

SOMA Movement Studio opens in Unionville

By Alison Jalbert
Assistant Editor

SOMA Movement Studio, focusing on Pilates, yoga and somatics, has recently opened in Unionville, looking to help people engage their minds and condition the whole body.

The cooperative of fitness and wellness professionals located on South Main Street in Unionville seeks to teach its clients how to move more efficiently and effortlessly. The instructors come from a variety of backgrounds, including academia, rehabilitation, dance, athletics and medicine.

Mary Badon, M.D., manager and instructor, said SOMA is a movement studio, not a fitness studio.

"We teach people how to move; getting in a workout is a secondary goal," she explained.

The studio emphasizes a hierarchy of movement disciplines, starting with the mind-body connection, moving to strength and conditioning and up to mobilization and coordination training. Badon said it's about teaching people how to move and creating a "blank slate" so they can unlearn poor habits and learn the right way to move.

"[Somatic movement uses] really slow movements to try and re-learn how to control our muscles," she explained. "They need to be turned on, like computers. If they're not, it's like a light switch, but that button is stuck in your brain. You need to get your brain to turn that muscle off."

Hanna Somatic Movement aims to deal with the base of the studio's pyramid, enabling clients to regain control of tight muscles and voluntarily relax them. Once a client has controlled and relaxed their muscles, SOMA recommends beginning strength conditioning and training. Badon said the client will start using Pilates equipment such as reformers, trapeze tables and ladder barrels.

"We use springs to help clients hold up their bodies. The muscles have been contracted for many years - we've relaxed them, so the muscles are retracted, tired and weak," she explained. "As our clients get stronger, we take the springs away and start doing mat Pilates."

SOMA offers specialty classes, including dance, yoga and the Gyrotonic method, the latter of which is a "relatively new movement discipline," Badon explained, as it was developed in the 1970s by a former ballet dancer. The Gyrotonic Expansion System

uses three-dimensional, circular exercises performed on specialized equipment that focuses on creating length, flexibility and a mobile spine, according to SOMA's website.

"If Gyrotonic and Pilates were dance, Pilates would be ballet and Gyrotonic would be more like modern interpretive dance - it's a little more free form," Badon said. "Pilates is excellent for learning movements because you create a stable base - a strong core. As you advance, the movements get bigger. Gyrotonic starts big and ends big."

The majority of what the studio sells is Pilates, but the majority of what is taught is somatics, she said. Pilates brings people in because it's familiar. Certain people require a transitional class before they can take Pilates, however.

"I'm afraid to teach them Pilates because they can't move. They don't have the strength in their back to keep their abs tight. I put them in the transitional class - a mix of Pilates and somatics. They learn how to fire [their] muscles again."

Although the studio officially opened in April, Badon and other instructors have been teaching classes in the building since 2005, mostly geared toward the patients of Farmington Valley Physical Therapy.

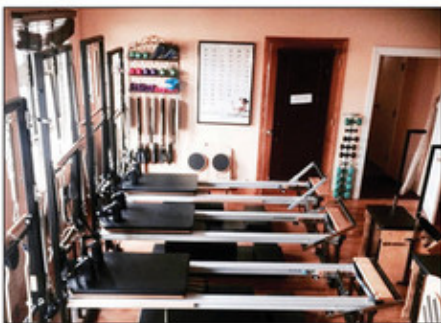
"This is a way to formally share what we're doing. We decided we want to do this on a full-time basis," she said. "For people who don't necessarily need physical therapy, but aren't moving normally, how can we help that off?"

Along with Badon, instructors include former professional dancer Kristen Waters, spinning instructor Adriana Pagliuca, physical therapist Bogdanova Badon, ballet instructor Linda Presnyakova and Andrew Schaffer, who holds a Ph.D. in neuroscience. "We each bring our own thing to it," Badon said, who has a degree from the Yale School of Medicine and did two years of orthopedic surgery training. "We didn't recruit people - all of these people came to us. It's not just, 'Oh, this is another place I'm working. This place is doing something different.'"

She said she is proud of the people she works with, and the team SOMA has put together is made up of "really intelligent, passionate people who work in movement."

Those interested in SOMA's offerings can call or email for a consultation, but Badon encourages people to come to a pre-Pilates transitional class, which are five people maximum.

"We'll work out all of the links in their



Courtesy photo

Reformers are among the Pilates equipment used at SOMA Movement Studio, located on South Main Street in Unionville.

movement. If they work through all the basic principles of Pilates, they can go into Pilates and take whatever classes they want. If not, they can stay in pre-Pilates or go to a somatics class."

Badon said the studio is busy on weekdays, with classes selling out.

"Word is getting out," she said. "We're really excited and really hoping for a con-

tinued upward trend. It's all about word of mouth - people smile when they're leaving the studio. That's what we want - we want you to feel good."

