

THE MEANING OF LIFE

By Alice Potteiger Wilkes for the Capitol Times

"What is the meaning of life?" my friend at work asked, a little shopworn and homeward bound on a Thursday afternoon. I began to react with the word "sex," but I stopped.

It was just too easy and obvious. I have a lot of respect for my kindred-spirited friend, and in light of our workload and some personal situations of mine, I decided his rhetorical question deserved a genuine answer.

Ah, the timing of the Universe. For Christmas I'd received a small Native American philosophy book about "agreements" we make with ourselves. Last week, another co-worker gave me an original 1937 copy of "The Importance of Living" by Lin Yutang, a Chinese-American philosopher, and I've been absorbing both between design jobs and at lunch. I recently got back into Tai Chi after a long break from a frustrated beginning, and suddenly it's working; I probably was not ready before. So, with my newly developing sense of existentialism, I e-mailed my friend at Mac Station 8 a vague resemblance of the following culmination. It's a "Cliff Notes" of my quest for the meaning of life. Not everyone will relate and some may totally disagree. I think it's worth contemplation.

• Everything changes. "Resistance Is Futile."

• Perspective relies completely on your current state of mind and matter.

• Opening your mind to the perspectives of others broadens your vision and knowledge and can even help you understand

your "self" more.

• Life is a constant duel of dualities. You can choose to experience life through truth and love or deceit and fear. Truth and love create beauty while deceit and fear generate lies and hatred.

• Strive to understand true beauty. Know it and live it as best and as much as possible.

• Love and truth start with the self. Value your finer points and change the world by trying to improve the rest of yourself. Every day, fill in the blank with a positive trait you desire and tell yourself, "I am _____!" It works because words are extremely powerful (journalism and English majors take note). Whenever you doubt yourself, remember those who appreciate you and believe in yourself for them.

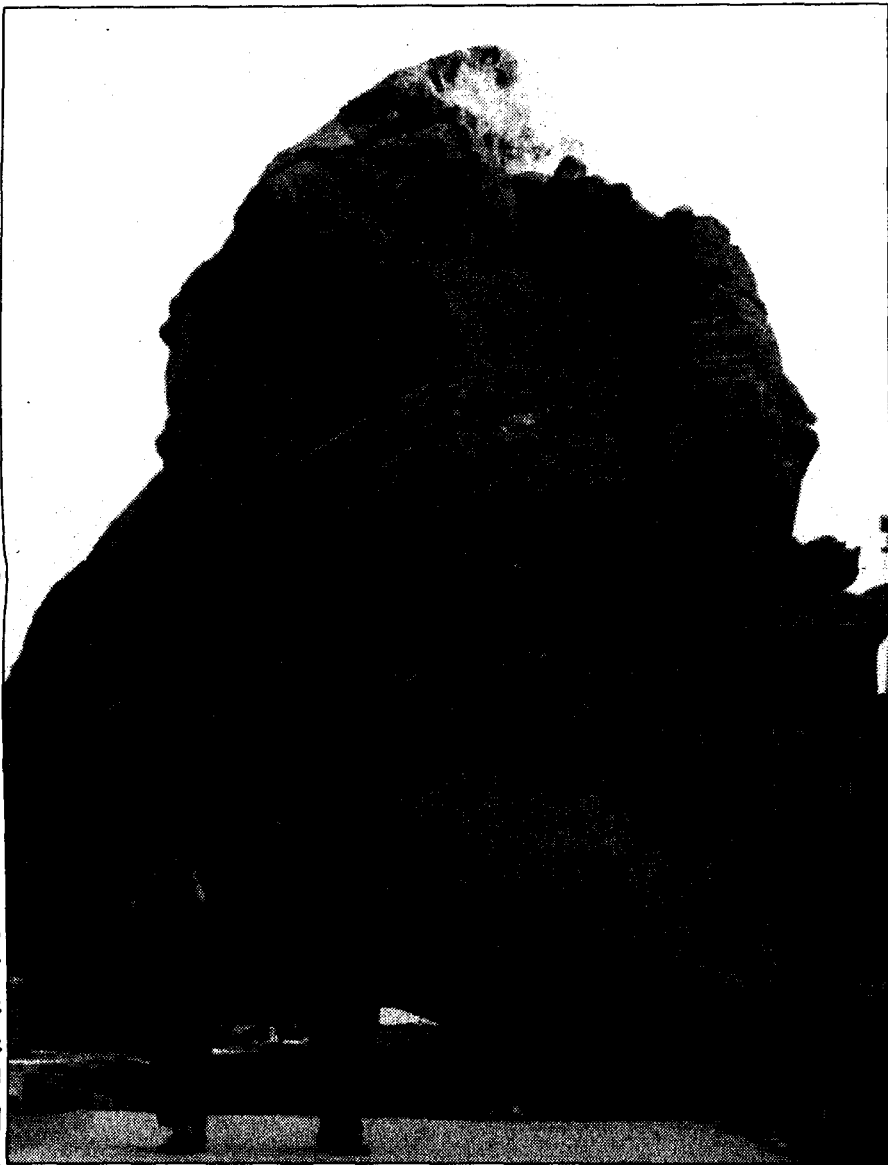
• There are those who never find truth and love and those who get the

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chance but remain distrustful of the unfamiliar surroundings. Strive to be an example; suggest a good book! But do so knowing

they must find their own paths or that they may choose to stay where they are.

• When we make a conscious effort to dis-



affects someone else, you must be true to your needs, your spirit and your capabilities first. This is not selfish; this is respect for your "self." If you have deceived yourself, even your best intentions will actually lead you away from the paths of love and truth.

• When it seems you haven't made the best decisions, have faith that everything always works out as it should. If it's not as you planned then there must be a lesson to learn. Cultivate gratitude from every situation.

• Sometimes the most dramatic life-changing events occur from the minutest circumstances. I didn't know it, but I really needed to sum up the bits and pieces of introspection.

I've been pigeonholing. If not for my friend's mild mannered sarcasm, I'd still be milling around with no solid evidence of actually getting someplace with myself. New questions and answers will always develop, and some will always remain. Like: who is Cliff? Did he once work for Reader's Digest Condensed Books Division? Well, I can tell you there's no question about one thing though. We'd all be deceived if I didn't fearlessly admit to loving the embodiment of that three-letter "s" word.

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place our fears, we instinctively gravitate toward like-minded companions whose company electrifies us with the ability to diffuse the negative karma of those who don't. We develop an extra-sensory perception that finds beauty amid even the bleakest landscapes and the dimmest eyes, and we often find ways to give them some color or shine because we understand why it is missing.

• When you make any decision that