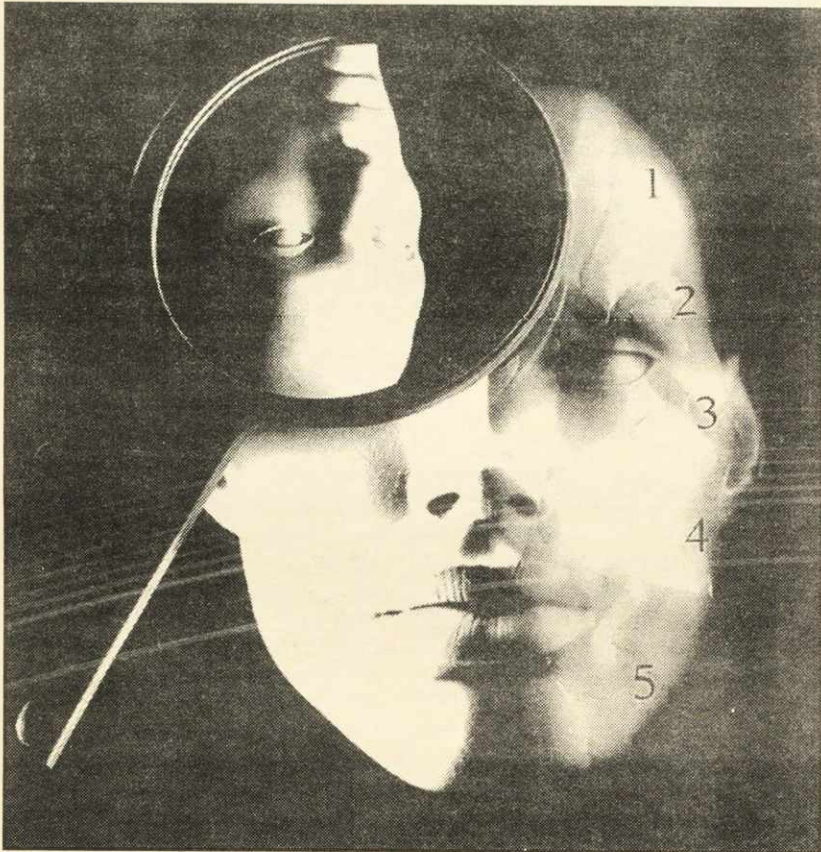


Feet, Needles, and the bump that wouldn't go away

BY JOHN CULLEN

I had an idea to do a piece last year on the rising popularity of "alternative" medicine, but I had no physical problems at the time, and quickly forgot about it. However, about 6 weeks ago, I noticed a bump on the back of my neck. It was about as big as a quarter and hard like stale bread. About



the same time, some of my friends noticed that I was stuttering over words. I rarely do that.

I am not one to complain about physical things, and I visit the doctor as infrequently as I possibly can. Unfortunately, during one of my weekly talks with my mom, I let it slip that there was some bump on my neck. My mom was very concerned and made me promise that I would see a neurologist.

I arranged a meeting with Dr. Purdy at the Victoria General Hospital and then it dawned on me. Why not exploit my illness for the sake of journalism? It seemed to have worked in the past. I decided that I would go to as many places as would take me. The next two weeks would involve a Coaxial Tomography (CT) scan, acupuncture, a foot massage and a small dose of hypnotherapy.

My appointment with Dr. Purdy was very strange. He made me do a series of exercises involving different parts of my brain. He asked me questions like, "What color is this pen?" and combined it with me touching my nose with an eye closed. The tests seemed trivial, and Dr. Purdy obviously had more important things on his mind than a student with a bump on his neck.

The doctor sent me to a faceless waiting room until a nurse was ready to administer a CAT scan. Television has done a wonderful job at sensationalizing this process. I did not need to change into some ill-fitting gown or take some drug or have a needle stuck in me. I simply lied on a table as a doughnut of radiation was shot at my head for 10 minutes. No pomp, no "This could be dangerous, Jim" mentality — it was a safe and almost boring way to spend ten minutes. I was sent home by the nurse, and told that the doctor would call me with the results. That evening the Doctor called and said that there was

nothing growing on my brain that would cause the speech problem. According to modern medicine, I was 100% healthy. But what about that bump? I decided to go get a second opinion.

I live above a hair salon which caters to almost every aesthetic facet of the body. I was in the shop getting our mail, when I noticed a flyer offering Reflexology,

way through the right foot, I felt an acute pain similar to a knotted muscle. I asked her what part of my body it represented.

"That's your lymph glands," she replied. The lymph glands are the draining area at the back of the neck for infections.

