



Photo by Elsie Denton

**CAROLA STEPPER** treats a client during a recent session at the Hood River office of Cascade Acupuncture Center.

## Carola Stepper: Cascade Acupuncture Center

*Clients feel healthy, inspired*

By **ELSIE DENTON**  
Hood River News intern

Providing excellent care is a serious matter for Carola Stepper, owner of Cascade Acupuncture Center. She believes that it is important to keep the entire body in mind when healing. That is why her business provides three types of care: relief, corrective and maintenance.

"Relief care is like having a leaking roof and sticking a bucket under it," said Stepper. It is a temporary fix, but the problem will return again and again.

Cascade Acupuncture also provides corrective care to fix ongoing health issues and mainte-

nance care to ensure that the body does not return to its former unhealthy state.

Stepper said that part of her business' holistic approach is helping patients improve their lifestyles. She encourages patients to eat healthfully and thoughtfully, to exercise, to reduce and learn how to handle stress in their lives, and, of course, continue coming in for treatments.

"Acupuncture treatments are like physical therapy," said Stepper. "They build off of one another."

Stepper first became interested in acupuncture when she was working as a home health and

hospice nurse.

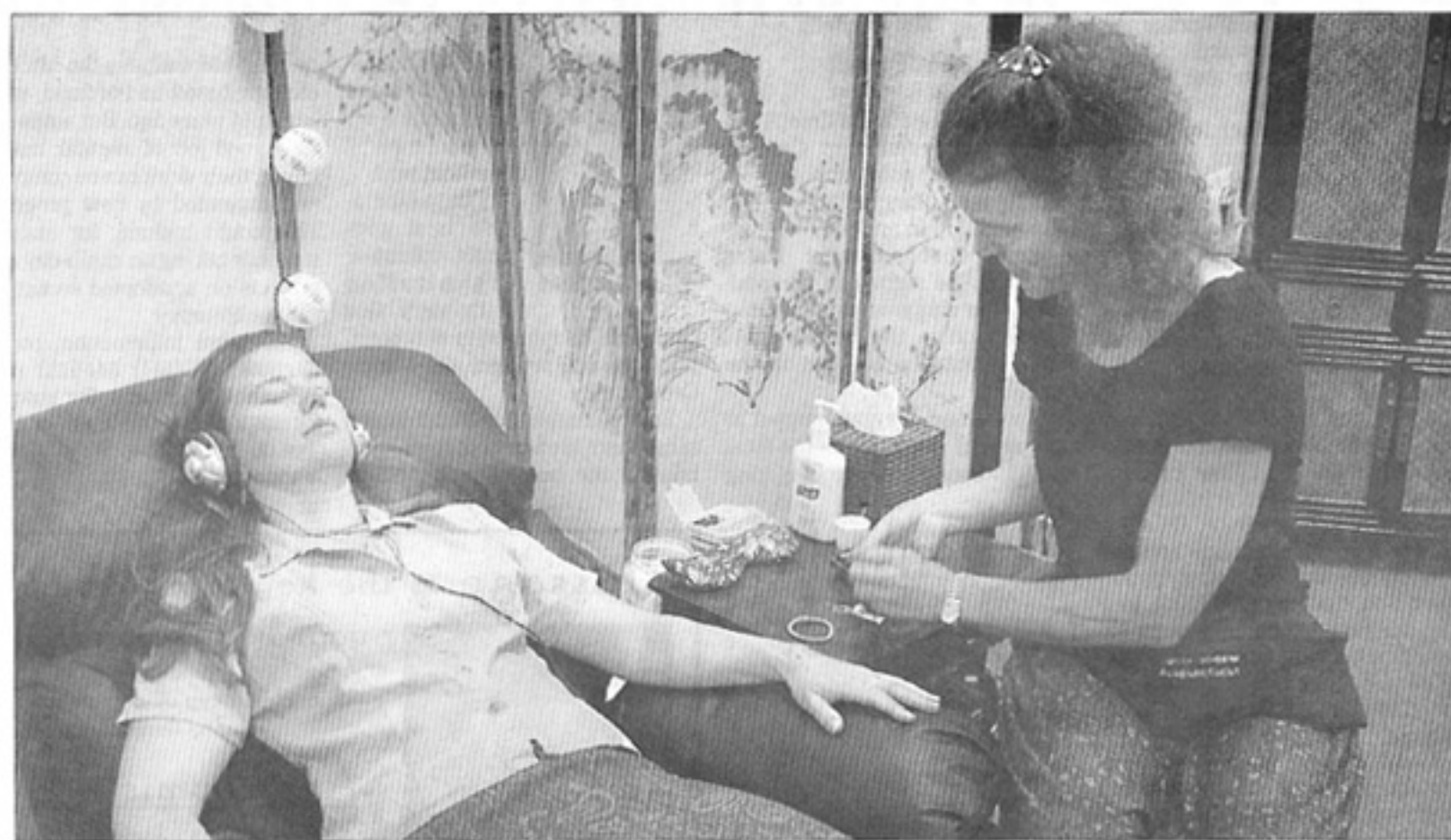
"I felt that as a nurse I had to use whatever the doctor prescribed," said Stepper. "I saw the effects of seniors taking tons of medications. It didn't always work. I wanted to do something different."

