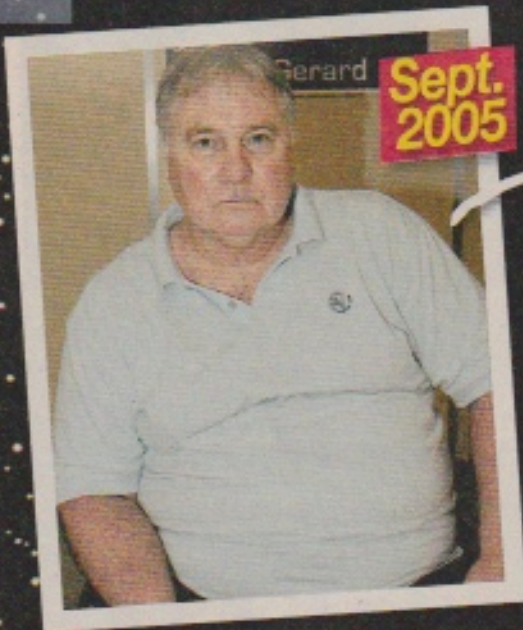


Welcome back, **BUCK ROGERS**

1979

Gil Gerard sheds 140 lbs. after gastric bypass surgery

Gil Gerard went from flying through space to taking up a lot of space



GOOD LARD! Actor Gil Gerard has shed a phenomenal 140 pounds after undergoing gastric bypass surgery.

Best known as the hunky star of the popular sci-fi series "Buck Rogers in the 25th Century," the 6-foot-1 Gerard ballooned to more than 350 pounds.

"I was morbidly obese," said the 64-year-old actor. "I was dying."

Gerard developed life-threatening conditions, including diabetes and heart disease – and it was a struggle just to move around.

"My hips hurt, my knees hurt," he told an interviewer.

In October 2005 – with the encouragement of his longtime pal Bill Clinton, who speaks out against childhood obesity – Gil allowed the Discovery Health channel to cover his surgery and subsequent progress.

Seven months later, the handsome

actor had dropped 140 pounds. His blood sugar had decreased to a normal range, and his heart was healthier.

Astonishingly, Gerard was able to resume playing tennis and golf.

"It feels good to be able to move again," said the grateful star. "I started working out shortly after the surgery and now I'm getting all kinds of exercise, and doing all kinds of things I couldn't do before. I can't ask for more than that."

Gerard weighed 175 pounds when he starred as Buck Rogers from 1979 to 1981, but he got so heavy that when he appeared at sci-fi conventions, people were unable to recognize him.

As his health deteriorated, he finally had a bellyful of being miserable.

"I really did not want to die."

by ROBIN MIZRAN