Not bad, I thought, but can she spot my stuttering problem? Five minutes later, she felt the spot congruent with the pituitary gland (the part of the brain that deals with speech and stress, among other things); it was inflamed and painful. This shocked the hell out of me. Christa had easily identified my physical problems by listening to my feet.

Finding the problem seemed easy enough, but what about the treatment? The answer is simple. Once located, the trouble area is massaged. If it is a persistent problem, you will probably have to go back for more appointments.

I found Ms. Mulligan-Tremblay to be very articulate and professional. The atmosphere is very relaxed and this is compounded by the fact that your feet are being rubbed — it is very calming. However, I found that I was dehydrated at the end of the session. I was told that this was a natural side effect, and to drink excessive

amounts of water over the next 24 hours.

The cost is the only real drawback of Reflexology for students. My half-hour appointment came to \$32.10. At \$55 dollars an hour, students may not be able to afford this service very often, but I highly recommend it — even if you can only go once.

Christa Mulligan-Tremblay can be reached at the Totally Yours hair salon, 429-2852. She works by appointment only. There seemed to be no miracle cure for the bump on my neck, so on the advice of a colleague, I made an appointment with another person.

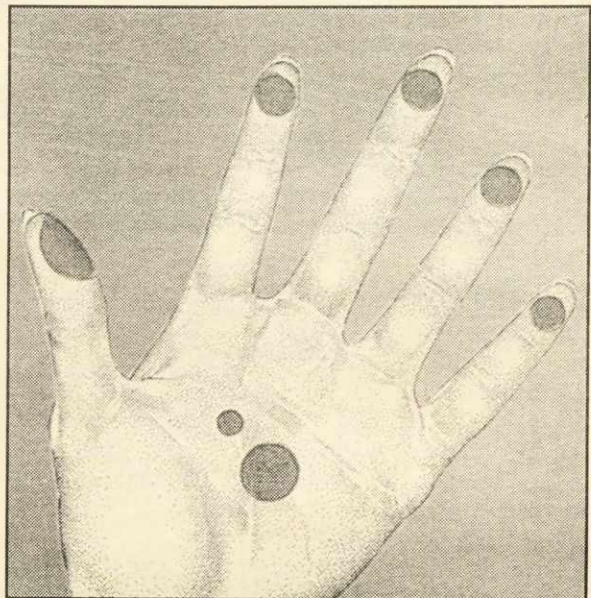
The next place I went to was on Göttingen Street. Paula Arnot has just started a Health and Wellbeing centre in Halifax. She offers expertise in Massage, Yoga, Hypnotherapy, Vision Training, and Therapeutic Touch. Most of these words meant nothing to me, but I

was willing to try it out. I met her in her office/home and was shown into a comfortable room. I sat on the couch and we proceeded to talk about this article. Ms. Arnot struck me as a very intelligent woman, and full of an inner stillness. Her words were chosen perfectly, delivered in a deliberate and calming manner. I spent just over two hours in the room, but the amount of new

things I was learning made me forget about time.

We started with Vision Training, which uses special exercises to ease the daily strain on our eyes. According to Arnot, the damage to our eyes can be reversed through simple daily exercises. She then showed me some yoga tricks to help get me relaxed for the Therapeutic touch and Hypnotherapy. I was shown some ways to put myself in a trance-like state, (great for parties) and then it was time for the "T.T.", as Arnot called it.

First and foremost, if you are a squirmish person who doesn't like physical contact, don't be alarmed; Therapeutic Touch does not involve touching. It works on the premise that the body has an aura of energy surrounding it. If



there is a problem in your body, say a bum knee or something, then the aura is not flowing properly. The person performing makes several different kinds of gestures around the body to get the energy moving properly. The person performing the act is supposed to sense where the body's problems lie by "reading" the energy. She warned me prior to treatment that T.T. can be very draining, and some time is needed to regain strength after it is performed. She was so right.

After the treatment, I sat like a little child on the couch. I could barely speak, and I felt like I had the mental capacity of my left shoe. Although I felt nothing during the treatment, something had to have happened to me. I sat and listened to her speak for a good 20 minutes. I was conscious of the fact that anything I tried to say came out sounding extremely stupid, but I didn't care at all. I was so drained, all I could do was listen and absorb.

All the things I learned from Ms. Arnot were interesting. However, my speech problem and the mysterious bump were never mentioned. In hindsight, I realize that for these things to work, one must be dedicated. A pronounced lifestyle change (especially for me) and a schedule are necessary for getting good results. Although I would love to do all these things religiously, I don't have the time right now. Mind you, it is worth the visit — and at only \$25.00 for students, the price is a little more agreeable. If you decide to try this, the appointments last about one hour and fifteen minutes and you can arrange them by calling 429-2450.

