

Letter from the Editor

The crisp air, the turning leaves, and the start of school — they remind me that summer playtime is gone and fall has begun. As the seasons change, I find myself reflecting on my “to do” list and goals for the next few months. For me, fall brings in a sense of calm as routine settles in and work resumes a steady pace. This return to routine also occurs in my study of movement. From time to time, I get caught up in a nuance of choreography, a correction, or just simply get “out of practice” for a season. As that season ends, I find myself needing to go back to the basics and be reminded of those fundamental principles of movement. The simple benefit of “the routine” can bring clarity to the body and mind.

The fall issue of the newsletter offers the opportunity to reconnect and be reminded of the basics. From the simplicity of the calendar of events to Ron’s explanation of the ABC’s the fall newsletter serves as a refreshing reminder of the change in seasons. For some, maybe a change in routine is necessary, like attending a new event. For others, maybe it is going back to the basics to find what has yet to be explored. Enjoy!

Catherine Anderson — Editor, The Fletcher News ~ Catherine@pilatesonthecoast.com

Ron’s Saga *continued*

Ron Fletcher

And so here I am... buns deep in the heart of Texas. The wonderful little Ron Fletcher Company® goes well, as do the seminars and the teaching program, thanks to Pat Guyton, Kyria Sabin and all the other dedicated teachers, students and staff. They have put it all together for me and keep it movin’ along... with beautiful work, high style and spirit.

As I look around today, my frustration is that I do not see enough people who recognize the depth and the specifics of Pilates Body Contrology. There are many who haven’t studied long enough or don’t continue to study in order to *really* know the work, or more importantly, *to learn how to teach*. This lack of study continues in spite of venues like Pilates On Tour, Pilates Method Alliance, and the Body Mind Spirit Expo — all of which offer varied learning opportunities.

Recently, I taught a class of about 40 and asked if there were any teachers in the room. Well, don’t you know all 40 hands went up! A 60 second look at their postural positions told me they didn’t know enough about the ABCs of the work. Most of them didn’t feel the work deeply enough in their bones to understand it — and they didn’t know they didn’t know. After class, several of them came up to me and said they had learned a lot, and realized how much there was to learn about the ABCs... that’s nice!

I have students now who have been studying with me for years, and they — and I — are still learning. This work is *much* more than just an exercise and / or rehab regimen. It is an art and a science. The timeless exploration of it will change your life!

For the better!

Pat's Perspective

Patricia Guyton

Over the last couple of years I have struggled with some personal back pain. It is a kind of irritation that is tolerable for most of the day and then explodes without warning. I don't speak about this aspect of my health to many people because it does seem to fit the "image" of Pilates. It feels better when I am in motion and gets cranky when I stop moving. At times, I can fling this body around the room as I did in the past. Other times, it is a sheer struggle to get it going and keep it going. Chronic pain can be difficult to diagnose and I did not want to face the fact that this body is no longer in its thirties! I love to move and do not want to give that up. Therefore, after getting a medical diagnosis for my pain, I began to examine how movement and chronic pain in the body coexist.

I am learning there is much more to discover.

This discovery was illustrated last August when some of us were treated to an extravaganza of Ron's exploration of "movement in the moment." He had an assigned task of talking about the Guillotine (a.k.a. the tower). Instead, he strode into the open space and announced that he intended to show us all "how the old man worked out in the morning". We followed along as it did not seem like a few stretches of the hands, feet, and spine would prove to be too risky. At the end of two hours, we were into an advanced class that had the young kids breathing hard. Some were gleeful, some were amazed and some were struggling to keep up. Ron was in a sublime space and just kept moving. My back did not complain nor rarely does when Ron teaches, because he intuitively knows how to get the pot from a slow simmer to a rolling boil.

Over the last year, Ron has mentored me with love and concern regarding this injury. He has reminded me of the very basics of leg and footwork. He has admonished me to pay even greater attention to detail — to breathe and feel each piece anew. Ron also shared with me how the practice of the work changes as we change with our seasons of life. He reminded me of his neck surgery and the necessity to work at recovery. He shared his struggle with neuropathy. He laughed while recalling the stories of his dive off a chair on wheels and a rotator cuff injury from a feisty kick by his donkey. More importantly, he models his message to "keep on keeping on."

I have learned that Pilates is for a lifetime. Pilates does not stop the natural cycle of birth, growth, and aging but allows us to utilize what Ron calls "the divine mechanism"

throughout life. My struggle has taught me about the need to recognize the human experience of aging and chronic pain. It takes encouragement, motivation and empathy to get through the hard days. Sometimes it is just work werk wurk. Dedication to the practice of good movement such as Pilates does open new doors of understanding and acceptance of the body's processes. Every day can be a new discovery of the wonder of the body.

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Congratulations
to all Fletcher teachers
who are now PMA certified! We
invite the rest of you to join this
group and accept our challenge
to sit for the PMA exam before
March 1st, 2007! Log onto
pilatesmethodalliance.org
for information.

Taking the Fletcher Work® on the Road

Dave Freker – dfreker@yahoo.com

When I first studied the Fletcher Work®, one of the features to which I was drawn was the attention to the body in the standing position. For example, the Fletcher Standing and Centering Cues are described in a clear and straightforward manner. This allows clients to simply understand *how to stand*. What a novel idea! For some time, I have wanted students to more fully comprehend how the work on the reformer, mat, cadillac, etc. relates to posture and movement in general and to all aspects of life. I also wanted them to be empowered, to be able to practice the work at least to some extent, on their own — to give them a means to understand and maintain their bodies.

