row in elray set fixed

the perceived deep depression on 1-56. Could the roosted snailhole lurking toboos, who report to someday could be does read this column of side Bill G. Davis of Transportation inspectors found "no
next danger." Or
said, but they sus-
tainable combat or sew-
ging may be bucking.
ix, however, is on
my. Expansion of the
from Delray to West
Beach is set to be
April, and as Orive
"the problem will
to be corrected."

it's a chance
write for TV

set to be the next
art Towne, call Nick
center.
q, worked for other
fection for years,
ition company,
91009.
movie rights to the
site said, "We've
re

and cops who stole
the dealers to
Theses drenched
the country and
led to the intrigue.

York
riding what we've
years. Habart
als, executive chef
or Seasons Ocean
is, is front banner,
at the James Beard
New York, he'll
a national title
other regional
the 1985 Evan
leau Awards.
will prepare week-
seven pepper Atlantic
mental green
apple casserole, the
regional honors
ment, sponsored by
attracted more
bon appetit.

Good cause
Sole in a generous
Michael donated
ed receipts to the
set.

585-0230) in Lake
ented Sole (585-
ners can pay their
to the society
up more restaurants
for a day's

Martin Servi-
ter chef from
or the American
are a mast.

I want to be
spinning
but I
can't—
because I'm
spinning.

Mary Ellen Clark

Faith and tenacity keep this Olympic
medalist holding to her dream. But the
crippling dizziness of vertigo threatens
her last chance to go for the gold.

“If I get back in there, I have my work cut out for me,” Olympic medalist Mary Ellen Clark says about her desire to dive again.

By CAROLYN SUSMAN
Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

Mary Ellen Clark has faith.
It's the strong religious faith that comes from
her traditional Catholic upbringing. She grips it
with the same tenacity she invades to contest her
body into mind-suspending twists and turns when
she plunges from a three-story diving board.
She dig deep into that faith to answer the
question, "Why me?"

Why, she asks, is she an Olympic-class diver
who doesn't dare dive?
The irony, she told a sports writer once, hasn't
escaped her.
"I want to be spinning but I can't — because
I'm spinning."

Clark goes because of vertigo. The crippling
dizziness hit the 25-year-old Olympic medalist
nearly nine months ago during training at Fort
Lauderdale's International Swimming Hall of
Fame. The disorientation was familiar; it had
happened twice before. But each time it went
away.
Now, with the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta
approaching, the strange disorder haunts her. She
has learned its medical name: benign paroxysmal
positional vertigo. But it has nothing to do with a
fear of heights, which can cause feelings of
dizziness or spinning in some people.
Clark gets dizzy and disoriented when she
moves her head the wrong way, maybe too far up
or too far down, during a dive. She doesn't know
why. She doesn't know how to stop it, although
DIVER desperate to get back on board

DIVER From 1D

She has tried just about every treatment imaginable since the condition hit her again in January.

The first time she felt it, in 1988, she did some exercises recommended by a doctor and "just blocked it out." The dizzy- ness just went away. The second time, in 1990, it lasted three days and "I trained by occurrence.

This time, she is desperate for answers before her chance at the Olympics evaporates. She's been diving 25 years, 10 of them from the platform, and she has worked hard on that "serious journey," as she calls it, toward the top of her profession.

Olympic dream came early

One of seven children in an athletic family in Pennsylvania, Clark started diving when she was 7. She's standing for her first national competition.

"She used to come along before we had to have her in the car when her brothers practiced," remembers her mother, Carolyn. "She used to fall in the pool on purpose so she could swim, too."

"Then her father saw something in her and thought she might have dive, her persistence. It's not that she has the most natural ability in the family. I think it was because she... had that Olympic dream. She developed it very young."

"She just took to everything physical," her mother says.

"She captivated every team she was on. She was graceful, swim- ming and basketball. She settled on diving because the scholarship was there."

The scholarship was to Penn State, where Clark received her undergraduate degree. She also has a master's degree in physical education from Ohio State.

"I don't know that I had talented kids," says her self-deprecating way, "worked hard for something and it came true."

Vertigo is a symptom

The culmination of that dream came at the 1992 Olympic games in Barcelona, where she won the bronze medal for platform diving, prompting Sports Illustrated to dub her the best female diver ever in the country. Specification in sports circles is that she was America's best hope at a medal in women's diving for a reason.

But now, the thought of stepping into space from a 33- foot platform and hurling into the water at 35 miles an hour scares her.

"The danger is that (vertigo) is disgust-setting and she might not land a dive right," says Susan Herdman, a physical therapist at the University of Miami who has treated Clark.

The type of vertigo Clark has, Herdman says, is common and it is sometimes a function of aging.

"We estimate now that in people over 65, half will develop it at one time or another," she says.

Other sports figure have battled this spacing dizziness.

Golfer Lee Trevino experienced it on the Senior PGA Tour and it knocked him off his game.

