

## Letter from the Editor

**W**elcome to the fall 2004 *RFC Newsletter*. Now that the fitness mainstream has fully embraced Pilates, these are indeed exciting times for practicing professionals. Not only are studios opening in record numbers across the United States, the trend has also taken off internationally. More than ever before people frequenting my studio are either familiar with or have had some personal exposure to Pilates. Some take an occasional mat class, some attend regular classes, and many extol the virtues and benefits of their personal at-home video practice. Pilates is spreading quickly and continuously with everyone from Hollywood celebrities to stay-at-home moms. Predictably, there is a growing demand for qualified teachers both in the US and in newly-opened studios around the world. In this issue, we will hear from Asia – a new frontier for The Fletcher Work™ – which is growing in popularity and name-recognition. We will also pick up where we left off with Ron's story (immediately following) and how his work grew from a small studio in Hollywood to ultimately span the US, Mexico and Asia.

Catherine Anderson — Editor, *The Fletcher News*  
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## The Ron Fletcher Studio for Body Contrology Comes Alive!

**A**s you may recall, having just opened my new studio in Beverly Hills, I was sitting in my antique rocker waiting for hordes of people to appear. Well, nobody came! For three days, I sat there from 8am to 8pm. I started to panic a bit and thought "Oh sh\*t, I've outsmarted myself... unlisted phone number indeed!"

Then, late on the fourth afternoon I heard the door open downstairs. At last! Someone coming up and into the studio. Her name was Dorothy Bennett and she lived in an apartment at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel across the street. She was wearing a "diamond as big as the Ritz" and she was curious about Body Contrology. I donned my charm coat and went into my salesman/performer mode and went through the entire syllabus. She was very impressed with the décor and the work and made an appointment to come the next afternoon with a few friends.

The next day, she appeared with Betsy Bloomindale, Wally Annenberg, Princess Radziwill and Nancy Reagan, whom I knew from many years before when we appeared in the same show on Broadway. Needless to say, these were not the Beverly Hillbillies! Nice, nice ladies – the society leaders – but not very physical, and certainly not into any noisy breathing (too vulgar they thought).

Although they were difficult to work with, they loved the idea and tried their best. That's when the towelwork was born. Trying to get them to stand straight and lift their arms up in alignment. I gave each of them a rolled towel to hold in a straight line. It worked! They came in three times a week with every hair in place and after a two-hour session they left the same way.

Not a hair out of place. Not a bead of perspiration between the five of them.

My fee then was 10 sessions for \$100 (this was 1971), three sessions weekly – pay or play. No problem. They each doled out \$500 cash for 50 sessions and paid \$500 for a down on her luck lady from Pasadena. She brought a friend who brought a friend and within four months I had a studio full of the "First Ladies" of Beverly Hills, Bel-Air, Brentwood and Pasadena. \$\$\$ coming in... a good thing! But teacher gratification... Zero!

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## Ron, continued from previous page

I opened at 8 am, had a few morning lookie-loos and late afternoon ladies each day. I hung around until 8pm as advertised, cleaned up the place (those uptown babes left very messy toilets), collected the towels, went home, ate dinner while the towels washed and dried, folded them up and went to bed to get up and go back to the studio in my little 1959 Mercedes Roadster full of towels and "eats". It had to appear that I had a proper cleaning staff.

But I was getting bored and feeling non productive as a teacher when one day, a feisty little lady named Judith Krantz popped in. Her husband, a TV and film producer, had just opened offices in California and they had made the big move. She had had some sessions in New York with Romana and was interested in pursuing Pilates. Dear smart funny Judy had not yet started to write her racy romantic best-seller novels but was a successful freelance writer for various magazines including Cosmopolitan.

She loved our work and wrote some of the best pieces ever printed about the studio and was largely responsible for the amazing amount of publicity we got. The Ron Fletcher Studio for Body Contrology - Pilates Method was being read and talked about all over the land. And this was just the beginning.

*To be continued...*

## Pat's Perspective: Asia

It is a long flight from the United States to a tiny island on the Malaysian Peninsula called Singapore. After eighteen hours, Kyria and I eagerly disembarked the environment of seats, tray tables and droning engines. Our skin was suddenly moist and the perfume of flowers was in the morning air. The sun was coming up as our taxi negotiated the early traffic to our hotel. Asia is one of the world's fastest growing Pilates markets primarily because Singapore is such a central hub of communication. We were excited and anxious.

During the first five days, we presented a mini intensive at Pilates Body Works followed by a three-day towel course to students who had come to us from Japan, China, Thailand, The Philippines, Malaysia, and Australia. Facing the class on the first day of a five-day event is daunting. The class is in front of me, but in my imagination, behind me is an audience that includes Ron Fletcher, Kathy Grant, Bruce King, and every other teacher of note with whom it's been my privilege to study, plus Joe and Clara.

We start. A few of the students are familiar to me from earlier trips. It's good to have friends in the audience! But most are new faces. Each of the students worked diligently. The questions were thoughtful and provocative. Our old nemesis, the neutral spine, was eventually overcome as we presented Ron's articulate spine. The best surprise was the group's reaction to the creative work! They were totally committed to the daily improvisation and they understood the value and the application of the creative process to The Fletcher Work™. By the end of the five days Kyria and I were both pleased and proud.

We are also pleased to announce that we will be returning to Singapore in April, 2005 to present a full intensive. With several serious students interested in developing this work in their respective countries, we will gladly board the plane once again in April and will look forward to seeing our many friends in Asia.