SOMA Movement Studio is located at 112 South Main St. in Unionville. For more information, call 860-470-MOVE, email info@somamovementstudio.com or visit www.somamovementstudio.com.

Is a home equity line of credit right for you?

You may be a first-time homeowner, or you may have lived in your home for decades. Either way, eventually that roof will need to be replaced, or the car will need new tires, or you will face an emergency, and you will need access to funds immediately. You have many options. You could take from your accumulated savings. Perhaps use a credit card, and risk paying a high interest rate. Or, as a homeowner, there is another option you may consider: a Home Equity Line of Credit.

What is a Home Equity Line of Credit?

A Home Equity Line of Credit (often referred to as a "HELOC") is a line of credit that allows a homeowner to

Dollars and Sense



By Martin J. Goetz
President & CEO
Simsbury Bank

borrow against the unencumbered value of their home. The line is secured by a junior mortgage on their property. However, HELOCs differ from first mortgage loans in many ways. First mortgages are funded in full at closing. HELOCs are revolving loan facilities that allow homeowners to borrow, repay, and borrow as the need arises. The borrower is approved for a maximum line amount, similar to a credit card. The

borrower only pays interest on the amount of money borrowed. If there is no borrowing on the credit line, the homeowner will pay no interest. Most lenders charge an annual fee on a HELOC.

How does it work?

The terms of the HELOC is split into two periods: a draw period, and a repayment period. If you open a 20-year HELOC with your lender, you will typically have a 10

year "draw" period. During the draw period, the borrower not only has the freedom to decide if, when, and how much to borrow, but also how much they pay back and when. Any funds drawn from your HELOC require interest-only payments during the draw period. At the end of the draw period, the outstanding loan amount is converted to a typical, amortizing loan where payments of principal and interest are made monthly during the repayment period. However, the borrower can repay it early with no penalty during the repayment period.

What is important to know?

A HELOC has many benefits.

Typically, a HELOC will have a significantly lower interest rate than a credit card, and will provide repayment flexibility. Typically, the interest rate on a HELOC is based on the Wall Street Journal Prime Rate and in many cases there is a margin either subtracted from the rate or added to it. For example, if prime were at 3.50 percent, prime minus .50 would be 3.00 percent.

A HELOC could also possibly provide a tax benefit to the borrower. In addition, the borrower will have immediate access to all available funds. As a safety net, it's one of the best low-interest emergency funding options for a homeowner.

There are some things to keep in mind, however.

HELOCs have a variable rate and will change when the Prime Rate changes.

How do I get started?
Deciding if a HELOC product is the right credit choice for you is an important one.

There are differences from bank to bank on HELOC structure, pricing and terms. So, it is important for you to select the bank that offers the product, advice and education that you need. Local banks like Simsbury Bank have knowledgeable professionals to help you understand the pros and cons of a HELOC as the financial tool to achieve your goals and the competitive structure, terms and pricing that you expect.

Avon Chamber welcomes new companies at Bring-A-Non-Member event

The Avon Chamber of Commerce inducted six new member companies at the annual "Bring-A-Non-Member" night April 13 at Farmington Woods Golf Club. "New members are a lifeline to all active and growing organizations

and this meeting is always a key part of chamber activities throughout the year" said Lisa Bodman, executive director of the Chamber. "Our members enjoy the opportunity to meet new people and welcome other businesses to our dynamic Chamber."

New members are: Heather Boughen, The Blevs Knees Catering & Culi; Sarah Calatayud, Haladung; Janice England-Cirkovic, Cagnoli Restaurant of Farmington; Ben Jordan, Photo Images Co.; Brian Schuber, Merrill Lynch-The Johnson Group; and Dr. Harriet McDermott, Avon Eye Care. Visit www.avonchamber.com.

Simsbury Chamber of Commerce holds 'Lunch N Learn' program

On May 12, 33 members of the Simsbury Chamber of Commerce met as "mentors" for the ninth annual "Lunch N Learn" program at Henry James Memorial School in Simsbury. The program introduces the school's 711 seventh- and eighth-grade students to a variety of professionals who are willing to share their life stories while enjoying lunch with small groups of students during lunch periods. Members and staff of the Chamber's Education Committee meet early in the year with the school's Guidance Department to plan for this event.

Mentors aim to stimulate thinking about a student's



Courtesy photo

Amelia Tessier, stylist with peterdominic Salon & Spa in Simsbury, mentors students at Henry James Memorial School.

own career choice and what steps they can start to take - even at the age 12 or 13 - toward their own dreams. Mentors share information about skills and character traits which lead to success in many

different careers, helping students understand the value of self-motivation, detail-orientation, commitment, reliability, follow-through and other habits that will serve them well in any career path.

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