

Even helping to relieve chemotherapy pain

Acupuncture in Mt. Airy producing powerful results

By Audrey Levine

Eleven years ago, Beth Sutter, 55, of Germantown, began getting acupuncture and other treatments in an effort to gain some relief from her rheumatoid arthritis and congenital spinal stenosis, both of which left her severely disabled and in a great deal of pain.

But nine months into the acupuncture treatment, she found she was not getting any relief, and she ended it until, to continue treatments while her regular bodyworker was out of the country for a few months, she met Mt. Airy

acupuncturist Sharon Sherman.

"I needed someone who would do home visits, and my bodyworker said I should see Sharon," Sutter explained. "I was reluctant, but since I had no one else, I asked her to help."

Now, five years later, Sutter still relies on Sherman, 45, whose acupuncture business, Empirical Point LLC at 26 E. Mt. Airy Avenue, is going strong with hundreds of patients touting the ways in which her methods have helped treat their ailments.

"I have hundreds of patients with varying degrees of activity," Sherman said. "When I first opened my doors eight years ago in Mt. Airy, I only had a few patients. Now, I see dozens per week. Oriental Medicine and acupuncture become a maintenance resource and preventative tool in my clients' lives."

For Sutter, Sherman's work has helped to ease discomfort that comes with her chronic disabilities, including consistent vomiting while taking chemotherapy to suppress her overactive immune system. She said she is seeing positive results from Sherman's work that she never had in her initial acupuncture treatments so many years ago.

"Before I saw Sharon, I was vomiting 20 times a day," she said. "It affected my ability to think, and it was very painful. But I've had dramatic results from working with Sharon. After three weeks with her, I was down to vomiting four times a day, now it's just a few times a month. It has made a huge difference in my life."

After abandoning an initial plan to go to veterinary school when she learned about acupuncture assisting in vet medicine, Sherman decided to immerse herself in this craft and opened a business eight



Sharon Sherman, a local businesswoman and acupuncturist with a near decade-long private practice at 26 E. Mt. Airy Ave.

years ago near where her mother grew up in East Mt. Airy.

"I also grew up nearby, with fond memories of shopping on Wadsworth Avenue each Saturday as a child," she said. "I went to an acupuncturist to better understand the science and craft. I became immersed in this medicine, and the rest is history."

Acupuncture is a method that uses thin, sterile, single-use metallic needles to activate areas beneath the skin, called points. When they are stimulated, they move energy in the body. "Energy that is moved in a skillful manner engages the body's healing response," Sharon said. "This often results in reduction of pain, illness or disease."

Mt. Airy resident Debbie Hoffman, 56, decided to try acupuncture instead of massages and chiropractic sessions to treat sinus migraines and other seasonal infections. She said prescription med-

ications often become less effective over time, but the acupuncture for her was about pain relief, not just treating individual symptoms.

"Acupuncture gives me physical and emotional relief," she said. "With acupuncture, I take Chinese herbs only when my allergies are really bad without any kick-back effect when the herbs wear off. It's about working towards curing what ails you without the potential side effects of taking prescription medications."

Gina Michaels, 54, of Germantown, had been using acupuncture treatments for years, but continued to suffer from low energy and a compromised immune system, later coming down with chronic fatigue, which treatments could not completely cure.

"But Sharon's treatments were able to clear out latent viruses, the remnants of past viral infections that were running down my immune system," Michaels said. "Thanks to Sharon, I am in truly robust good health for the first time in my life."

According to Sherman, the World Health Organization and the National Institute of Health now recognize acupuncture for such medical diagnoses as food allergies, infertility, emphysema, eczema, psoriasis, depression, addictions, eating disorders and others.

Margo Campbell, 35, of Roxborough, who turned to acupuncture to help with sleeping problems, said the treatments have done more than just improve her rest patterns. "I saw some other benefits from the treatment as well, like improved concentration, better responses to stress and anxiety and more energy. When I was having sleeping problems, I wanted to avoid prescribed medicine and even the over-the-counter sleep medicines and find a more natural way to address the problem."

Acupuncture is one branch of Oriental Medicine which "has a richly documented past," according to Sherman. "(It) is an effective, empirical science based on data and experience gathered in the real world over the course of millennia."

Sherman said there is a connection between Oriental Medicine and Western Medicine, in that the former can pick up where the latter leaves off. "Often, when patients are exhibiting issues that Western diagnostics are not defining as a particular pathology, acupuncture and Oriental Medicine can provide effective intervention. When someone comes to see me complaining of feeling poorly, with no or uncertain diagnosis from Western medicine professionals, I often am able to improve the complaints of the patient, correcting the subtle threats before anything snowballs into a systemic, major issue."

But despite glowing recommendations from patients, Sherman understands that she must be flexi-

ble in dealing with problems her patients might be encountering, particularly during these tough economic times. "When I had the flu last year and literally couldn't move, Sharon hand-delivered Chinese herbs, and I was up and back to work in three days," Hoffman said.

Despite initially earning a fine arts degree from Temple University's Tyler School of Art, after completing a full pre-med curriculum as a part-time continuing education student in several Pennsylvania schools, Sherman attended Tri-State College of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine in New York City, graduating in 2001. Sherman, who is also a graduate of nearby Springfield Township High School, continued studying Chinese herbs and biomedicine, and is now certified from the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM), and is licensed as a Practitioner of Oriental Medicine in Pennsylvania.

"Only eight percent of practitioners in Pennsylvania hold both of these certifications," said Sherman, "which are the highest levels of professional standing a practitioner can currently earn."

For more information, call 215-247-7100, x1, visit www.philadelphia-acupuncture.com or email: sharon@philadelphiaacupuncture.com



DISNEY COMES TO AREA:

United Cerebral Palsy of Philadelphia & Vicinity (UCP) and the Carol Schwartz Gallery, both in Chestnut Hill, have partnered to bring Disney performance artist Trevor Carlton (seen here) to make his Philadelphia premiere at the UCP 21st Annual Fantasy Auction. In a matter of minutes, Carlton will use music, paint, and his unique canvas distressing technique to create an original 5' x 5' painting featuring a Disney icon. The completed piece will be auctioned off to the highest bidder. For a preview of Trevor Carlton's performance, watch "Making Magic" at <http://www.disneyfineart.com/videopl.php?vid=1242>. This year's UCP Fantasy Auction will take place Nov. 21, 6:30, at the Hilton Philadelphia, 4200 City Ave. Tickets can be obtained by calling 215-242-4200 or visit www.ucpphila.org. For more information on the Carol Schwartz Gallery, visit <http://www.carolschwartzgallery.com/>.



LANSBURY AT HILL

LIBRARY: A very young Angela Lansbury stars in the 1945 adaption of Oscar Wilde's "The Picture of Dorian Gray" at 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, Nov. 24, at the Chestnut Hill Library, 8711 Germantown Ave. Hurd Hatfield, George Sanders, Donna Reed and Peter Lawford also star in this story of a painter who makes a Faustian bargain to maintain his youthful look. Admission is free.

A lot of ER care.

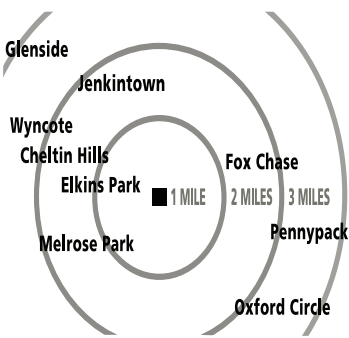
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