

MEET RUTH

She won't reveal her age but she feels 17 when she dances

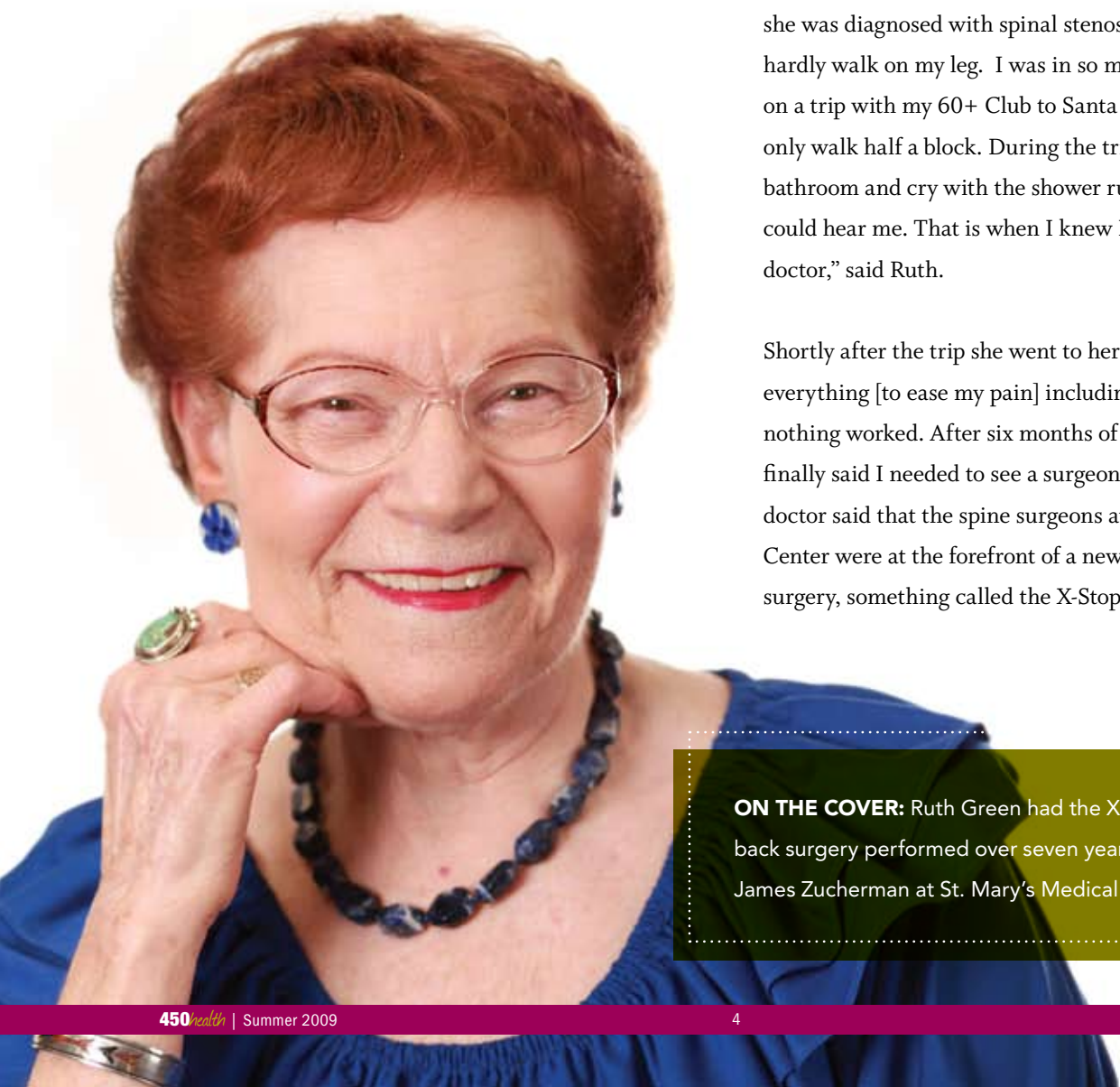
Ruth is not like every other senior out there. Every Monday evening you will find her dancing at a church hall on Judah Street in San Francisco where she has been a member of the San Francisco Caper Cutters Square Dancers Club for nearly 15 years. Ruth has been dancing for more than 25 years because she says dancing makes her feel like she is 17-years-old all over again.