We are also glad to know of an excellent foot reflexologist right across the street from our hotel. Lord knows, we'll need it!

*Pat Guyton, Master Teacher — Director, TRFPOS*



# The Fletcher Work™: The Singapore Experience

**P**ilates has grown in popularity in Singapore over the last two years, not only among the general public, but also among the professional medical community. These medical professionals are expressing interest in – and are curious about – the benefits of Pilates as well.

The popularity of Pilates has grown in conjunction with research into the importance of core stability (muscles that protect the spine). However, after practicing Pilates for more than two years, I now see it as much more than *just* focusing on the deep, stabilizing core muscles.

Pilates is about body control in movement.

Apart from working the trunk muscles, it also works the chest (breathing) muscles as well as every other muscle in the body, including the hands and feet. The many benefits of Pilates include enhanced body awareness and postural improvement in both static positions and in movement. Body awareness is important because it is the first step to correcting marginal movement patterns. In the field of rehabilitation, movement re-education has been practiced all along and thus, explains the increasing interest of Pilates among the medical profession.

Doing Pilates work has helped me to transfer the theoretical aspect of core control into movement. Mr. Ron Fletcher develops Joseph Pilates' work further and brings Pilates work to more functional positions in sitting and standing, e.g. the Towelwork™ and the spine corrector work.

Pilates is a holistic way of looking at body movement, from head to toe.

I like the specificity of alignment in The Fletcher Work™. And a qualified and experienced Fletcher teacher will be able to help you maximize the benefits of Pilates.

People who have neck and back pain should get medical clearance before doing Pilates. Ideally, you should practice at a studio with well trained and experienced instructors. If you develop any pain while doing Pilates, do inform your instructor or seek medical advice.

*Josephine Ko, Physiotherapist — Singapore*

## Upcoming Events

### RON FLETCHER SEMINARS

*February 25-27, 2005*

*University of Arizona ..... Tucson, AZ*

*August 12-14, 2005*

*University of Colorado ..... Boulder, CO*

*October 21-23, 2005*

*University of Arizona ..... Tucson, AZ*

### FLETCHER PROGRAM OF STUDY EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

#### Level I Intensives

*January 7-16, 2005 ..... Tucson, AZ*

*April 1-10, 2005 ..... Singapore*

*June 10-19, 2005 ..... Tucson, AZ*

#### Level II Intensives

*May 20-29, 2005 ..... Tucson, AZ*

*July 8-17, 2005 ..... Tucson, AZ*

#### Fletcher Towelwork™ Courses

*November 12-14, 2004 ..... Cincinnati, OH*

*February 18-20, 2005 ..... San Francisco, CA*

*May 13-15, 2005 ..... Toronto, Canada*

*December 9-11, 2005 ..... Miami, FL*

#### Fletcher Spine Corrector Courses

*April 27-28, 2005 ..... San Jose, CA*

*July 23-24, 2005 ..... Seattle, WA*

*Visit [www.ronfletcherwork.com/education](http://www.ronfletcherwork.com/education)  
for more information about intensives and courses.*

**To register, please contact:**

Email ..... [info@ronfletcherwork.com](mailto:info@ronfletcherwork.com)

Phone ..... (520) 323-7070

# Testimonial

**W**here I come from, Pilates is a word as foreign as sushi is in the jungles of Africa and, back home, nobody really knew what it was all about. Allow me, through this article, to share with you how I view Pilates as an exercise program and to express my appreciation of the Ron Fletcher work.

The beauty of Pilates falls into both physiological and kinesiological balances of the body. Kinesiologically, it works muscular structures in synergistic pairs, promoting and enhancing the normal rhythms of the human body (i.e. shoulder and lumbar-pelvic rhythms), just as applied physics and human movement engineering work side by side to produce more efficient muscle power and stability.

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The fluidity of such exercises brought me new levels of understanding as to how the efficiency of the human gait can be improved through working the core muscles. Or even in working to improve bad knees and to enhance the efficiency of leg and footwork in general.

The list goes on, actually. And such principles are valuable tools in my field of practice.

Yet as I went deeper into explaining to my clients exactly how Pilates works, something more meaningful than the kinematics of it seemed to be missing. What was missing was the vitality of the program itself... the vitality of Contrology.

I am currently enrolled in The Ron Fletcher Program of Study™, and my practice has developed into a deeper and more meaningful one. I honestly believe that the Fletcher program has given me the opportunity for this development. I've realized that it's not just enough to work on something for the sake of finishing it, but working more deeply produces the most profound effect of all... freedom. Isn't that what functional movement is for?

Although, I still occasionally encounter people advertising Pilates mat work, ball classes or "Yogilates" here in my city, I believe it's the tapestry of discipline I was given by Pat and Kyria, together with Alvin in Singapore from Ron Fletcher himself, that I share with my clients now. It is a wonderful gift. It has helped me transform myself from 203 pounds two years ago to a leaner more fit 150 pounds. I am sharing and building a community of practitioners and as this community continues to thrive, I remain very positive about the work and about its future benefits for generations to come.

*Ian Mari Micabalo, Physiotherapist — Philippines*

## Our Mission

We preserve the inspired evolution of Body Contrology — the work of Joseph and Clara Pilates — as articulated by our Master Teacher, Ron Fletcher. As he mentored and taught us, so we will teach and mentor others in the transformation that leads from strength to balance to grace.