

Letter from the Editor

To predict what 2005 will hold for The Ron Fletcher Company™, consider what has been accomplished in January alone: the launch of a beautiful new website — www.ronfletcherwork.com; *Pilates Style* magazine featured Ron's transformative Towelwork™; and The Program of Study hosted the first Level I Intensive of the year with 33 participants from six countries. The calendar for the year is full of opportunities for both students and teachers to rise to the next level!

As for the newsletter, we continue on, nurturing a community that reaches around the world. In this issue, Ron's story continues to illuminate how it all began, Pat shares her personal experience with Percussive Breath™ and we have some surprise announcements! We truly can be proud of the niche The Ron Fletcher Company™ is carving out.

Catherine Anderson — Editor, *The Fletcher News*
cath7771@netzero.net

Ron's Saga *continued*

I answered the phone one morning to Brooke Hayward. (She referred to herself in writing as *Brooke Haywire*). One of the "Hollywood Royalty", her mother was the legendary movie queen, Margaret Sullivan and her father, Heland Hayward, was a "top-a-the-heap" figure in early Hollywood film production. Brooke was a "horse-lady" and suffered chronic back disease in common with her "horse-lady" friend Candice Bergen. Judith Krantz had told her about me; she wondered if the work would be a good thing for them. Obviously my answer was, "YES." They came in that afternoon with Paula Prentiss — a trio of perfect "neutral spines," a.k.a. sway-backs. They were very good students, though Candice, a Taurus, was often a tot stubborn. They and I worked for two hours trying to get their lumbar vertebrae down to the floor. Well, we didn't get the bones down but they stumbled out with the concept in their brains and appointments for two days later. They continued to come and were ecstatic about how well the work worked for them; they were three-times-a-week regulars for years.

Candice and I became close friends — she was unattached at that time and "hung out" a lot at the studio and at my house because she LOVED my two royal poodles Bravo and Linus. The dogs and I often spent time with her at her various glamorous "digs." Then Candice brought Ali McGraw who brought Dyan Cannon who brought Goldie Hawn who brought Cher, and in came Toni Curtis, Shirley Jones, Richard Dreyfus, Barbara Streisand, Carol Channing, Steve McQueen, Ben Vereen, Sandy Duncan, Don Henley, Racquel Welch, Katherine Ross, and the young Steven Spielberg, and on and on it went (to my utter amazement).

I was exhausted — working alone — and concerned as to how I was going to continue to be able to give sufficient time and quality teaching to these bright, eager and demanding students. I hired a young man to answer the phone and book appointments. My business manager billed most of my clients' money managers; but there wasn't enough of ME to go around. There weren't, and still aren't, a great lot of A+ Pilates teachers, and there were none on the west coast at that time. Then lo, one fine day my "Higher Power" sent a dancer up my stairs and about three months later came another one. Both were fresh professionals from New York — Julliard graduates who came to see what L.A. had to offer them. My name registered with them but "what" they wondered was "Body Contrology?"

continued on following page

Ron, continued from previous page

Their names were Diane Severino and Michael Podwal. They were, figuratively speaking, wearing angel wings and halos because they were indeed heaven-sent. To my delight, they loved the concept of the work and wanted to learn and teach it. Both of them were very quick to “get-it” into their brains and bones, and in a very short time they became two of the best teachers in the business — they still are. They were a Godsend to me. I was asked to appear twice weekly on Good Morning, L.A., a popular TV show hosted by Regis Philbin; by the time I got back to my studio, the phones were ringing off the walls — INCREDIBLE! This meant more people, which meant more space, more equipment, more apprentice teachers, more of everything, including studio hours and hours and hours. I was asked to write a monthly column in *Cosmopolitan Magazine* bringing high attention and more students.

Then one day Michael came to me and said, “You know Ron, we have a waiting list of 200 people! Whatta we gonna do?” The Ron Fletcher Studio for Body Contrology had become a major part of the “Hollywood Lifestyle,” and had taken on a life of its own. I believe now, as many people have said, that my decision to take Joe and Clara’s work to Los Angeles served to breathe new life into their work, because the studio in New York was slowly but surely going “down the drain.”