Stepper changed her approach. She went back to school, attended the Oregon College of Oriental Medicine in Portland and graduated in 2001 with a master's degree in acupuncture and Oriental medicine.

"What I love about acupuncture is that it is different, and ancient," said Stepper. "It is safe,

*Please see CAROLA, Page 10*

**Cascade Acupuncture Center**  
104 Fifth St., Hood River  
414 Washington St., The Dalles  
Owner: Carola Stepper



### TOTAL BODY FITNESS

Carola Stepper eases Melanie McCloskey's headache at Cascade Acupuncture Center. She has endeavored to make the space at the acupuncture center pleasant and comfortable so that patients will enjoy their healing sessions and be inspired to stay healthy.

Photo by Elsie Denton

## CAROLA

*Continued from Page 8*

and it is effective and very simple."

In 2002 Stepper began working as an independent acupuncture contractor. She was hired by the Celilo Cancer Center in The Dalles to provide supportive acupuncture treatments to cancer patients undergoing chemical and radiation therapy. Still, Stepper wanted to expand her business and provide care to more people.

In 2003 she opened a practice in Hood River based out of the Cascade Wellness Center. More recently she opened a second office in The Dalles on the second floor of The Dalles Medical Arts Building. Her staff now includes two other acupuncturists, two office managers and one office assistant.

Despite her success, Stepper isn't looking at further expansion.

"I don't have children, so (the Hood River) business is the first-born and The Dalles is the second-born. I'm done. I just want them to be happy and healthy."

Stepper has carefully designed both of her office spaces to be attractive and comfortable. She hired a feng shui (harmonious space) consultant to help arrange space and select colors.

"I've endeavored to make the space pleasant and a place where people want to come," she said. "They may be in here as often as twice a week."

Her efforts seem to be paying off. A combination of the enhanced atmosphere, the friendly staff and the free tea seems to

lure customers in for their appointments early and encourage them to linger afterwards.

"People come here and are inspired," said Stepper.

Cascade Acupuncture offers another unique feature thanks to Stepper: a sliding payment scale. Patients with an income of \$25,000 a year or less may receive a discount to encourage them to seek treatment. Stepper says that it is the center's goal to provide treatment for as many people as possible and money shouldn't be an issue.

Along the same lines, Stepper has Cascade Acupuncture put in the extra effort to stay credentialed with as many insurance companies as possible.

"For many insurance companies we are the only ones in the Gorge on their panels, but I feel like we need to do it because it would be horrible for people to pay more for alternative insurance and then have no one to go to," said Stepper.

Owning your own business, particularly one in the health field, comes with a multiplicity of administrative hassles that surprised Stepper when she first opened Cascade Acupuncture. Business administration was barely touched on in her curriculum at the Oregon College of Oriental Medicine. That may be why five years after graduation only 20 percent of acupuncturists are still in the business.

Stepper seems to have made it over the hurdle. She is now six years out and her practice is strong and healthy.

"My goals are to be a good practitioner, a good businesswoman and a good employer," said Stepper. "I think I've succeeded."