There is a feeling for which I always strive with the Pilates work. It's a feeling of being light, relaxed and moving with ease. It feels like I am taller. The Fletcher Towelwork® gives me that feeling. The Fletcher Spine Corrector Work teaches one to work from the center, feeling strong and connected. I want every one who practices the Pilates method to feel what I am describing. That is how I measure success.

About a year ago, a group of doctors in Sacramento, California, heard about the Fletcher Work® from a colleague on the East Coast who had used it to treat patients and experienced positive results. Interested in incorporating it into their patient's routines, one of the doctors found me on the Fletcher website and expressed interest in the work. It became clear to me that private sessions would be too costly for their patients. I suggested an idea I had been developing: a portable Fletcher class which included Spine Correctors, towels and circles. I could do it just about anywhere there was floor space. "Could you do it here at our facility?" they asked. "Well, yes!" I answered. How had I not already thought of that? This was the opportunity to put the idea into action.

I then taught a short series of classes to the doctors themselves in order to demonstrate the Fletcher Work®. It was well received — and the Fletcher Work® road show was under way.

When Joseph Pilates developed the Spine Corrector, I believe one of his intentions was that it be portable. Following this concept, my SUV has since become a mobile studio with Spine Correctors, towels and circles, enough to teach a group of six.

Response to the class has been excellent! Several students practice the Fletcher Towelwork® between classes with wonderful results. With great frequency, I hear students expressing the feelings I described above. It is always good to hear such comments unsolicited. Then, I know they have it in them.

The ability to bring the Fletcher lineage of Pilates to people in a meaningful way is a wonderful thing. I look forward to continuing being able to *literally* take the Fletcher Work® on the road.

**You may register
for all Fletcher Events online.
Simply log on to
the Event Calendar page at
www.ronfletchercompany.com.**

Upcoming Events

RON FLETCHER SEMINARS

March 16-18, 2007 Tucson, AZ
May 11-13, 2007 Tokyo, Japan
August 10-12, 2007 Boulder, CO
October, 2007 Swarthmore, PA

FLETCHER PROGRAM OF STUDY EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Level I Intensives

January 5-14, 2007 Tucson, AZ
April 28-May 6, 2007 Singapore
June 15-24, 2007 Boulder, CO

Comprehensive Program

Beginning January 2007... Boulder, CO Campus
Beginning October, 2007.... Tucson, AZ Campus

Fletcher Towelwork® Licensing Course

February 16-18, 2007 New York, NY

The “It” Factor

Kyria Sabin

When I first met Ron in 1992 at a workshop in Denver, I immediately recognized him as the Real Deal. Here was a teacher — and a man — who didn’t “pretend” to anything or “pose” as anything; he didn’t have to. His authenticity and innate gifts were evident in virtually everything he did. From the very beginning, I was rapt and my spirit was at attention — open to this new possibility as it had never been open to anything before.

In very short order it became clear to me that Ron both had and taught “IT.” And for me, this “IT” factor is what continues to distinguish the Fletcher Work® from all other Pilates-based programs. Rooted firmly in the genius of Joseph Pilates’ original method, Ron has applied his own unique vision and his genius for movement. In doing so, he has evolved the work to an entirely new threshold of possibility.



Over the years I’ve watched new students get “it” and be completely inspired — just as I was. More often than not, they can’t put their finger on exactly what “it” is about the Fletcher Work® that they find so gratifying and so intensely moving. Is it the fact that it’s about movement rather than exercise? Is it the specificity and attention to every detail? Is it the ingenious Fletcher Percussive Breath technique? What about the Martha Graham influence? Is it the fact that Ron actually takes the time to “teach” the individual rather than “train” the group? Or is it the joy and spirit inherent in each piece — and in the program as a whole?

We just initiated our fall Level I Program and I decided to ask the new teachers-in-training what inspired them to enter The Ron Fletcher Program of Study® as opposed to following a different path. I posed the question, “If you were to describe to a close friend or family member what led you to follow this path of study, what would you say?” Following are some of their answers.

What inspires me with this work is that its creative aspects challenge me to reach beyond my ordinary level of comfort with respect to movement. As a person whose comfort levels revolve around predictability, sequence and rhythm, the creative aspect of this work challenges me to work INTO unknown realms beyond a linear foundation. After all, if you don’t continue to challenge yourself beyond your routine comfort level, are you really living your life as it is intended to be lived? I’m excited about what’s coming next!

—*Christian Foster*

I gave up on teaching Pilates years ago because the principles felt too abstract to communicate them well — and I felt as if I was speaking over people’s heads. The Fletcher Work® makes so much sense to me and is so easy to communicate. I’ve also been conflicted about teaching the aging population the matwork because it revolves around flexion. With the Fletcher Work®, I have so many more options to choose from and can now pull on matwork pieces to augment the program.

—*Amy Kubanek*

The Fletcher Work® is not just an “exercise” program. It is a fun, creative way to explore the body and how it works through the processes of breath and movement. By practicing the Fletcher Work®, one becomes more balanced and centered in every aspect of life. It’s a way to learn how to move the body while using the mind to its fullest potential.

—*Anne Goetz*

The Fletcher Work® is unlike any other form or mode of Pilates. The Fletcher Breath is the most important element in that it connects you to both your own body as well as to the other students in the room. And it’s easy to become so engrossed in the movement that time just slips away. The Fletcher Work® seems to draw me back again and again. If there’s an “IT” here for me, it’s that I can never get enough of it.

—*Ellen Hunt*

What is special about the Fletcher Program is its evolution. It is not a rigid program grounded in an ideological doctrine. Rather, it is a program that keeps growing and improving by adding more fluid movements and new ways to improve both body and mind. I truly love it.

—*Maya Rosenblatt*