

Views: How Do You Spell Stress?

I had a dream the other night. I was in a spelling bee and I could not spell "veterinarian." I was mortified because I *am* a veterinarian. It was just a variation of my lately all-too-common unprepared-for-school dreams. Usually, there is an exam the next day and I have not been to class and don't even own the textbook. Sometimes, there is a big project due and I don't know anything about it because I have not been to class.



Can you spell *stress*? They say you shouldn't do more than one of these "major life events" at a time: change a job, move, get married, have medical issues. In typical we-can-do-it-all fashion, my partner and I are starting a new business, buying a house, renovating that house, moving, and getting married out of town, all within about one nanosecond this year. Did I mention the newly discovered growth in my uterus? Surgery is recommended. Needless to say, I have lots of dreams that scream "worry," and I often wake with a

her serenity in the midst of our chaotic little world. Now and then, I'm perturbed that *nothing* seems to aggravate her.

Before I met Becky, I remembered my dreams only a few times each year. I was envious of people who would come to work and discuss their latest imaginary nighttime escapade. It seemed there was a second life out there and I was missing it. Almost as soon as I met Becky, after literally decades of vacant nights, my dream life came to be. Fun dreams, scary sometimes, lots of detail, and I *remembered* them,

storage will help. Not necessarily. We're trading in our easy monthly rent for a higher mortgage and those unpredictable homeowner expenses.

Okay, maybe getting our wedding into the history book will put my mind at ease. Ah, but that might not be so easy. I'm an Episcopalian and, as you may know, the Episcopal Church is trying to shred itself at the seams over whether or not my partner and I can marry. With famine, war, AIDS, and school shootings (can you spell *the Rapture?*), our church is arguing over whether or not there is *too much love* in our household.

Better yet, I'll play a trick on my mind to rid myself of this stress. One by one, I'm going to focus on each ridiculous concern. As I identify these self-indulgent worries, all of which are a product of how truly lucky I am, I'm going to mentally shift them out of my head and into that unwelcome little mass in my uterus: Can you spell *visualize*? And then, I'm going to have the mass removed. Surgeons like to boast that "to cut is to cure." Maybe my "fibroidectomy" will also cure my insomnia.

In any case, getting up in the middle of the night after one of those crazy dreams. I sometimes pull out the tablet and write about whatever is in my head. Now and then, it even turns into an article for *Out In The Mountains* – like this one.

My partner? She patiently asks if everything is okay when I flip on the light. Quietly she returns to her dreams ... and in her dreams, I guess she's always prepared for school, or she just takes it in stride anyway.

Ah, "to sleep, perchance to dream." ▼

Susan McMillan is the assistant editor of OITM. She, her partner and their four-footed companions are moving to Mills Point. The surgery was a success.

In typical we-can-do-it-all fashion, my partner and I are starting a new business, buying a house, renovating that house, moving, and getting married out of town.

start – do we have enough rooms reserved for our out-of-town wedding guests? Did the bank get the escrow agreement? When can the contractor start construction? Does the logo for the new business make sense?

My partner does not worry. Period. Can you spell *Libra*? She's very patient with my bottomless pit of concerns and endless lists. Even in the middle of the night, she patiently hears all my "what-ifs" before returning to her oh so easy-to-reach snooze cycle. Sometimes I'm jealous of

sometimes several times a night. I loved them all because, finally, I had my own dream world. We still wake in the night to tell each other about the latest feature at the astonishing in-your-own-head cinema.

Now, I wonder when my final-exam-and-I-cannot-find-the-classroom-dreams might taper off. Maybe once we get the business going? Nah, I'll fret about my clients and patients as long as I practice.

Surely closing on the house and getting our stuff out of

IF YOU'VE NEVER BEEN TESTED, OR IF YOU'VE HAD UNPROTECTED SEX OR SHARED A NEEDLE SINCE YOUR LAST TEST, NOW IS THE TIME TO GET AN HIV TEST. IF YOU'VE NEVER BEEN TESTED, OR IF YOU'VE HAD UNPROTECTED SEX OR SHARED A NEEDLE SINCE YOUR LAST TEST, NOW IS THE TIME TO GET AN HIV TEST. IF YOU'VE NEVER BEEN TESTED, OR IF YOU'VE HAD UNPROTECTED SEX OR SHARED A NEEDLE SINCE YOUR LAST TEST, NOW IS THE TIME TO GET AN HIV TEST.

It's better to know



YOU CAN GET HEALTH CARE AND TREATMENT IF YOU TEST POSITIVE.

For information on HIV testing:

- call toll-free from in Vermont
800-882-AIDS (800-882-2437)*
- for hearing impaired TTY access
800-319-3141*
- or visit us on-line at
<http://www.healthyvermonters.info>

* The Vermont AIDS Hotline is open weekdays, 8:30–4:30. (For information 24/7, call the National AIDS Hotline 800-342-2437.)

Take the TEST. Take CONTROL.



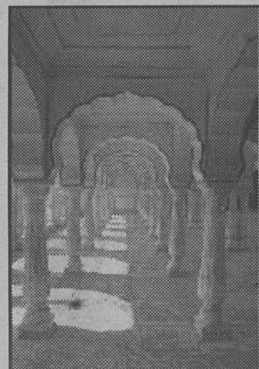
Fabulous, Fun, Value = Cruising!

Call about our new *Honeymoon Registry!*

The Isaacs Group
Barre VT
www.866deckchair.com

TollFree: 866.332.5242 (866-deckchair)
CLIA 802.476.0808

CRUISEONE.
#1 In Cruising, Nationwide



Hypnosis Works

Kerry Skiffington, DHyp
Hypnotherapist

802-345-2948
or 453-5411

Sleep better, Lose Weight, Conquer Fears and Phobias, Control Habits, Manage Stress