I end this part of the saga on an ironic and funny note. Judith Krantz had written in one of her pieces “If you’re not in Ron Fletcher’s Rolodex, you may as well leave town.”

to be continued

Announcements

Joyce Ho Becomes a Fletcher Facilitator

Joyce Ho has earned and accepted the role of Fletcher Facilitator for Singapore. Many of you will remember Joyce from her first intensive in Denver in 2003. She returned to Tucson, Arizona for our January Intensive and Ron was quite impressed with her continued dedication to study as well as her personal performance of the syllabus. Joyce is busy preparing students from all over Asia to participate in the Level I 10-day Program of Study Intensive to be held in Singapore April 1-10.

As a reminder, Fletcher Facilitators are the *only* providers eligible to prepare students to become Fletcher Teachers.

Studio B: Athletic Technology

In March 2005, Studio A, owned by Aida Zorrilla and Paul Scheuer of San Antonio, Texas, will open an athletic performance facility adding a second phase to their studio. Together, Studio A Movement Dynamics and Studio B Athletic Technology will provide a synergistic and dynamic experience for athletes. Scheuer will focus on providing programs for athletes with an emphasis on strength development and skill enhancement through 3D Motion Analysis. In keeping with Zorrilla and Scheuer’s mission to empower individuals through the teaching of disciplined performance, Studio B will further prepare athletes by integrating Pilates and Fletcher technique to enhance their athletic abilities.

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.

Congratulations

Congratulations to Alvin Giam and his new bride, Jasmine! Alvin will also be moving his studio to a new location and has decided to no longer participate in his role as Singapore Facilitator for The Ron Fletcher Program of Study™ in order to focus on his new life changes. We all wish the new couple and their families the best for 2005.



Pat's Perspective: Percussive Breathing™

Encouraged by a friend to take a Ron Fletcher workshop, I found myself standing in the middle of the room in the third row waiting for class to begin. My friend had extolled Ron's style, his meticulous attention to detail and his focus on movement rather than exercise. Perhaps the most persuasive part of my friend's entreaty was her enthusiasm for the work and her insistence on the kindness and support that this master teacher gave his students.

Ron Fletcher arrived and made his entrance. The excitement in the room was palpable. He greeted his familiar students with obvious joy and pleasure. Like a true maestro he lifted his arms in the "Fletcher Ave." Imagine my surprise at the first sounds of Percussive Breathing™! As I write these words, I know that others will resonate with remembrance of the first time that they heard the beat and sound of the breath that has become a Fletcher trademark.

Before meeting Ron, I had been involved in a car accident and the subsequent rehabilitation. Various therapists had told me I did not breathe properly. This was true in part to trauma and in part to my training as a dancer. Dancers were told to pull in our stomachs and to shield the audience from the reality that dance was hard work accompanied by the usual bodily functions. For whatever reason, nothing these therapists did or said made any difference in my understanding of breath, and I remained with some thoracic dysfunction. When I heard that first wave of Percussive Breathing™ in class, I did what I always did as an obedient student. I followed it, and listened, and followed. I also followed Ron Fletcher to every workshop. Over the months, my understanding of this practice grew with knowledge and experience. I began to yearn for every opportunity to feel the movement and breathing as one.

Years later, I am a director of The Ron Fletcher Program of Study™ and a responsible disseminator of this work. I find it challenging and invigorating to present the elements of Percussive Breathing™. My first experience at presenting it was to an audience of MDs and DOs in Vail, Colorado. Upon postmortem review of the day, one of the teaching doctors from an Osteopathic College informed me that he found Ron Fletcher's intuitive understanding of the movement of breathing fascinating and functional. It was this doctor's explanation



Program of Study Level I Class of 2005 (pictured from left to right). Back row: Lisa Morrison (standing on left), Naomi Glazer, Lauren Saracione, Leslie Schleyer, Alison Garrard and Lisa Priebe (standing on right). Middle row: Kathleen Ruzow, Deborah Mendoza (Program Facilitator), Kyria Sabin (Program Director) and Kerri Williams. Front row: Crystal Greenwell, Richard Garcia, Lori Evans and Gena Freyman.

of bucket handle rib motion and pump handle rib motion and the corresponding muscle involvement of the movement of the breathing apparatus that has become a foundation of The Ron Fletcher Program of Study™.

