie is controlling you through the power of his purse strings and the pain of his put-downs. He's an emotionally (if not physically) abusive man. If you thought when you married him that your love would help him become a more secure, giving person, you now know his problems run much deeper.

Ask yourself if you'd be better off without him than you are with him. (I think I know the answer.) You could get some valuable input from "Men Who Hate Women and Women Who Love Them," (Bantam) by Susan Forward, Ph.D., and Joan Torres. It's about men like Ernie and women like you.

**DEAR MEG** — I'm an executive assistant, and I've been living with Mal for four years. Mal is an actor and has the disposition to go with it. At the beginning our relationship was

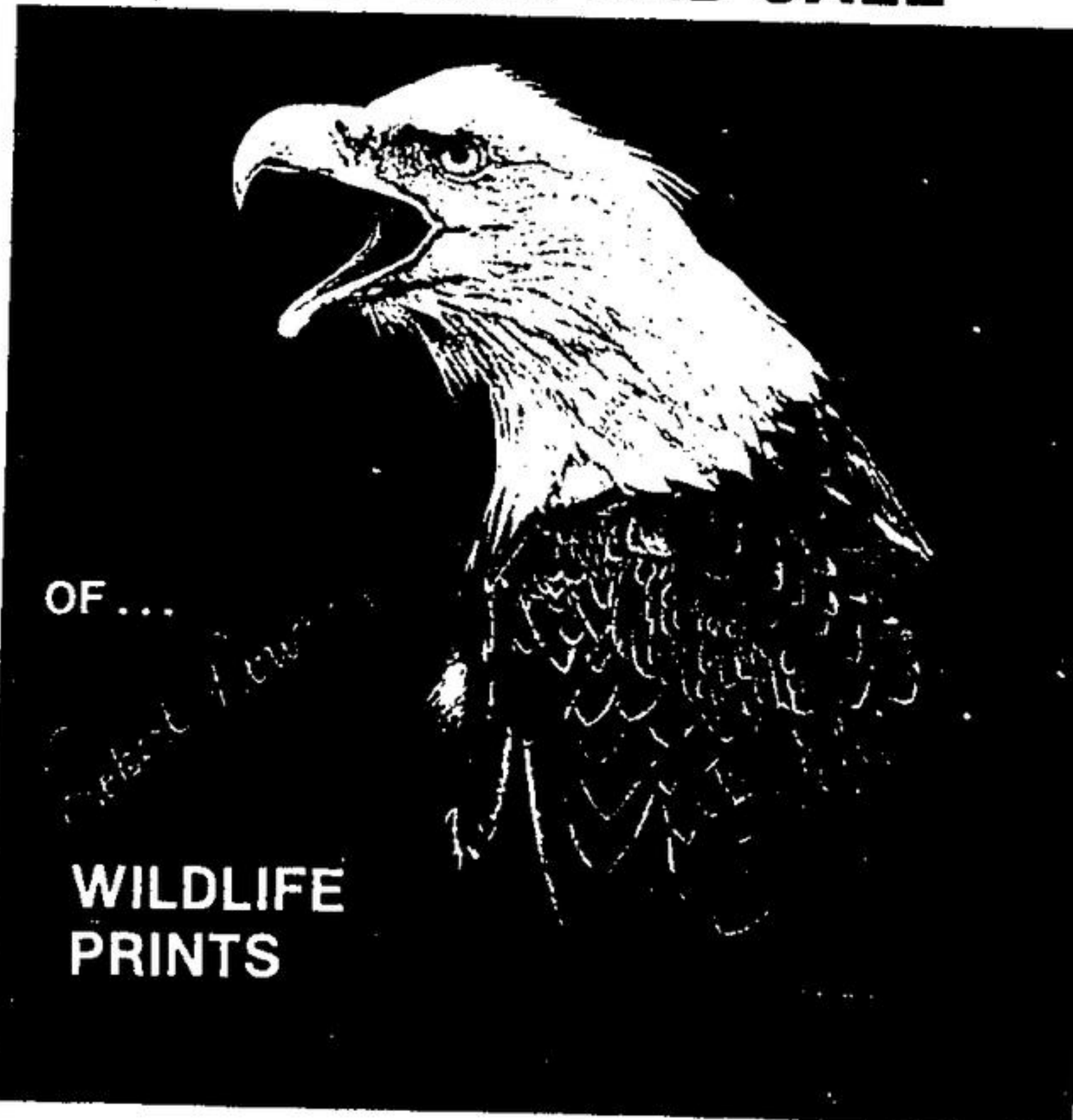
carefree and fun. He kept telling me he loved me and would soon be getting a divorce, but I don't think he even mentioned divorce to his wife.

Last month I had my third abortion, and Mal wasn't even at the hospital. He apologized and promised everything would be like it used to be, but he's as moody and unreliable as ever. I know deep down he loves me, and I'm determined to make the relationship work. Can you give me some pointers? — COMMITTED, WASH.

**DEAR COMMITTED** — Not one, dear. You're in a dead-end relationship, and I see nothing but pain and heartache ahead if you insist on sticking it out. Denying yourself happiness by clinging to behavior that's causing you distress is self-defeating. Mal doesn't love anybody. When a scenario has played itself out, it's time to bring down the curtain.

Write to Meg care of this newspaper. Meg can only answer letters that contain a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Questions of general interest will be discussed in future columns.

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