

# VILLAGE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

## Public Meeting

May 10, 2005

7:00 p.m.

Four Corners Room/Community Center

### INTRODUCTION

VRA Board member Ron Bialkowski led the meeting. After everyone had enjoyed some ice cream, we had a few short announcements and a talk on relaxation and massage.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### 1. **Children's Art Exhibit.**

- The annual Art Exhibit will be this Friday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. in the Community Center. There will be arts and crafts projects for children and prizes for submitted artwork. There is still time to enter art in the contest. If you would like to do so, take the child's art to the Village Office by Friday.

#### 2. **Homeward Bound.**

- Similar to America 101 for incoming international students, this program is for international students who are preparing to return to their home country. It will be held on Wednesday, May 24<sup>th</sup>, from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. More information will be forthcoming.

#### 3. **Village Yard Sale.**

- A Village-wide yard sale will be held in front of the Village Office on Saturday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>. Anyone interested in participating may do so. There will also be a truck from Out of the Closet to take any items that you would like to donate at the end of the yard sale.

### RELAXATION AND MASSAGE: ANNIE INGAMELLS

#### 1. **What is stress?**

- Stress is a reaction in the body during situations that make you tense up and experience a fight-or-flight reaction. The sympathetic nervous system takes the nervous energy and stores it. If stored stress is not released over time, one starts reacting to small stressors the same way as to large stressors.

#### 2. **How can you release stress?**

- The best way to deal with stress is to exercise. It doesn't even have to be strenuous, but just something that gets you moving. Exercise released endorphins which help alleviate stress and make you feel happier and more relaxed.
- Yoga is also a good way of dealing with stress. The Village Community Center offers low-cost yoga classes three times a week.
- Eat healthily and drink enough water. Water lubricates your muscles; if you don't have enough of it in your body then stress builds up more quickly.

- Try meditation. Meditation can calm you down and bring you out of a fight-or-flight state. In order to meditate you can focus on an image or a phrase, or you can simply lower your gaze to the floor and breathe deeply.
- Go to a hot tub. There is a place near the Village called Albany Hot Tubs. They charge about \$20 for half an hour. It sounds expensive, but it is cheaper than getting a massage and it is a very good way to relax.
- If you have trouble going to sleep at night, try breathing techniques to bring your heart-rate down. Drink a little chamomile tea and do a bit of stretching. Just a little stretching goes a long way.
- In general, stretching by yourself is a cheap, easy, fast way to relieve stress and soothe sore muscles.

### 3. **What kinds of stretches should I do?**

- If you have been working on computer for long time, your shoulders will probably be tense. Many people store stress, so to speak, in their shoulders.
- In order to loosen up your shoulder muscles, roll your shoulders from front to back and twist your body from the waist.
- Find a door frame, lean one hand on it, and with your arm straight, twist your body to the front and then to the back.
- If you have a tennis ball you can put it between your shoulders and lay down on your back. Let your shoulders relax around the tennis ball.

### 3. **Massage**

- You can massage your own shoulders even if you do not have a partner around to help. To do this, reach one hand over to the opposite shoulder and grab the shoulder muscle. Gently squeeze it or just hold it for a while.
- When you are massaging another person, use your body weight. You can use your thumbs or the heel of your hand.
- Pick up the muscle on the back of the shoulder with your palm and fingers and shake the shoulder a little. Shaking it helps release the tension.
- If you want a professional massage, there are several places around town you can go, including Whole Foods, Elephant Pharmacy, and the Farmer's Market. The standard charge for massage is about \$1 per minute. An hour-long massage is usually \$60, but you can get a nice chair massage for \$15. Often a chair massage can really relax you, especially if you have been working on a computer for a long time.
- There are a couple massage training locations where you can have cheaper massages, but you will probably get a less effective massage than you would get for regular price. Two such training locations include the National Holistic Institute in Emeryville and the Berkeley Acupressure Institute.

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