

AGGIELIFE

Just Breathe

Ancient art finds modern following

BY SCOTT HARRIS
The Battalion

In a world of 8-Minute Abs, dietary and muscle gain supplements and many other new get-fit-quick schemes, it might just be the best way to a fit body which is not new at all. In fact, it is thousands of years old. The way to a sound body and mind is perhaps down the path of yoga.

According to the Healthy, Happy, Holy Website, yoga is a complete science which deals with the physical body, the mind and the subtle energies of the body such as prana (life energy) and the chakras (energy centers of the spine). The practice of yoga incorporates mental focus, breathing techniques, body positions and relaxation to scientifically provide a healthy way of life for each participant.

Bobby Lane, a certified yoga instructor and owner of The Yoga Health and Fitness Center, said yoga focuses largely on strength and conditioning.

"In the beginner classes, we focus a lot on upper body strength so when the students reach the more advanced classes, they have the strength and balance to support themselves in some of the postures we use," Lane said. "We also do a lot of abdominal work, to support the lower back."

Along with strength conditioning, yoga concentrates on stretching and breathing, that Lane said has medicinal effects.

"(Yoga) takes care of many physical problems through the stretching and breathing," he said. "By stretching the knees and ankles and other joints we want to strengthen them. We want the ligaments and tendons to be strong. Holding a posture and breathing correctly, you create oxygenated blood and during the stretch you restrict blood to a certain area. When you release the stretch it is bombarded with fresh blood. That is a way to open up closed areas and provide nutrients and remove toxicity."

Blaire Tully, a senior community health major, said she is getting involved in yoga for these same reasons.

"I had heard a lot about yoga, how it helps you relax and clear your head," Tully said. "I hope to become more relaxed, have deeper breathing and focus more. Also I had been in ballet for twelve years and I wanted to get back into stretching."

Lane said although practicing yoga is a way to stay in shape, it can

also aid other methods of exercise.

"It provides the body with fresh blood and energy and allows the body not to deteriorate," Lane said. "The more you can move your body around in a mindful fashion, the more beneficial it will be. This goes for even aerobics and weight lifting. If you concentrate on what you are doing it will be more beneficial. Yoga helps you to focus."

Yoga is a broad discipline which has eight different aspects, including body postures, breathing techniques, accepting positive thinking and restraining from bad thoughts.

The breathing technique used in yoga is called Pranayama. Lane said Pranayama is a way to control breathing. Yoga teaches people to take full breaths and use all of the lobes in their lungs. Lane said most people take shallow breaths which is one reason people suffer from fatigue.

Lane said although there are many things to learn in yoga, the mental aspect and proper mind set is the most important thing.

"You learn to integrate muscles and align your body by correctly using spiral and looping techniques and to stretch safely," Lane said. "But it comes down to attitude. Attitude is the most important thing."