The last place I visited was the L-C Acupuncture Clinic. Estab-

lished 12 years ago, the clinic was referred to me by at least five different people. When I got to the clinic, I had to wait for about half an hour, but another patient gladly filled the void with stories of how acupuncture solved all his physical problems. I could tell that he was genuine, and hearing his story made me want to get as many needles stuck in me as humanly possible. There is nothing more pleasing than to hear someone's miraculous story right before you try a new thing; it gives you a little faith.

When it was my turn to meet Dr. Franklin S. Chen, I was a little nervous. He seemed very rigid, and I didn't want to make him angry. He asked what problems I had, and I told him of the bump. I was also interested in the acu-

puncture way to stop smoking. I was on the nicotine patch, but if I took it off for over an hour, I would slowly go insane with twitches and gut-rot. He decided to treat me for the smoking instead of the bump.

The smoking treatment involves 4 thin needles placed in the ear and then hooked

up to some kind of electrical source. A steady pulse is sent through the needles for about 15 minutes. The first thing that went through my mind while I was slowly being shocked was, "Electricity isn't ancient, mystical, or from the orient..." But who cares? The treatment worked. I have zero cravings, and it's like I never smoked in the first place. I have to go back for a follow-up treatment, but I look forward to it.

The L-C Acupuncture Clinic emanates security when you close the door behind you. When setting foot in the office, one realizes that this is a serious operation run by professionals. No crackpot scams here. Like the reflexology, the pricing is not aimed at students. One visit will cost \$59 plus taxes. I recommend the treatment for quitting smoking as \$59 is nothing when you total the cost of the habit.

This article has taken two weeks to research, with four separate trips to four different people. One common denominator for all the "alternative" medicine practitioners is that they do not want to overthrow mainstream medical practices. They feel that there are ways that the two philosophies can work together.

"I like to think of it as complementary medicine," says Paula Arnot. This seems extremely logical to me. After experiencing all these things, I have become a convert. I'm not talking fanatical — you won't see me outside the SUB selling herbs — but I will think twice next time I reach for the Tylenol bottle.

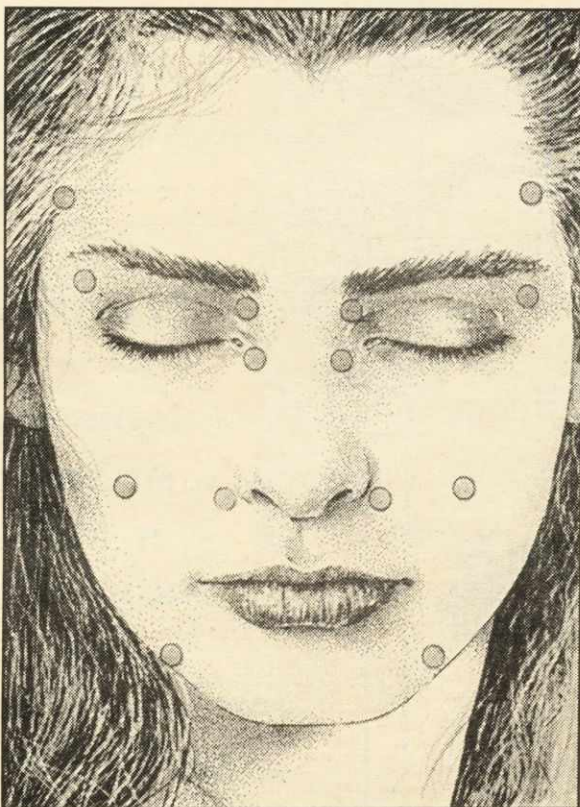
However, there is one problem — the bump is still sitting there. My speech seems to have righted itself, but the darn bump...

But asking for a cherry to top the sundae is just a little selfish.

Aromatherapy, and massage therapy. I asked for an appointment.

Christa Mulligan-Tremblay is a Registered Massage Therapist, and a Certified Reflexologist. She has been practising for just under two years. I had never heard of Reflexology, and was anxious to experience what it was like.

Reflexology is all in the feet. Each foot holds an abundance of nerve endings. When under the eyes of an experienced reflexologist, the feet can tell a whole lot



about a person's health. Every organ and gland is represented; not just broad regions of the body like the "abdomen" or "chest". I made sure not to mention my recent physical problems, and let Christa start her work.

Through massaging the areas of the feet, one can direct attention to the ailing parts of the body within. I was told to let her know if certain areas felt sensitive. Half-