

**BUTTERFLY**

# ButterFly

A HEALING ARTS RESOURCE



## Ounce of Prevention or Pound of Cure

By Sandy Penny

At a time when health care is a major political topic, it brings up the question: are we doing everything we can to stay healthy?

Taos is home to a wealth of holistic practitioners committed to your wellness. There are Chinese herbal doctors, acupuncturists, acupressurists, nutritionists, ayurvedic consultants, herbal stores, energy healers, body workers and stress reduction trainers. With a little investigation, you can put together a wellness regime of nutrition, herbs, and practices.

If you prefer, you can go to a health consultant like Katie Muldoon who can assist you in creating a plan. Katie is trained in both Western and Eastern medicine, herbology and healthy lifestyle practices. She is National Board Certified in Chinese

medicine and acupuncture. She has dedicated her life to teaching and healing. She moved to Taos in 2008 with plans to offer classes in how to take better care of your health with food, herbs and exercise. She can also suggest small changes in your diet that contribute to your wellness while maintaining the cultural flavor of your food.

Because our bodies are constantly changing and giving us feedback on what we are putting into it, Katie says that we are the best monitors of those changes. If we are empowered to recognize changes that lead to health problems and to take action on our own behalf, we are much more likely to stay well.

**TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE**

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) offers a comprehensive system of health practices.

It includes nutrition, herbs, acupuncture, acupressure, moxibustion (burning specific herbs over acupuncture points to warm them), chi gong (energetic transmission of chi to your body to boost your ability to heal) and exercises to build your chi.

TCM has at least a 4000 year documented history of using herbs and foods for health. Practices have been rapidly growing in popularity in the U.S. since 1972, and today it is practiced all over the world. Chinese herbs no longer come only from China either, they come from everywhere. Cinnamon from Vietnam, cardamom from India, and even American ginseng from Wisconsin are now used in Chinese herbal practices.

**PHILOSOPHY**

The underlying philosophy is based on chi or qi, your body's energy system. Your body is nourished, cleansed, and dependent on keeping the energy flowing. Chi refers to all your body's energies: electrical, chemical, magnetic, and radiant. Our physical systems are naturally governed by forces such as gravity, time, inertia, friction, and positive and negative changes (yin and yang, masculine and feminine, active and receptive) that affect us, inside and out. Chi moves the blood, blood produces the chi, and every organ has its own chi. When blood and chi are balanced and flowing, we are well. When blood or chi is weak or stuck, we become ill or have pain. Keeping the chi properly flowing is the foundation of Chinese Medicine. By checking your pulses

and examining your tongue, a Chinese Medicine doctor can identify problems at early treatable stages, although they encourage personal responsibility first. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Some people end up going to Chinese Medicine doctors after they have exhausted the resources of Western Medicine. By that time, the patient may be so deteriorated that normalcy cannot be restored, but even then, sometimes "miraculous" cures happen. Chinese Medicine doctors usually lament the fact that the patient did not come to them earlier when establishing a healthy balance would have been much easier.

Today, change is occurring. Western medical doctors are beginning to align themselves with other practitioners. This is known as integrative or complementary medicine. In addition, lifestyle changes like nutrition, exercise and stress reduction practices are being recommended more often as preventives. Pharmaceutical companies are reviewing Chinese herbs that have demonstrated positive results to possibly be refined into scientifically tested, FDA approved medications. Acupuncture has been used to block pain without the risks associated with anesthesia. Perhaps, in the future, we will have a holistic team of health practitioners. With the best of all cultures working together, maybe we can stay healthy, keep all our organs, live longer and reduce medical costs.

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**BODY & SOUL**

**Treading The Brittle Pathway**

By Debra Villalobos

The crow of the rooster just before dawn is muffled by deep layers of glittering snow atop the chicken hut. The regular Sunday morning sounds are hushed as snow falls softly and continuously through the day and into the night. There seems to be no end. It piles up like sifted flour.

Chip the ice, scoop and toss the snow. Sweep it from the roofs of cars, houses and garden sheds. Do it again and again. The metal shovel clangs against the ice, concrete, pavement and flagstone, accompanying the swishing broom, breaking the silence created by blanketing snow.

Pump goes out, no water in our house on a dark Saturday eve. Toilet and bathtub in a rental backs up with dreaded brown matter. Phone conversations center around plumbers, a good "snaker", Joseph (Plumbing Plus), the pump guy, Dean (DS Pump Service), and backhoe driver, Joe, who plows. The deadline for the paper looms. Tempers flare. The guys save us.

