

Hand analysis attracts mainstream crowd

Sun streams through skylights warming an open hand as sticky black ink rolls across the palm. Phyllis Campanello controls the application, smoothing black over each finger and the thumb before carefully pressing the hand onto

plain white paper then pulling it away. The whorls and loops of each fingertip appear clearly on the page.

Campanello starts on the left hand as the scent of fresh coffee fills the room and a group of ladies gather around a nearby table.

In the hub of activity at Monterey Recreation Centre, Campanello has a small seating area tucked into the corner near the Fern Café. This is where the Oak Bay woman practices her "system based on science" of modified palmistry. The handprints are just the first step; it's a document like a medical file, she says.

"Then they have a record of where they were at that moment in time," she explains.

Campanello offered her first mainstream hand analysis presentation here last month. The response stunned her, and Monterey coordinator Lesley Cobus.

"I shouldn't be (surprised). ... Like anything, the person sells their business and Phyllis is extraordinary. She's compelling," Cobus says. "She is just a real person who's got these skills. She builds trust and rapport with people and so I think they feel safe with her, because she's not flaky."

Hand analysis wasn't even on the periphery of Cobus' mind for the program rotation at Monterey but she was quickly sold on the idea.

"I think everyone's curious," Cobus adds. "She's a professional and people trust her. I like that in any instructor."

After the printing, Campanello seats the client, offers a drink of water, then delves into the hands, touching, pointing, even drawing on areas she wants to bring attention to. She maps out

her points on a paper, assigning spiritual homework.

Her enthusiasm highlights her enjoyment of the job – and she wants to share.

"I wanted something that was in my community," Campanello explains. "The presentation was to test the water and it drew people from 20- to 80-year-olds and even men."

Despite the first Oak Bay street market and warm sunshine drawing people outdoors, Campanello's presentation attracted more than 50 people, almost twice the number expected.

"I had no idea what kind of response we would have because it's such a conservative community (in Oak Bay)," says Campanello, who retired here six years ago from San Francisco. "Victoria is very progressive, which is why my husband and I chose to move here."

Cobus attributes the crowd to open minds, despite Oak Bay's reputation as a conservative area.

"Vancouver Island in general is home to a lot of artistic, creative people, and people with that inclination, their mind is open," Cobus says. "She sparks that curiosity in people and they want to come and learn more. Maybe there's insight to be gained from exploring this kind of thing."

Hand analysis and seminars are being planned for the fall schedule at Monterey. Call 250-370-7300 for more information on programs at the Oak Bay centre.

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Phyllis Campanello provides hand analysis for a client at Monterey rec centre in Oak Bay.

Did you know?

■ Phyllis Campanello is certified by the American Federation of Astrologers. She completed three years of formal study at the International Institute of Hand Analysis in Sausalito, California and was awarded certification, she is a member of the American Society of Dowsters, and is a new member of the Canadian Society of Questers.

She founded a holistic dental health and metaphysical practice in California where she was business manager, dental hygienist, teacher, trainer and metaphysical counsellor. She and her husband Duane Underwood came to Victoria six years ago.