

A new twist

YogaLife Institute in Upper Merion no stretch for Butera

By **CARL ROTENBERG**

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UPPER MERION — Does your boss refuse to listen to you? Is your commuter drive a daily nightmare of molasses-slow vehicles and wasted time? Do your children shun you in favor of the boob tube?

You may benefit from the inner peace and fortitude that some say daily exercise and yoga can bring to your psyche.

Robert J. Butera Jr. and Joe Finnerty have built a yoga center on the second floor of the Village Mart at 580 Shoemaker Road. Their YogaLife Institute started offering beginner, intermediate and advanced classes Monday evening.

"People are looking for ways to get in touch with themselves," said Butera, the founder and owner of the YogaLife Institute in Phoenixville. "It is hectic in the workplace. They are looking for a little balance in their life."

Butera has been teaching yoga for the past 12 years and practicing yoga for 17 years. The West Norriton native has an East Asian studies degree from the Friends World College and a doctorate in yoga from the California Institute of Integral Studies.

Butera's father, Robert Butera Sr., was the state Representative from the 150th District from 1962 to 1978.

The younger Butera studied Buddhism in Japan from 1986 to 1988. He also has a

divinity degree from the Earlham School of Religion.

Butera and Finnerty have invested \$20,000 for the Upper Merion yoga center, including \$5,000 for a butter-scotch oak floor and a 400-volume bookstore on yoga, holistic practice and health foods.

The titles at the bookstore include "Yoga Sutras of Patanjali," "Emotional Intelligence" and "Tantra-The Path of Ecstasy."

Eight weeks of 1½-hour classes costs \$90. Six instructors have started teaching eight yoga classes that range from gentle yoga for seniors to vigorous yoga for advanced students. The Wednesday night intermediate class has already attracted 20 students.

The center is expected to attract 80 students for the first nine-week session.

"We try to motivate people to practice their own personal beliefs," said Butera.

An open house event Saturday will feature free classes at 10 a.m., noon and 2 p.m., along with free, healthy food samples donated by Fresh Fields, Butera said.

Butera opened a YogaLife Institute in Phoenixville four years ago at 318 Bridge St. He has used a self-published yoga magazine to promote the yoga lifestyle and his classes. Butera prints 50,000 copies of "Yoga Living" six times a year. It is mailed to 3,500 yoga students in the region.

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Robert Butera Jr., foreground, and Joe Finnerty perform a seated twist at the new YogaLife Institute in Upper Merion Township.