

Software and 'soft' martial arts

Once each week, Tai Chun Pan, a Digital software engineer, leads a group of his colleagues in the practice of t'ai chi chuan, the ancient Chinese martial art.

He began his own study of t'ai chi 25 years ago in Taiwan. When he came to the U.S. as a student in 1980, he started to teach it in the Chinese-American community "even before I felt comfortable with English."

Tai Chun joined Digital in 1984. Today he works with Digital's PATHWORKS group on the development of application programs for PC network integration.

But while the development of computer software is a relatively new science, the practice of t'ai chi chuan is an-

cient, dating back to 12th century China.

T'ai chi is called a "soft" martial art, and its form consists of a series of balanced, relaxed postures, connected by slow graceful movements.

"T'ai chi emphasizes a relaxed body posture, and concentration on mind/body coordination."

—Tai Chun Pan

"Even though it's based on martial arts applications," says Tai Chun, "t'ai chi emphasizes a relaxed body posture, and concentration on mind/body coordination."

Today, most people study t'ai chi for health reasons. Its postures were designed to increase the flow of chi, the internal energy system which is the foundation of the body,

according to Chinese medicine.

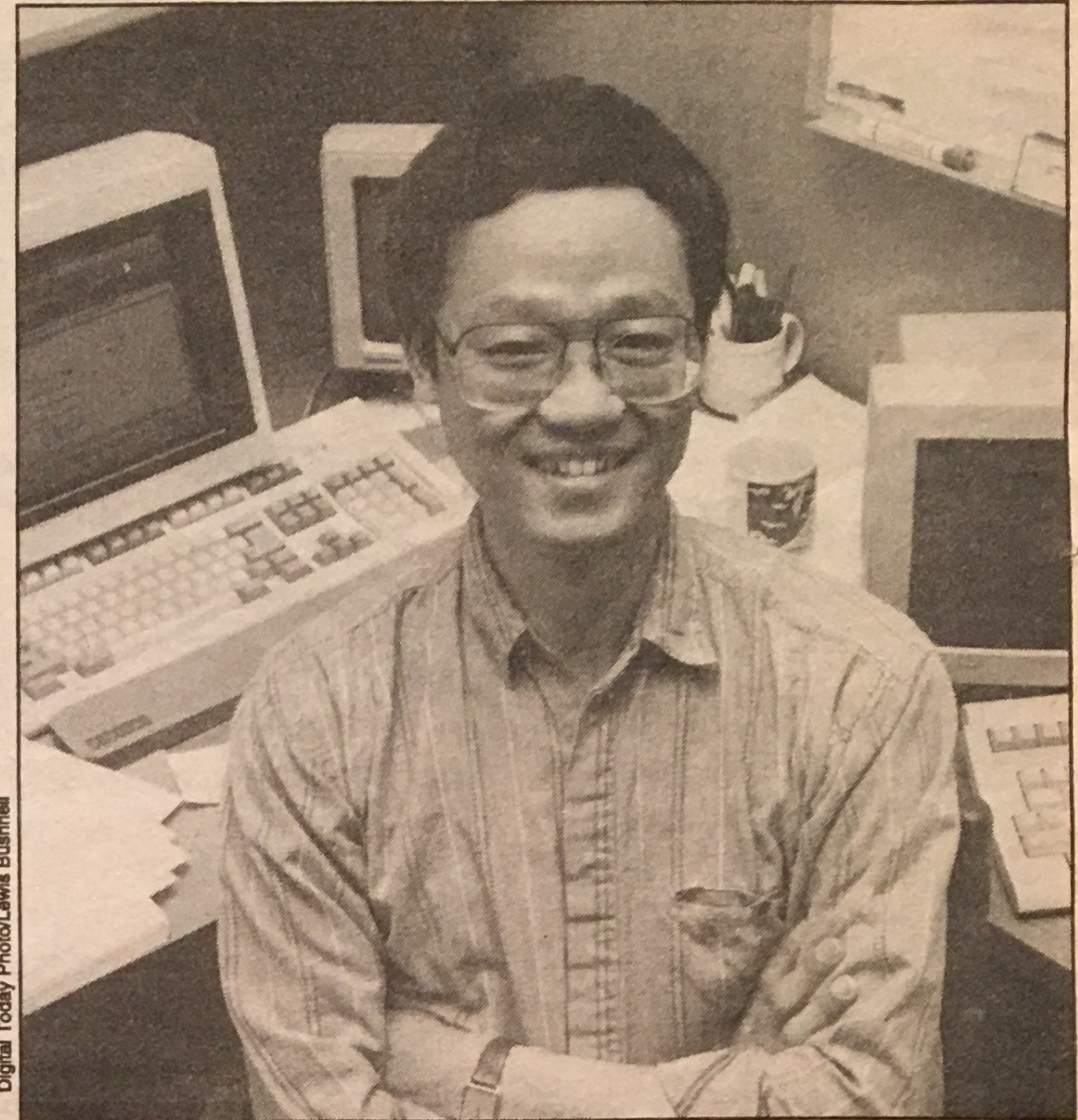
With its slow-motion, gentle moves, t'ai chi is sometimes called "moving meditation."