Snow piles up on the side of the road leading to town—as high as the car. Piles of it on the Plaza are higher than my head. An ATV with a blade scoops up the snow for a back-hoe with a front-end loader, which dumps loads of the white stuff into a truck. Where do they dump it?

Ice crystals flutter through the air like silver glitter making the outside world look

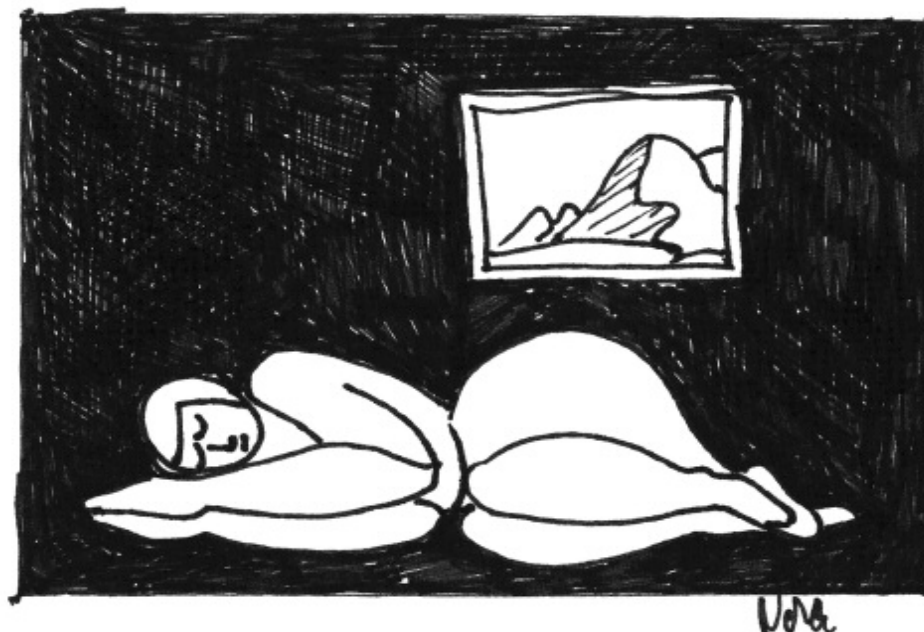
like fairy-land. Thank goodness the wind doesn't blow as hard as predicted. Nonetheless, limbs of trees sway, setting the glistening snow off like fireworks.

Less than a week ago, our skin was soft from the moisture of the atmosphere in more humidified surroundings. Our faces relaxed as we walked the streets of San Francisco and soaked in the warm mineral waters of Dr. Wilkinson's in Calistoga visiting with relatives. It was a well-deserved vacation. The pain in the shins from walking the hills down and up kept the memories present of Chinatown, Hotel Grant, feasting on chowder, oysters and crab at Swan Oyster Depot.

The revelry of holiday season is replaced by reality. Now, pain between the shoulder blades and across the chest replaces those physical memories of the body with the brittle reality of winter. January and February loom long. Shovels rest on the porch awaiting daily duty. Was the vacation worth being broke and tapped out?

Last year we stayed home for the holidays, prepared ourselves for the January issue of Horse Fly. I wrote these words. *Hiding and sleeping like a sick child, burrowing under the warm covers of quilts, the world becomes very small, introverted.* Still seems a good idea.

I'd rather be reading, writing and work-



ing on my art and state of mind for the coming new year than shoveling the winter blues.

Hues of crystalline blue lie like a blanket across the snow. Hoar frost hangs on the limbs and branches of trees, bushes and grasses, creating a magical world that will diminish with the light of sun. The drooping, icy grasses remind me of summer and hoppers. Too bad I have no frosted hoppers for sale to roast or use as fishing bait.

Prayers are uttered up for the sun to come out, thoughts dreading, however, the next reality. Sounds of dripping icicles accompany thunderous thudding as sheets of snow and ice melt and fall from the roof.

Our boots crunch ice in the morning, slog through mud in the afternoon.

*When snow blankets the earth and quiets the chaos, and when shadows of the branches of trees cast blue strikes across the snow and the snow glitters like a million diamonds and the world shatters into ice, and the night is long and I wait for the light of day, the rhythm is stillness.* Those were the words of last year. There is no stillness this winter, only work.

Pot-holes grow deeper, causing the joints of cars to groan and creak as one wheel after the other sinks into an abyss of pavement. Town workers try to fill them in, but they quickly sink again. The sound of the early morning scraping of the snow-plover becomes routine.

Congestion arrives. We cough, sneeze, and wheeze. Yet, we endure.

This is not the year of winter stillness. We adapt to the call of nature, the call of change and hope and we must endure this season and perhaps the next. We have been challenged, this season, this year.

In the night, I dream of spring and resurrection.

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