



Bergen CFS-FM Support Group Newsletter

Meeting Report

The January meeting was held at the Seville Diner in Westwood. It was brutally cold afternoon, but a small group did gather. Discussions included possible meeting places and the recent New York Times Article on Fibromyalgia.

The owners of the site we had anticipated as our new meeting place, withdrew the offer on the advice of their legal department, since we do not carry insurance. We have reopened our search and are following up on some hopeful sites. We will continue to meet on the third Sunday of the month at alternate locations, as needed. Please watch our newsletter and email meeting reminders for the latest information about the current meeting place. The February meeting will be held on Sunday February 17th at the Panera Bread located on Route 4 West in the Kohl's shopping plaza. It is at the west end of the center. We will meet in the party room that is located within the store. You are not obligated to purchase anything to attend.

Social

Social Director, Frank Kawa, has set a date for a gathering

Wednesday February 6th

Luncheon

at

The Seville Diner

289 Broadway

Westwood

The group will be there from 1:30 PM until about 3 PM.

Just show up.

If you have any questions or wish to let Frank know you are coming, you can call him at 201-768-4111. You do not need to contact Frank to attend.

Co-leader in the News

Co-leader, Nancy Visocki was interviewed recently by **The Record**, regarding treatments she has been receiving from energy healer, Master Shin. Master Shin has attended several of our meetings – often performing mini-treatments on attendees. He is scheduled to speak at the March meeting. In case you missed seeing the article, it is included here. Note: Nancy's last name was misspelled in the article.

The Bergen CFS-FM Support Group, the co-leaders, and the parent organization, NJCFSA, do not necessarily endorse this form of treatment, but offer it as an option that some may wish to explore.

Harnessing energy's healing powers

The Record Monday, January 28, 2008

http://www.northjersey.com/health/Practitioners_harness_energys_healing_powers.html?c=y&page=2

BY EVELYN SHIH

One week recently, Nancy Vislocki of Dumont went to the gym every day. She took yoga, pilates, aerobics and even weight training. Strange thing is, she hadn't been to the gym in 17 years.

Vislocki was diagnosed with chronic fatigue syndrome 10 years ago, and with an inflammatory autoimmune disease called Sjögren's syndrome five years ago. She shouldn't have been able to drive to the gym every day of the week, let alone attempt lunges and presses.

But that week, "my energy level was so high," said Vislocki. "That's why I thought I could do all this stuff!"

Vislocki believes that dramatic change in her well-being was the result of two weeks of intensive treatments with energy healer Shoe-Zen Shin (known as Osamu Kamiyama when not healing). She went every other day to lie fully clothed on a table so that Kamiyama could briefly prod and pinch her problem areas, then infuse her with universal energy using his hands for the better part of an hour. She emerged relaxed, refreshed — and, miraculously, energetic.

Skeptical? Vislocki didn't buy any of it, either, when she first heard of energy healing.

Hands-on treatment

Unlike massage therapy or chiropractics, energy healing does not involve a therapist manipulating muscles and bone structures with physical force. Instead, energy healers from various traditions put their hands on patients and, staying almost completely still for minutes on end, pass energy to the patient. The idea is that the patient suffers aches and pains from imbalances in his or her life-force energy that the healer can remedy.

Although life energy is a common idea in many Eastern medical traditions, it has been slow in coming to North Jersey. Even so, practitioners like Kamiyama are gaining credibility. Certain variations of energy healing, such as Reiki, have widely recognized certification standards. Healer and masseuse Renee LeBental of Wayne says that she has worked on patients from 8 to 80 years of age, from the overstressed to the terminal cancer patient.

"I love working on [the skeptics]," LeBental said, laughing. Over the years, she has offered 10 minutes of energy healing at the end of her usual massage sessions and has had a slow but steady conversion rate. At her Ridgewood practice, energy healing is about 30 to 35 percent of her work.

Yet energy healing of all kinds — Quantum-Touch, Chinese qigong and polarity treatment, among others — has had a difficult time gaining official recognition. LeBental and Kamiyama earned massage therapy certificates (although neither initially was interested in massage work) because the state does not offer licenses for energy healing.

It pays, however, to be a discerning customer. Even LeBental has met "inauthentic" healers whom she could not trust.

"You have to be careful," she said. "There are a lot of people selling things that are questionable...But I can say honestly that energy healing does work. I've had a lot of people come back and tell me about what it did for them, so I feel comfortable offering it."