Tai Chun says by practicing t'ai chi he's become a "totally different person

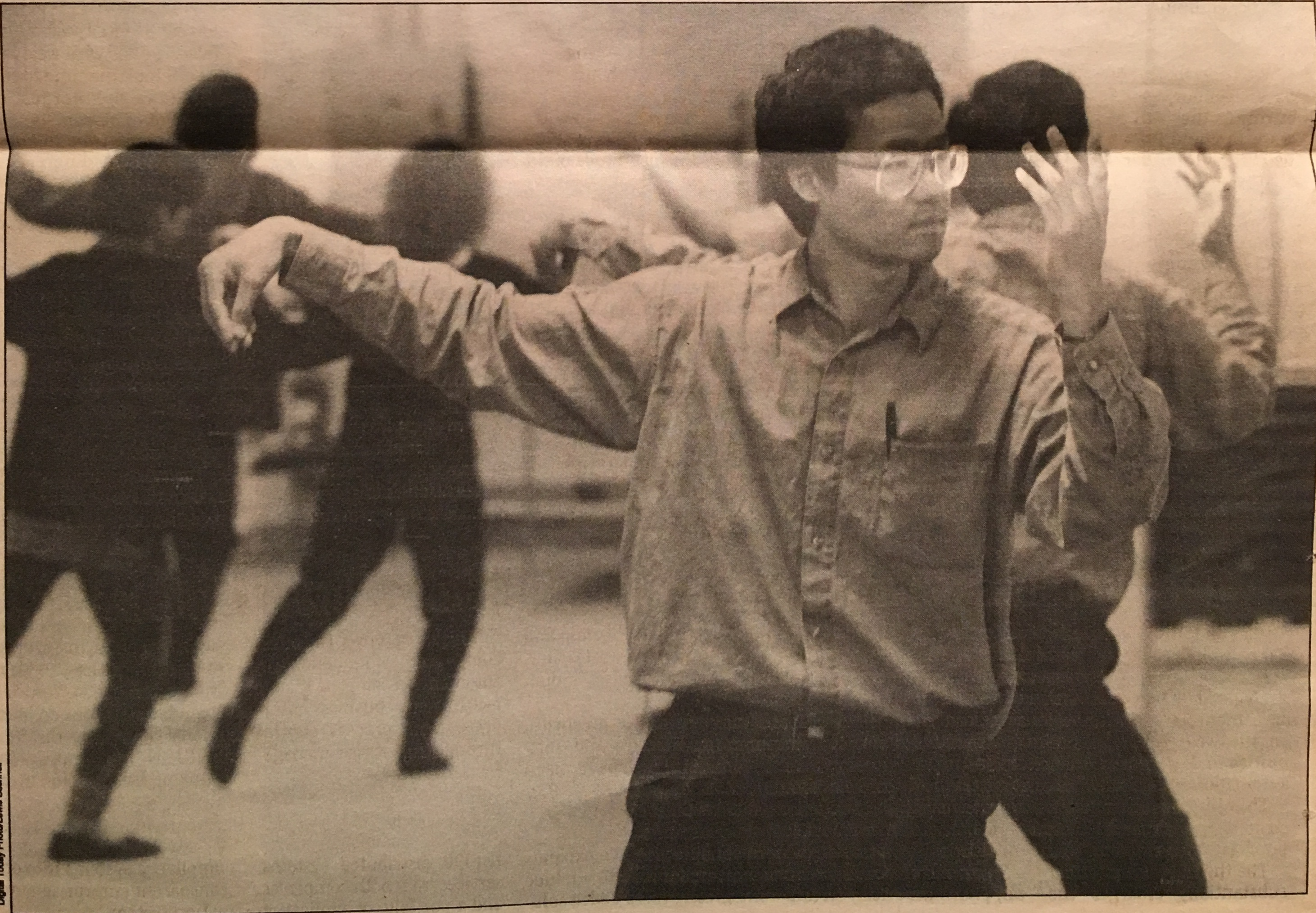
The t'ai chi principles of staying relaxed and using the mind and body together can apply to daily work," he says, "and it helps us improve our relationships with people."

Tai Chun is also skilled in the more advanced forms of t'ai chi chuan practice, which use the sword, saber, and staff.

"It is not easy to find a teacher who teaches those, even in China," he says. "When I studied in Taiwan, I was careful to find someone who knew the complete t'ai chi chuan."



Software engineer Tai Chun Pan, of Digital's Pathworks Group, is also a teacher of the "soft" martial art, t'ai chi chuan.



Digital Today Photo/Lewis Bushnell