

The Reston Times

Covering Fairfax County Since 1882

121st Year, No. 26

Phone 703-437-5400

Wednesday, June 23, 2004

www.TimesCommunity.com

Times Community Newspapers

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A5

Using best of East and West to heal

Khalsa brings integrative medicine to Reston

By LISE HAUSRATH SIMMONS
ljsimmons@timespapers.com

It took a while for the sensation to register, but, when it did, it was powerful and identifiable. I felt an incredible warmth radiating down my legs but centered in my lower abdomen.

That area, apparently, is where most of my hurt was centered, and the acupuncture treatment I was receiving was redistributing my body's energy in an effort to take it away.

My caregiver was Darshan S. Khalsa, a Reston-based alternative medicine provider whose practice centers on holistic care and Oriental medicine, using acupuncture, herbal and enzyme therapy, nutrition, yogic breathing, detoxification and sound therapy.

Khalsa and his wife, Carol, long active in the health care field herself, relocated their practice in May to new offices that are designed to be allergen-free and pleasing to the soul. Located at Bowman Greene Drive, Khalsa Integrative Medicine LLC was designed with the patient in mind.

Its floors are hardwood—no more dust-laden wall-to-wall carpeting—and there are wooden blinds on the windows, with no chemicals applied.

The waiting-room chairs are upholstered with silk fabric that resists gathering dust, and the furniture is spare and custom-made "so that people could truly heal," Carol, the manager of the practice, said.

About 75 to 80 percent of Khalsa's patients are women, which he said is "typical of most of the healing professions." Many are treated for allergies, menopause and the side effects of chemotherapy.

Khalsa, a Reston resident for about seven years, has an undergraduate degree from the University of Maryland and his acupuncture degree from the Maryland Institute of Traditional Chinese Medicine.

He is board-certified and licensed to practice acupuncture by the Virginia Board of Medicine. Khalsa is currently pursuing a doctorate in Oriental medicine at the Tai Sophia Institute in Columbia, Md.

He has undergraduate degrees in engineering and general studies but has been practicing and teaching yoga and meditation for about 30 years.

So he decided to pursue a career in alternative medicine. "This was more in alignment with the healing work I've been doing basically all my life," he said in a recent interview.

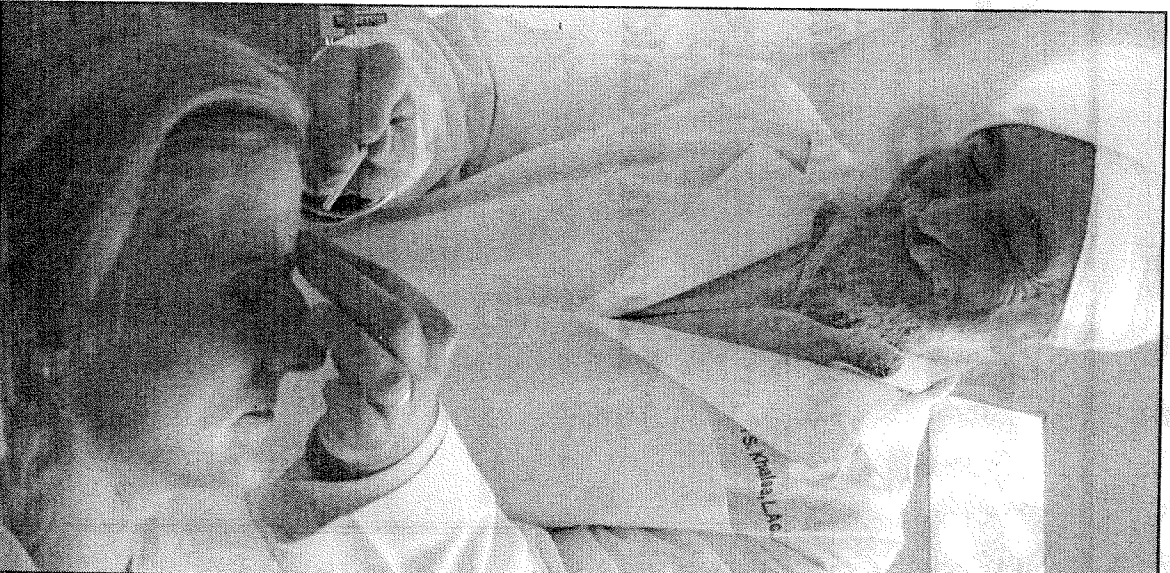
Khalsa explained that integrative medicine "is combining the best of Western medicine with Eastern concepts of bringing the body's energy into harmony. ... We're integrating body, mind and spirit," he said.