Baseball player Nick Esasky of the Indians felt vertigo in 1950 and it ended his career.

There are different types of vertigo, Maniere's disease, for example, involves repeated attacks of dizziness that result from increased pressure in the inner-ear fluid and may vary in duration from 15 minutes to several hours.

But vertigo is a symptom, not a disease.

"The term means that the person has the illusion that the world is moving or they're moving. Most common is the sensation of spinning. It doesn't really refer to a specific disorder; it's that sensation," says Herdman, who has a doctorate in neuroanatomy.

It can be caused by inner-ear problems, a head injury, or a tumor. Or nothing identifiable.

"Probably half of all people just wake up with it," says Herdman.

Clark doesn't know what happened to her. There are many theories. Maybe it stems from a virus she picked up overseas while she was traveling. Maybe it happened when she hit the water the wrong way, head first.

Treatments were temporary

Now, in fact, she even doubts Herdman's diagnosis, since the treatments she's had haven't stopped the dizzyness where it matters most: in a dive.

"A lot of people say inner ear, which is where Susan's coming from. Now," Clark says. "I'm thinking, neck."

Although vertigo can result when the cervical vertebrae in the neck are out of alignment — which can be caused by a dive — Herdman has said that vertigo usually comes with no other neurological problems. Clark has been given a clean bill of health from a neurologist.

"She has responded well to the treatment. The treatment has gotten rid of the symptoms so she's been able to return to all of her normal, everyday activities, except diving," says Clark. "A couple times we treated her and she was able to dive for a day or two and then it came back."

The treatment consists of moving the patient's head into a series of different positions. That repositioning particles of calcium carbonate crystals that have moved into the skull from another part of the ear by mistake. The crystals, a natural occurrence in the ear that contribute to balance, are thought to confuse the brain, resulting in dizziness and spinning.

Clark wasn't allowed to lie down for 48 hours after each treatment, to prevent the floating debris from moving back into the canal.

She tried the treatment six times.

Almost nothing has been too unconventional in her quest to get well.

Clark has taken Chinese herbs — after clearing them with her trainer — and medications prescribed for seizures. She's seen internists and neurologists and undergone acupuncture treatment.

She's even gone to the Updelder Institute in Palm Beach Gardens for cranio-sacral therapy, where Tom Giannetto, a collegiate swimmer and dive himself, is giving her free treat- ment. The treatment involve a gentle, hands-on manipulation that has been successful with other vertigo cases, he says.

With Clark, he said, his as- sessment found her temporal bone — bones in the skull — weren't moving properly. "That area holds the... system where you have balance."

Clark says, "I'm not saying that what happened with this one doctor hasn't helped in one way or another, like with Susan and stuff. She has been awesome and very supportive and I'm fine on a daily basis. The procedure, I would say, is successful to a point. But it's not enabled me to get back on the board and do what I am cut out to do."

Dive.

"Path has already been set"" We're all frustrated for her," says her mother. "She's trying very hard to think it's only a temporary thing, but in the back of her mind she knows it could after her plans for the future."

Her mother credits Clark's spiritual nature for her strength. "Probably more than any other member of the family, she has this trust that there is a plan for her and she does her very best to figure out what is in God's hand to do. I know she does a lot of praying and trusting in it."

"The only time she called recently (that) you could tell she was upset," was when she was back on the board the first time. We all knew to say a prayer on (August) 17th. Her coach was going to pick her up that day. She made it through that day. The next day, she began to get dizzy again.

Despite her disappointment, Clark seems incredibly focused, still, on her Olympic dream. "I'm still in that definite time frame," she says on her recent morning, while consuming a low-calorie diet of fruit segments and a bagel at a favorite Fort Lauderdale cafe.

She wants to keep her weight down (5-foot-11, 118 pounds) and her training up to par so she can be ready:

"That's what I've put my right well back right now," her coach, Ron O'Brien, says. "But time is ticking. Olympic trials are nine months away."

Clark adds, "I need to do it yesterday."

But then, with the next breath, she is philosophical, even fatalistic, leaning back into her chair and practicing what she often says.

"When you try to get the answer, you have to strip down and... say, "What's all the crap in your head?"

"That's what she did when her father, Gene, underwent quadruple heart-bypass surgery right before the 1984 Olympic games. And that's what she's trying to do now, even though the frustration sometimes damp- ens her spirits."

"You're as good as your last competition," she says, dismissing the praise she's received in the past. "If I get back in there, I have my work cut out for me."

"In the beginning, I was so bummed," she says, "it was a definitely a lonely time. I was just a sponge to try and learn what (Vertigo) was all about. I just feel like it's out of my hands, that I've tried everything possible."

Meanwhile, she practices on a trampoline, lifts weights, runs around selling a line of dietary supplements known as Interior Design Nutritional. And holds tight to her faith.

"I definitely think things happen for a reason. I don't have that answer right now, but at some point it will be clear," she says firmly. "If I never get back in the pool again, I know I'm gonna be OK."