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A horn for healing

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PORTSMOUTH -- **Joseph Carringer** woke up one morning with a thought that would soon lead to an unusual career change.

"I woke up from a dream and told the woman I dated at the time that I was going to play the didgeridoo," he said.

Carringer, however, had no experience with the Australian aboriginal wind instrument, even admitting he had no idea what it looked like. But a trip from his home in Nashua to a music shop in Portsmouth 10 years ago changed everything once he picked up the didgeridoo and the store owner insisted he buy it.

Carringer said he found himself meditating while playing the instrument on the banks of the Souhegan River and in numerous jazz and blues clubs, but it wasn't until he heard from a co-worker that actor Leonardo DiCaprio hired a didgeridoo player as part of holistic healing did he begin fusing his musical habit into a therapeutic business.

A co-worker made the suggestion when **Carringer** was working as the foreman of a printing company. "My immediate response was 'Get back to work,' because I thought he was nuts," **Carringer** said.

During a quest for a career change, **Carringer** began researching therapeutic practices involving the didgeridoo, but found relatively little information was available. It wasn't until a February 2004 meeting with Seacoast holistic practitioners did he get the connections in the business and an apprenticeship to help build clientele.

"Everybody just went 'Oh my god, this is amazing,'" he said. "And they all started to help and work with me."

Carringer took his didgeridoo to a chiropractor's office and began using different keys to correspond with energy fields that were being worked on for patients, including his wife, who was being treated for lower back pain. After finding success throughout his apprenticeship, **Carringer** set up his own business -- Ancient Voices Harmonic Therapy on Islington Street in Portsmouth -- to offer sound-therapy sessions and record CDs for individuals or other holistic practitioners, such as massage therapists.

"(They describe it as) an ultrasound wand over their fingers," said **Carringer**.

A deep believer in eastern medicine and holistic practices, **Carringer** said he believes the body is made from "wave form vibrations" and energy roots and a majority of ailments have been formed after the body undergoes a traumatic experience. By the soothing sound and movements **Carringer** makes with the didgeridoo, the body and mind can relax and begin a healing process physically, meditatively and with body's energy fields, he said.

"Modern medicine kind of throws pills (at the problem)," he said. "At a holistic approach, it goes to the root of the problem."

Traditionally, the instrument has not been used for healing purposes. The Aboriginals in northern Australia used it for various ceremonies, including healing ceremonies, but the therapeutic application has only been discovered recently.

Depending on the needs of a client, "entrainment," or harmonic therapy sessions, run from 15 minutes to more than an hour. Although rates are adjusted to meet a client's financial abilities, a 15-minute session can cost \$30 to \$40 with an hour session costing as much as \$150.

Clients who undergo the therapy are placed in a small military cot, recommended to **Carringer** by an engineer friend, while **Carringer** hovers over them and surrounds them with the vibration and sound of the instrument.

Although his healing services has brought him to the Caribbean, South America and throughout the United States, he is now focusing on creating a dance/techno album featuring the didgeridoo and has been drawing interest from several Australian music labels.

Carringer also has offered workshops at numerous holistic conferences and has connected with other holistic practitioners, including authors Vicky Monroe and John Holland, for regional and international book tours.

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