She's not alone. Some North Jerseyans are such staunch believers in energy healing that they are taking matters literally into their own hands. Jocelyn Kahn, a Wyckoff energy healer trained in Reiki, Jin Shin Jyutsu, TAT (Tapas Acupressure Technique) and Quantum-Touch, offers a workshop in Quantum-Touch three times a year — and her January class was at capacity.

Beginners with no healing background take the weekend course and can do basic healing "by lunchtime the first day," said Kahn. Quantum-Touch teaches a system of breathing and mental awareness that heightens energy in the practitioner and allows her to transmit it to a patient.

At monthly healing circles she holds at the High Mountain Clear Lake Zen Center in Wyckoff, Kahn guides the initiated in mutual healing sessions. One member of the group lies on a table, and all others place their hands on problem areas to give energy. Participants have health concerns ranging from stiffness and bad circulation to cancer recovery.

"The sessions give us a chance to practice," said Roseanne Cavenna of Westwood, who has been doing Quantum-Touch with Kahn for two years. She isn't a professional healer, but "I practice on family and friends whenever they have a rotator cuff injury or joint pain.

"Now, because they know it helps, they let me do it," said Cavenna.

Find qualified healers

Despite anecdotal testimonials, finding a qualified practitioner is almost entirely experiential for the consumer. The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM), a division of the National Institutes of Health, defines the forces used in hands-on energy healing as "putative," or defying measurement.

"We rely on scientific proof without paying attention to our own gut feelings," said Kamiyama. "But our brains are much more precisely designed than any man-made machines — MRIs, CAT scans, X-rays included. Oftentimes, science or medical testing cannot find problems until they are a certain size, but our brains can recognize it."

Vislocki listened to the explanation, but did not get in line for a treatment when Kamiyama visited the chronic fatigue syndrome support group for a free demonstration last November. "People were saying, 'Wow, I feel great! My neck was hurting, but now it's not hurting me anymore!'" she said. "I was thinking, I don't know...this all seems a little odd to me."

Despite her misgivings, Vislocki had a terrible pain in her neck and shoulders when the healer visited the group a second time. So she decided to give it a try.

For a few days afterward, she waited for the pain to come back. It never did. That's when Vislocki took the plunge: Kamiyama's two-week intensive treatment. By the end of the two weeks, she had more energy than she knew what to do with — and a bunch of gym class coupons from a gym that was about to close down for good.

What followed was a manic week of exercise — and then a small crash as Vislocki recovered from the muscle pains. "I'm good, but I can't take you back 17 years in two weeks," joked Kamiyama.

[Follow-up to New York Times Article](#)

<http://chronicfatigue.about.com/b/2008/01/31/is-there-a-silver-lining-to-bad-press-on-fibromyalgia.htm>

Is there a Silver Lining to Bad Press on Fibromyalgia?

It's been a couple of weeks now since The New York Times published a story on fibromyalgia (FMS) titled, "Drug Approved. Is Disease Real?" The article quoted three doctors who continue refusing to believe that fibromyalgia is a real, physiological condition in spite of all the research showing that those of us with FMS have measurable abnormalities in our bodies, especially when it comes to sleep

and how we perceive pain. Those of us whose lives have been forever changed by this all-too-real illness were angry, frustrated and afraid that the article would give critics a stronger voice in the debate and lead to even more people who think we're not sick, but crazy.

I've watched the fall-out from this article closely. For a few days after publication, other media outlets picked up the story or used quotes from it, spreading the misperceptions even farther. Then, however, the tides began to turn. Articles started popping up everywhere that gave a more accurate picture of what it's like to deal with FMS. Finally, the mainstream media seemed to be taking notice, and at least some of them got the story right.

I'm not typically a harsh critic of the news media - heck, I was part of it for more than a decade. But what I do know about the news cycle is that even a negative story can have positive ramifications. With the Lyrica ads all over TV and magazines, it was only a matter of time before the stories started coming out. The New York Times article caused a lot of backlash, including emails, letter-writing campaigns and, you can bet, more than a few news releases from FMS experts and patient advocacy groups. That led to a flood of more accurate stories, and with any luck, a lot more people - both inside the media and outside of it - who are better informed.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Sunday February 17th from 2-4 PM at Panera Bread. It is an open discussion meeting.

This newsletter is intended for CFS patients in the area of this support group. The purpose is to share information and support. If you have questions about meetings please contact: Pat LaRosa at pat.njcfsa@larosas.net, Nancy Visocki at ngv.njcfsa@verizon.net, Judy Machacek at judymachacek@msn.com or Frank Kawa at 201-768-4111.