

ments, and helping to oversee those improvements, Stih believes that a healthy home with good air quality should be maintained with the use of a high-quality air filter. At about \$700 for the air filter, it seems a spendy solution. But given the cost to treat allergy symptoms these days, this could be a practical solution for some.

For a more hands-on treatment, Eugene's complimentary medicine field can provide relief. Jade Screen Clinic's Marilyn Sjaastad, licensed acupuncturist and practitioner of Oriental Medicine, has had success in treating hay fever and other more severe respiratory complications using acupuncture and an Oriental Medicine approach. This approach, as Sjaastad explains in her literature, "refers to an ancient system of healing using acupuncture, moxabustion [the process of burning mugwort either directly on the skin or just above the skin, over specific acupuncture points relative to a condition] and herbal formulas, and other Chinese modalities as needed ..." This approach promotes healthy flow of *qi*, which in turn promotes overall good health.

For people with seasonal allergies, Sjaastad says she may use acupuncture needles in the obvious places such as "in the top of the head, in the nose, at the back of the head [and] at the lung points," but that there may also be *qi* blocked in other

places such as the kidneys. Sjaastad also employs a cupping method, where, using a lighted cotton ball soaked in rubbing alcohol, she creates a vacuum in a small glass cup and quickly applies it to affected areas. Not only does this method promote the flow of *qi*, but it can also draw problems to the body's surface. But before any



Rebecca Scarola

treatment begins, Sjaastad conducts a comprehensive evaluation of each patient to determine health concerns and a treatment plan.

Another complimentary therapy used in the treatment of allergies is Nambudripad's Allergy Elimination Techniques (NAET — www.naet.com). Developed by Dr. Devi S.

Nambudripad, this is "a synthesis of various medical disciplines such as allopathy, acupuncture, chiropractic, kinesiology, and nutrition." Local NAET practitioner Dr. Anthony DeSiena of Washington Street Chiropractic Center, discovered NAET in response to his own son's severe allergic reaction to bee stings. "It works on everything," he says matter-of-factly, and he has used it on patients contending with a wide range of allergies (especially food allergies) and ailments. NAET resembles acupressure in many ways: After consultation and evaluation, an NAET practitioner uses a device that applies a quick but gentle bit of pressure to either side of the spine. The idea is that because allergens can cause blockages in the body's energy flow, this accupressure technique should release the blockages, eventually clearing up the allergy and its symptoms.

Aside from specific complimentary therapies, don't forget that your naturopathic or

medical doctor can be a good resource for treating hay fever and allergies. Dr. Miriam Mazure-Mitchell, N.D., explains that treatment begins by "taking a close look at lifestyle — are there pets in the home? Is the patient a smoker? What kinds of things are happening with diet?" While naturopathic doctors are trained in a range of modalities and treatment methods, Dr. Mazure-Mitchell focuses a good deal on diet, nutrition and supplements.

Dr. Virginia Buck, M.D., of the Buck Allergy and Asthma Clinic, says that mainstream medicine deals with allergies in three general ways: avoidance of aller-



Dr. Virginia Buck, M.D.

'It's really kind of a bummer.

It's the time of year when you want to be outside gardening or riding your bike.'

- REBECCA SCAROLA



Marilyn Sjaastad uses acupuncture and cupping treatment for allergies and other respiratory ailments.

gens (which for hay fever sufferers means staying inside or getting out of the valley), various prescription and over-the-counter medicines, and immunotherapy, or allergy shots. Prescription antihistamines, contrary to the flashy ads, provide no greater relief than the over-the-counter varieties. The main difference is that side effects such as drowsiness are less with the new prescription medicines. (On a side note, Dr. Buck mentions that for those with especially irritated eyes, should you decide to go with an eye drop treatment, look for eye drops containing antihistamines for greater relief.)

Buck explains that these medicines only treat the symptoms and that really, avoidance and immunotherapy are more effective in treating the root of the problem. Immunotherapy is a carefully prescribed plan where a patient is injected with low doses of specific allergens. Over a course of time, the low-dose exposure allows the patient to build resistance. She says, "Immunotherapy can be really helpful with childhood asthma" because it allows children to build stronger tolerance against allergens, thus preventing the chances down the line of serious asthma attacks. (Incidentally, *anyone* can suffer an asthma attack, given some serious cause for airway constriction).