

Yoga center teaches 'art of relaxation'

By TINA BUSHNELL
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PHOENIXVILLE — How do you feel when you drive? Tense, edgy — or comfortable? Are your shoulders tight or loose?

That's a true indicator of how stressed you are, says yoga expert Bob Butera.

And if you are stressed out, he'll teach you how to relax. That's the first step in achieving a yoga lifestyle.

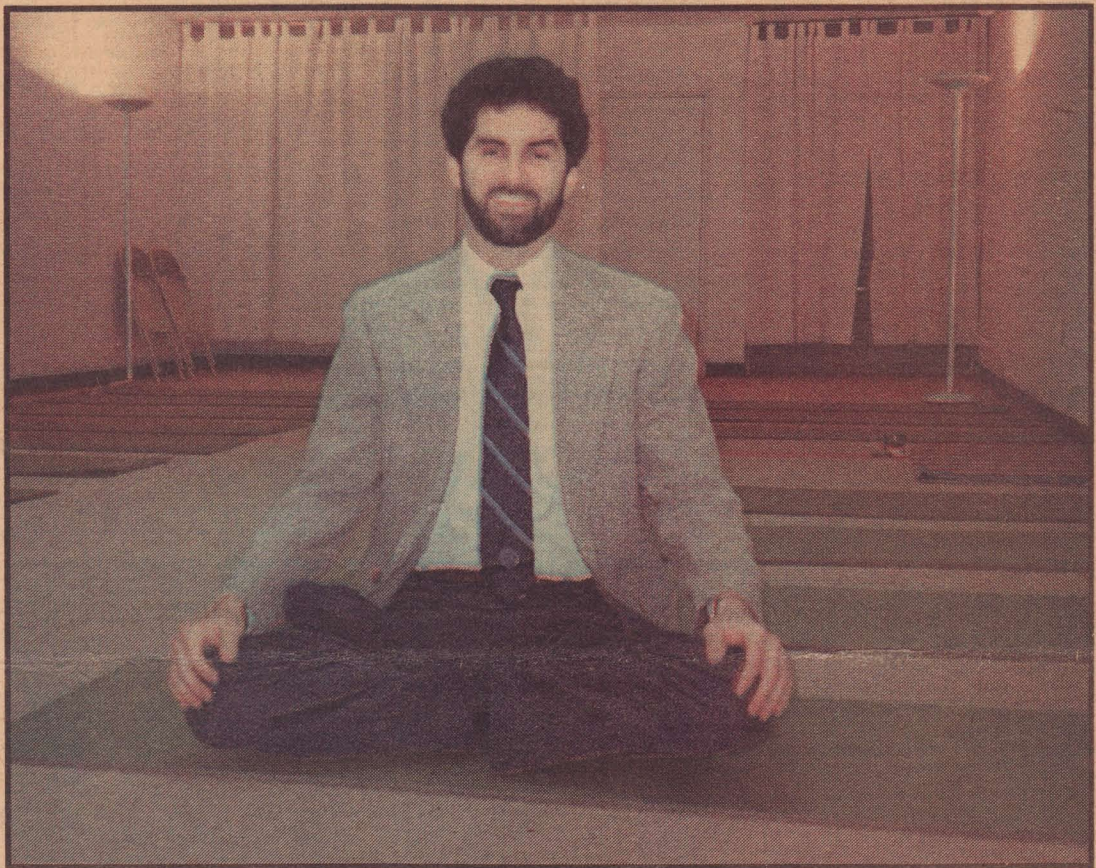
Butera is the proprietor of The Yoga Lifestyle Center at 318 Bridge Street, which had its official grand opening Thursday afternoon.

Borough Mayor Leo Scoda, Councilwoman Karen Johns, Borough Manager Joseph Pantano, Ellie Acampora of the Phoenixville Area Business Association, Barbara Cohen of the Phoenixville Area Economic Development Corporation and other borough officials attended the traditional ribbon-cutting ceremony.

"The downtown redevelopment, with the antiques businesses and shops and now this will add so much to the 'aura' of the business community," said Cohen.

After the official welcoming speeches and some casual mingling in the store-front reception area, Butera led those who lingered into the studio for an introductory talk on relaxation.

Please remove your shoes and observe silence beyond this point. The white-painted walls of the



Staff photo by Barry Taglieber

Robert Butera, proprietor of the Yoga Lifestyle Center, demonstrates the lotus position for meditation. The center officially opened yesterday at 318 Bridge Street in Phoenixville.

20-by-40 foot room are bare with a white curtain across the back. No distractions. About 20 mats lie on the floor, blankets are piled on top of the shelves for your shoes.

Butera, the son of former state Rep. Bob Butera of Montgomery County, holds a doctoral degree

in yoga.

"Having a concentrated, focused mind" is the goal, he said. "No fear, no worry."

During a 10-minute relaxation exercise, Butera's voice guides you through the steps. He knows when to speak and when to be silent.

You relax. It works.

"The most common thing is when yoga is presented like a pill," he said. But that method is short-term, and then you to return to a hyped-up state.

"It's temporary, to achieve

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more as opposed to *being* more," he said.

Hatha yoga, which is what Butera teaches, is practiced after thinking about your lifestyle.

"Think about something that

causes stress. It's easier to cope with when you're sitting still," said Butera.

Eventually, you learn to be relaxed all the time, said Butera.

Except maybe when you're driving...