

Pilates Takes Off

✦ Jane Grant Tougas



Above: Barbette Spitler, certified Pilates trainer, says Caro Bayley Bosca is a “star student.”

Top right: Former pilot Caro Bayley Bosca reminisces at the United States Air Force Museum.

Bottom right: Kim Young, certified Pilates trainer, works with teenage twins Britt and Cody Spitler.

Meet Caro Bayley Bosca—Pilates client at Samaritan North Health Center. Now 80 years old, Bosca can look back over an eventful life. Not only did she play the traditional female roles of dutiful daughter, loving wife and mother—she also branched out into what was then considered “male territory”: piloting an airplane.

During World War II, Bosca was one of about 1000 young women volunteers who served as Women’s Air Force Service Pilots (WASPS). Their assignment was to ferry and test planes, instruct pilots and tow targets for anti-aircraft artillery practice. By doing so, they “freed up” the male pilots for combat duty. When the war ended, Bosca continued to fly. She was an acrobatic flier in an all woman air show in the late 1940s. In 1951, she was the women’s international aerobatic

champion and set a world altitude record in a Piper Cub.

Always interested in keeping fit, Bosca says the Pilates classes she takes at the Samaritan Well-Being Center (located at Samaritan North) are ideal for her. “After doing Pilates for two years, I know I’m in better shape,” Bosca reports. “My abdominal muscles are stronger and my posture is better.” This year is an especially important time for Bosca to be in top form. She and about 50 of her fellow WASPs—the “girls,” as she calls them—reunited July 17 at the Dayton Air Show. Show attendees were treated to a special display of WASP history and memorabilia as part of the Year of Flight celebration.

Bosca’s trainer at the Samaritan Well-Being Center is Barbette Spitler, RN, BSN, CHTP, a certified Pilates instructor. “Pilates,” Spitler

Pilates? What’s That?

It’s not a rock group. It’s not the name of a new restaurant. And it’s not a small town in Ohio.

It’s an effective exercise program that can be tailored to fit the needs of men and women of all ages.

You can do Pilates on a mat on the floor. Or, you can perform the movements on specially designed equipment that uses springs and pulleys to create resistance. Instead

of performing many repetitions of the same movement, Pilates emphasizes fewer movements done in slow, smooth, precise form. Certified Pilates instructors, like Barbette Spitler, RN, BSN, CHTP, and Kim Young, LMT, PTA, at the Samaritan Well-Being Center, must complete a rigorous education program that teaches them how to adapt the various Pilates





explains, “is a stretching and strengthening program that focuses on the core muscles of the torso.

“It’s important to strengthen the core muscles,” Spitler says, “because every move you make—standing, sitting, walking— involves them. After ten Pilates sessions, you can usually *feel* a

difference. After 20 sessions, you start to *see* a difference in the length and tone of your muscles.”

Pilates also enhances flexibility and balance, both of which become critical safety concerns as people grow older. “Pilates fits well in the Samaritan Well-Being Center’s dedication to nurture

the balance of mind, body and spirit in order to promote health and healing,” Spitler adds.



movements to the special needs of clients.

A combination of Eastern and Western fitness regimens, the controlled movements of Pilates are designed to tone muscles; improve posture, flexibility and balance; enhance weight loss; and help reduce stress. Sometimes called the “exercise of celebrities,” Pilates is gaining popularity.

“We encourage people to check with their family physicians before they start Pilates,” says family physician and sports medicine specialist Michael Barrow, MD (left). “And, we often recommend Pilates for people who have been injured—after they have completed their rehabilitation. The exercises help them maintain the progress they’ve already made.”

The Samaritan Well-Being Center offers both mat classes and individual studio sessions with the special Pilates equipment. Classes and sessions last 50 to 60 minutes. For more information on upcoming classes—or to make an appointment for a one-on-one studio session—call the Samaritan Well-Being Center at 937/279-5860.