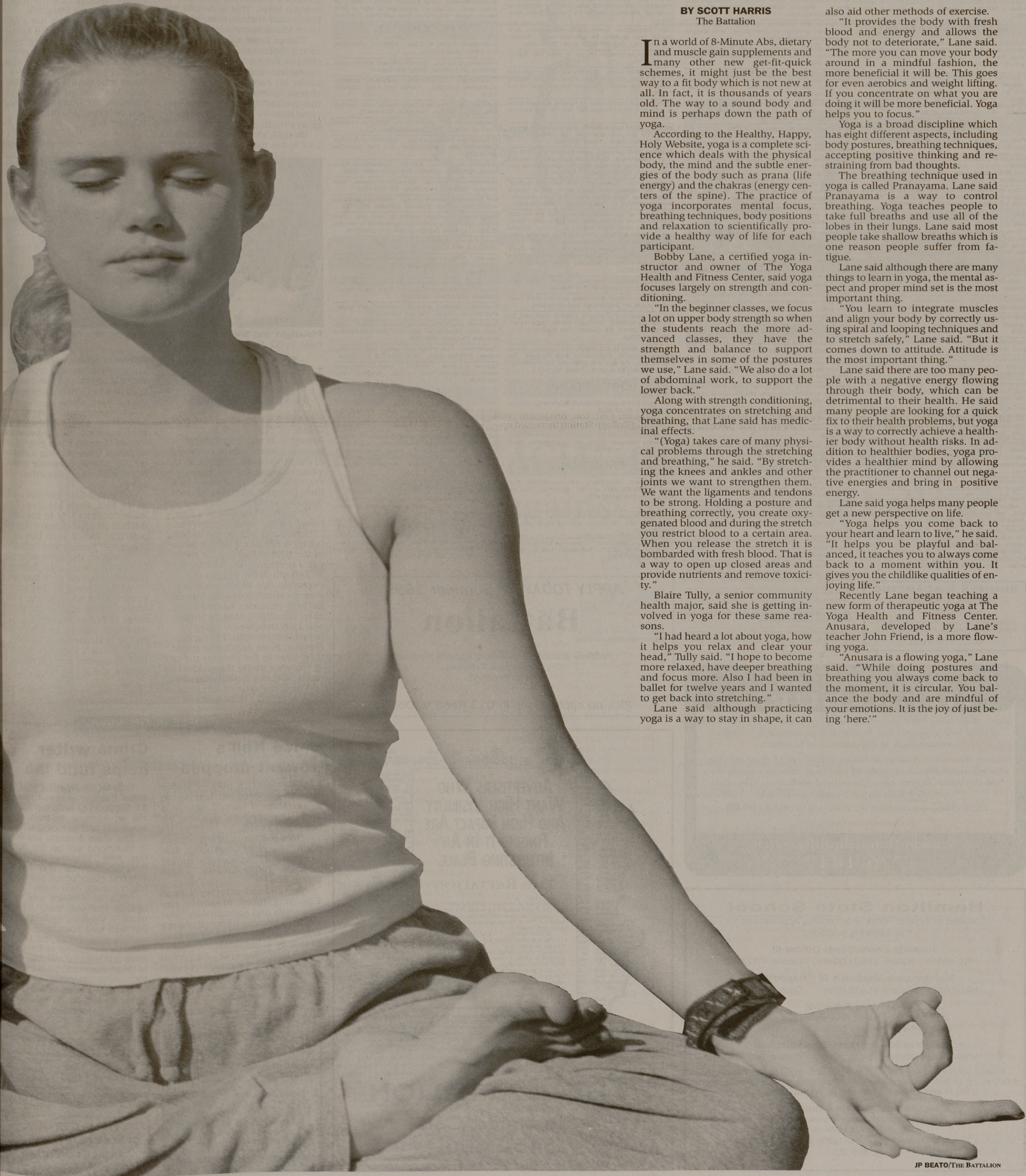
Lane said there are too many people with a negative energy flowing through their body, which can be detrimental to their health. He said many people are looking for a quick fix to their health problems, but yoga is a way to correctly achieve a healthier body without health risks. In addition to healthier bodies, yoga provides a healthier mind by allowing the practitioner to channel out negative energies and bring in positive energy.

Lane said yoga helps many people get a new perspective on life.

"Yoga helps you come back to your heart and learn to live," he said. "It helps you be playful and balanced, it teaches you to always come back to a moment within you. It gives you the childlike qualities of enjoying life."

Recently Lane began teaching a new form of therapeutic yoga at The Yoga Health and Fitness Center. Anusara, developed by Lane's teacher John Friend, is a more flowing yoga.

"Anusara is a flowing yoga," Lane said. "While doing postures and breathing you always come back to the moment, it is circular. You balance the body and are mindful of your emotions. It is the joy of just being 'here.'"



JP BEATO/THE BATTALION

The Battalion

Department of...
and will be...
s necessary...
s grant...
ent of...
vs said...
y officers...
e week...
dence...
Labor...
cal reside...
ns of...
from...
targeted...
: FM...
born...
y Road...
pass...
n...
y...
ditor...
Producer...
y Editor...
is Editor...
ion Editor...
Editor...
Master...
ithony...
es; Mich...
rium...
& Aaron...
aux, Amy...
on Puck...
ations, a...
845-247...
sional...
are 8...
sion...
summer...
through...
#...
778-1111