The mind and body form a unified system, and "what happens to one can have a great effect on the other," he remarked.

"We're 99.9 percent empty space—just energy," Khalsa continued. "Our thoughts and state of our consciousness have a tremendous effect on our well-being. ... People [can] make themselves sick with their thoughts."

My treatment began with the usual taking of a medical history, and, once Khalsa determined what my problem areas were, he proceeded from there.

First, he determined that I was in menopause, my diet was very healthy and that I was taking care of myself by exercising regularly



BODY BALANCING: Oriental medicine practitioner Darshan Khalsa inserts an acupuncture needle into a "chi" energy spot on Reston Times reporter Lise Simmons' face, while she undergoes a "body balancing" treatment.

New Business

and eschewing things such as caffeine, sugar and processed foods.

He then determined that stress from my impending divorce and other life changes were probably the cause of many of my physical ailments.

With most people he treats, the emotional component is "not the predominant problem," he said.

With those people, he deals with toxicity—things people are ingesting or are surrounded by that are not good for them.

The first clinical thing he did was check my pulse. "You're stressed," he said.

He then tested me for hidden food allergies using a polarity test. When there was an offending substance or thought, my body reacted with a temporary interruption in my nervous response, so I could not direct the muscles in my arm to be strong. This muscle testing is called kinesiology. I extended my left arm at shoulder height, while my right hand made contact with various things. Khalsa pushed down hard on my left arm,



Times Staff Photos/Shamus Ian Fazlinger

POLARITY TESTING: Darshan Khalsa is checking Reston Times reporter Lise Simmons for reactions to various substances in what is known as polarity testing.

and, if I was not able to resist the pressure and dropped by arm noticeably, that meant that I was sensitive to the substance in question.

The most obvious reaction came when I held a packet of sugar in my right hand. That meant no more sugar in my diet, I guessed, though I already had eliminated all but natural sugars from fruit. The sugar reaction "happens to a lot of people," he said.

I also reacted when holding a metal stylus in my right hand and touching vials containing the essence of coffee and chocolate. Two more things I was especially sensitive to.

Fortunately, I had pretty much eliminated them, too, from my diet long ago.

The body gets perceptibly weaker when things that are not good for you are in your energy field, Khalsa said.

After that initial testing, I laid face down on a cushioned table while Khalsa touched different pressure points down my neck and back.

Then he flipped me over and inserted several hair-thin acupuncture needles into my body, at strategic spots on my arms, legs, face and head, key channels of "chi" energy.

In the background, I could hear soothing music, designed to help me calm my body and my mind.

The needles pricked a bit, and two actually gave me the sensation of minor pain, the one at the top of my head and the one in my right foot. Khalsa left me alone in a darkened room for about a half hour, though I did lose track of time.

About 15 minutes into the treatment, I started to feel the warmth gathering in my lower abdomen, then radiating down my legs, in the form of a "v."

When I was done with the acupuncture treatment, which is also what he called "energy medicine," I felt very relaxed. That sensation lasted into the night.

Carol Khalsa, who is the past director of the American Preventive Medical Association and past executive director of the Alzheimer's Prevention International Foundation, said that I had probably experienced the release of energy from a spot in my body that had suffered the most.

I think more "body balance" treatments are in store for me.

"Clinically, we know we get effects from it," Khalsa said, while acknowledging that the science of integrative medicine is hard to explain. "Basically, our consciousness affects our health," he said.