At our last Intensive we spent the first three hours in discussion and exploration of the movement of the breath. The relationship of breath to the development of a healthy movement program is so critical that it is almost impossible to begin any movement pattern without a full explanation of breath. A student mantra has become, "There is no Ron Fletcher movement without Percussive Breathing™."

Our students experience greater success in teaching this technique when they have a deep understanding of its mechanics (based on science), plus a full sentient experience (based on practice). Ron has often told us he did not learn about breathing because of anything he was told. He took the things he was told and worked on them over decades with practice and observation of himself and his students. For these reasons, we insist that our students practice Percussive Breathing™. We listen and we watch the mechanics of the ribs, the shape of the



Program of Study Level II Class of 2004 (pictured from left to right). Back row: Kyria Sabin (Program Director), Haylee Sullivan, Teresa Sullivan, Harriet Garfinkle, Ken Gilbert, Mary Pinzone, Catherine Anderson and Pat Guyton (Program Director). Middle row: Deborah Mendoza, Tomi Kay Morris, Susan Fox, and Kristen Thomas Fryer. Bottom row: Linda Silva, Aida Zorrilla, Christy Crowley and Martha Eccles.

continued on following page

Breathing

continued from previous page

mouth and tongue, and the sound of the breath. It is not just noise. It is a specific sound that emanates from deep in the core of the body.

Fletcher teachers must manage several tasks. We must count, cue movement and be the leader for the breath. We must also encourage others to practice breathing, educate those who are resistant and set a standard unfamiliar to students from other schools.

Today I am always excited to share Percussive Breathing™. Preservation of The Fletcher Work™ requires that we practice the breath and that each studio seeking to represent this work presents Percussive Breathing™ as an integral part of the Fletcher movement experience.

Pat Guyton, Co-Director, TRFPOS

Student Testimonial

Since beginning the Level I Program of Study in October 2004, I have found many aspects of my life have undergone transformations. My body has physically changed because of the work, and I feel I am now beginning to get an inkling of that precious fluidity between flowing motion and precise movement.

Yet learning how to actually teach the work has enlightened me on an even deeper level. The observation, classroom and private practice hours have most recently allowed me to make the vital connections between separate movements on different pieces of equipment as well as on the floor. Just as a fluidity exists between precision and flow, I now grasp a fluidity within the work itself.

Just as a fluidity exists between precision and flow, I now grasp a fluidity within the work itself.

In the end, I feel it is only the intensity with which we all approach this work and the depth of the program itself that allows for these meaningful transformations to take place.

Alison Garrard

www.ronfletcherwork.com
info@ronfletcherwork.com

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*
Swarthmore College..... Swarthmore, PA

FLETCHER PROGRAM OF STUDY EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Level I Intensives

- 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

- February 18-20, 2005..... San Francisco, CA*
- May 13-15, 2005 Toronto, Canada*
(through Pilates on Tour: www.pilatesontour.com)
- December 9-11, 2005..... Miami, FL*

Fletcher Spine Corrector Courses

- April 27-28, 2005 San Jose, CA*
(through Body Mind Spirit: www.bodymindspirit.com)
- September 9-11, 2005..... Santa Barbara, CA*

Visit www.ronfletcherwork.com/education for more information.

To register, please contact:

Email.....info@ronfletcherwork.com
Phone (520) 323-7070

Work-Wurk-Werk

Job Opportunities for Fletcher Teachers

The Core Center a Pilates Studio LLC
Lehigh Valley (Easton), PA(610) 258-0415
Contact: Susan Fox
Email: Susan@CoreCenterPilates.com
Specifics: Part-time flexible hours