

Hands On Healing ~

Crazy Wisdom Interviews Seven Up-and-Coming Massage Therapists and Aspiring Healers under the Age of 40



(from left to right)

Tohfa Khabir, Jennifer Giacomelli, Brian Cochell, Kelly Kempter, Eril Andes, Billie Wahlen and Gillian Udrys

Interviews by Bill Zirinsky
Photography by Linda Lawson

This alternative Mecca of ours, Ann Arbor, is bountiful when it comes to healers and holistic practitioners! And in the domain of hands-on bodywork and healing, we have so many seasoned massage therapists who have the gift of touch. So many of the very experienced and highly respected massage therapists have expansive repertoires which integrate a variety of complementary modalities: Rolfing and Hellerwork, craniosacral and polarity therapies, Lomi and Trager, Reiki and Touch for Health, Feldenkrais and Alexander Technique, Bioenergetics and Hands of Light, reflexology and shiatsu, Lomi and transformational breathwork...and that's not even the half of it!

Many hands-on bodyworkers and healers (though by no means all of them) begin their practices with a firm grounding in a massage therapy program. Ann Arbor is home to the Ann Arbor Institute of Massage Therapy, one of the state's finest training programs. Irene's Myomassology Institute, in Southfield, has also capably trained scores of healers-to-be.

The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal has tended to focus its interviews and profiles on already established and recognized personalities in the Ann Arbor area -- spiritual teachers, well-known holistic doctors who bring integrative approaches to their practices, and leading thinkers in the body/mind/spirit fields. In this issue, we have instead focused on seven young and skilled massage therapists: Kelly Kempter, Gillian Udrys, Billie Wahlen, Tohfa Khabir, Eril Andes, Brian Cochell, and Jennifer Giacomelli.

Each of the seven people we interviewed is under the age of 40, and each one was recommended to us, as someone who is naturally talented, and poised to grow further. We spoke to a variety of well-established massage teachers and healers in the area, as part of our search for an interesting group of young practitioners to interview. Certainly, there are dozens of other up-and-coming bodyworkers and healers whom we could have interviewed, and we hope that as time goes on, many of them will also become known to our readers.

There are many interesting facets to the interviews that follow. What does it mean to be naturally kinesthetic? How did they find their ways to hands-on work? What do they love about their work? Do they aspire to be "healers" and what does it mean to be a "healer"? The interviews begin on page 20.

