

bagua can be used to deflect or engage opponents. Practicing bagua may also yield health benefits as this type of movement can employ joints and muscles not always exercised, stimulate acupuncture areas, and kindle the flow of chi (or energy) through the body. With repetition, bagua may help improve coordination, agility, flexibility, balance, and strength. Master Chenhan Yang, an expert trainer and practitioner in several martial arts areas, demonstrates baguazhang by breaking the style down into the various hand, arm, and leg movements. Yang shows the eight positions for the open palms, teaches four leg stances, and then illustrates the basic stepping moves—which include “walk like a dragon,” “retrieve and spin like an ape,” “change momentum like an eagle,” and “fierce like a tiger.” After the instruction concludes, Yang performs the entire eight palms sequence in a natural setting with pleasing music. Recommended. Aud: P. (*T. Root*)

Nutritional Science: Health & Well Being in the 21st Century ★★★

(2018) 18 min. DVD: \$44.95. DRA. TMW Media Group. PPR. Closed captioned.

Part of the *Show Me Science—Advanced series*, this program looks at the applicability of nutritional science in today’s world, exploring what foods people eat, how nutrients are utilized in the body, and the ways that nutrition impacts health. The film begins with a brief history of nutritional science, starting in the 1700s when scientists learned that vitamin C prevented sailors from getting scurvy and discovered some of the chemical properties of proteins, carbohydrates, and fats. In the 1930s, scientists found the last of the common amino acids and determined which were essential for health. After the 1950s, researchers determined that vitamins and minerals play a vital role in health; in 1968, Linus Pauling held that life could be lengthened with the right nutrients or molecules (although his

thinking on taking massive doses of vitamin C has been widely discredited). Beginning in 1990, labels with nutritional facts were required for all consumer foods so that individuals could make healthy choices. Students pursuing a degree in nutritional science will study the essential nutrients: carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins, water, and minerals. Purdue University, Rutgers University, and Boston University are named as notable choices for nutritional science programs, as each offers several areas of study: nutrition, dietetics, food service administration, public health, and community health. Undergraduate degrees will prepare students to become registered dietitians or pursue further study in dietetics, medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, and pharmacy, as well as careers in public health, public relations, and health fitness. A solid overview with helpful career guidance information, this is recommended. Aud: J, H, P. (*T. Root*)

To the Edge of the Sky ★★★

(2017) 120 min. DVD: \$19.95. Music Video Distributors (avail. from most distributors).

The four mothers in Jedd and Todd Wider’s inspiring documentary are doing everything they can for their pre-teen and teenaged children with Duchenne’s muscular dystrophy. Charley’s mother, Tracy Seckler, suspected that her son might have the progressive disease when she noticed minor but troubling mobility issues. She took him to the best neurologists on the East Coast, concluding, “There’s no treatment, there’s no cure, there’s nothing you can do.” His father, Benjy, provides the film’s title when he says, “I will go to the edge of the sky to keep him alive.” In their case, the couple founded a charitable foundation. Single mother Jenn McNary has two sons with Duchenne’s. Austin uses a wheelchair and younger brother Max doesn’t. The difference: Max has been participating in a clinical trial through Sarepta Therapeutics, a

small biotech company. Tracy and Benjy hope to put Charley on the same drug. Otherwise, they will be lucky if he makes it to age 28. Austin didn’t qualify for the initial trial, which only accepted ambulatory subjects. Now Jenn is working to get the drug fast-tracked for approval before it claims another generation of young men (the disease only affects men). She’s been aided in her efforts by Christine McSherry, whose son Jett isn’t part of the trial. The fourth subject, Mindy Leffler, has a son named Aidan who took part in a Prosenza trial in Canada that didn’t go well, in large part because they gave him a placebo. Over the course of the film, the mothers meet with politicians, lobbyists, and members of the FDA, and by the end their efforts have helped to expand the trial pool, although the fight for drug approval continues. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (*K. Fennessy*)

RELATIONSHIPS & SEXUALITY

Bigger Like Me ★1/2

(2019) 102 min. DVD: \$24.99. Breaking Glass Pictures (avail. from most distributors). Closed captioned.

While personal essays are a legitimate form of documentary filmmaking, obnoxious works that cross a line into self-obsession can be hard to take. Comedian Greg Bergman’s nonsensical *Bigger Like Me*—about his quest to make his penis bigger and/or wider—is a case in point. An extended cut of his 2014 documentary *Big Like Me*, Bergman’s off-the-wall, priapic preoccupation causes stress in his marriage and brings a strain of weirdness to his relationship with his younger brother. Trying to find a clinic that can do more for him after pills, pumps, and injections have failed, Bergman travels to Tijuana, Mexico, for controversial surgery. In the film’s worst scene (selected from a smorgasbord of cringe-worthy moments), viewers witness a naked Bergman undergoing a tortuous process on his genitals. It looks like Dr. Mengele’s idea of male enhancement, but does it work? And does Bergman finally get what he wanted? Frankly, there’s not much reason to care. Extras include bonus footage. Not recommended. Aud: P. (*T. Keogh*)

Break the Silence: Reproductive & Sexual Health Stories ★★★

(2018) 59 min. DVD: \$125; high schools & public libraries; \$299; colleges & universities. DRA. New Day Films. PPR. Closed captioned. ISBN: 978-1-57448-043-6.

The 18 candid women featured in filmmaker Willow O’Feral’s documentary are cisgender and transgender, varying in age and race, who talk about their sexual histories. Although their names appear in the opening credits, O’Feral doesn’t connect them with their faces, so they remain anonymous in a

Beginner Tai Chi for Health ★★★★★

(2019) 92 min. DVD: \$29.95. YMAA Publication Center (www.ymaa.com). ISBN: 978-1-59439-669-4.

Beginner Tai Chi for Health features Master Helen Liang, an expert tai chi practitioner and trainer who teaches the relatively new 16-move tai chi form. Tai chi is referred to here as “moving meditation,” and is an ancient form of exercise that is generally regarded as appropriate for supporting health, fitness, and relaxation. Designed for beginners interested in health benefits, this workout begins with an introduction and warm up (featuring qi gong exercises), after which Liang presents the entire 16-move tai chi form in mirror-view fashion in a lovely inside setting with wood floors and Chinese art in the background. Liang then explains the steps for each form by illustrating foot, body, arm, and hand placement in a relaxed, orderly manner. The 16-form includes “parting the horse’s mane,” “white crane spreads its wings,” “repulse the monkey,” “needle at sea bottom,” and “grasping the peacock’s tail” (exercises are also shown from the back view as Liang repeats the movements). The workout ends with a meditative routine. Not only is Liang very graceful, she is also a precise practitioner. Highly recommended. Editor’s Choice. Aud: P. (*T. Root*)