A mother of two and grandmother of five, Ruth has not slowed down with age. She is able to walk, drive and do all of the things she has always loved to do. She still travels to visit her family in Sonoma and Los Angeles. According to Ruth, "There is nothing I can't do these days. I always have something to do."

Ruth's active lifestyle was put in jeopardy in 2001 when she was diagnosed with spinal stenosis. "One day I could hardly walk on my leg. I was in so much pain. I went on a trip with my 60+ Club to Santa Barbara and I could only walk half a block. During the trip I would go in the bathroom and cry with the shower running so no one could hear me. That is when I knew I needed to see a doctor," said Ruth.

Shortly after the trip she went to her doctor, "they tried everything [to ease my pain] including epidurals, but nothing worked. After six months of treatments they finally said I needed to see a surgeon," said Ruth. Her doctor said that the spine surgeons at St. Mary's Medical Center were at the forefront of a new, non-invasive back surgery, something called the X-Stop.

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ON THE COVER: Ruth Green had the X-Stop Spacer back surgery performed over seven years ago by Dr. James Zucherman at St. Mary's Medical Center.

James Zucherman, MD invented and developed with the help of Ken Hsu, MD the X-Stop Interspinous Process Device for symptoms of lumbar spinal stenosis. Approved by the FDA in 2005, the X-Stop has been used by more than 40,000 patients worldwide. Drs. Zucherman, Hsu and Kondrashov at the St. Mary's Spine Center have done over 600 X-Stop procedures on patients including Ruth Green.

St. Mary's Spine Center is a comprehensive center with a variety of specialists who specialize in cervical, thoracic and lumbar non-surgical and surgical treatments. Our staff includes: osteopaths, orthopedic spine surgeons, interventional pain specialists, physiatrists, electrodiagnostic medicine physicians, neurological monitoring specialists and clinical researchers.

We are highly experienced and offer patients the most advanced non-surgical and surgical techniques including: osteopathic manipulative medicine (OMM), acupuncture, physical medicine and rehabilitation (PMR), spine injections, motion preservation devices, disc replacements, minimally invasive surgery, deformity correction and pain management.

If you suffer from back pain, please call our experts at the St. Mary's Spine Center for an appointment at 1-800-444-2303.



Dr. Jim Zucherman
St. Mary's Spine Surgeon
pictured with a whale vertebrae

At the time of Ruth's surgery in 2002, Drs. James Zucherman and Kenneth Hsu had already been working on the X-Stop device for 10 years. The X-Stop was still undergoing clinical trials (the X-Stop was approved by the FDA 2005). Ruth was in miserable pain so she was very excited when Dr. Zucherman told her she was a candidate for surgery. When given the option to try a new surgical procedure that may get her up and dancing again, Ruth says the answer was "YES from the start."

Ruth had the X-Stop surgery in June 2002 and had two X-Stop devices placed in her spine to alleviate the pain in her back and legs. Ruth's daughter traveled from Los Angeles expecting to take care of her mother for a week or more, but she soon realized that her services weren't required. Ruth was able to take care of herself again after only three days of rest. "I also did some physical therapy at St. Mary's and it was not painful at all," says Ruth. She did walking exercises and other rehabilitation with a physical therapist in order to get her moving again.

Now seven years later, Ruth is still square dancing every week to keep herself young. She says, "I don't want to tell my current [dance] partner my age because he is much younger than me." Ruth always dresses up to square dance, "Some people wear jeans, but I like to wear my fancy dresses, they make me feel feminine." Ruth says she gets a lot of attention when she wears her square dancing dresses to class and sometimes around town.

Ruth says, "I never see myself slowing down, I will be dancing forever."

When asked if she would go through the surgery again Ruth did not hesitate, "Oh yeah, and I always recommend it to others." And as for her dancing, Ruth says, "I have always loved to dance! I am good at it, I am light on my feet and it is just fun. I even danced with Lawrence Welk one time!"

If you want to learn more about the X-Stop, or make an appointment with one of St. Mary's Spine Center experts, call 1-800-444-2303.

"MEET DR. RIGHT"

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dr. gene kim