

# Breaking a sweat with hot yoga

*Instructors promote a non-judgmental, non-competitive environment for exercising*

By JACK DAVIS  
Siuslaw News

Imagine practicing yoga outdoors in the Mojave Desert in July. The temperature is pushing 100 degrees and the humidity is hovering around 30-40 percent. That's the hot yoga environment at Studio Florence, the only hot yoga studio in town.

Co-owners Bill Fleenor and Tina Alto opened the Florence Studio in February, along with their Hybrid Real Estate office.

"When I was Lane County commissioner in 2008 I was under a lot of stress," Fleenor said. "One day I was walking down Olive Street in Eugene and noticed the Bikram Yoga College of India. I happened in as asked what was going on. They said, 'We do hot yoga.' I said, 'That's interesting, what's hot yoga?' They took me on a tour."

The next day, Fleenor went back for a class.

"I fell in love with the process," he said. "I had a very difficult time at first. I wanted to leave the studio. It was incredibly hot, but I stayed."

Not only did Fleenor stay in the class, he was hooked on hot yoga.

"I became more confident in myself during the next few practices," he said. "Over the last eight years I have continued to practice hot yoga."

According to Fleenor, the basic benefits of hot yoga are reducing stress, increasing health and mental acuity and promoting a sense of joy and happiness.

"Yoga is not a spiritual or religious practice. It is a way of helping enhance the quality of your life," he said.

All the yoga and hot yoga classes at Studio Florence are lead by Fleenor and Allyson Byrd, both certified hot yoga instructors.

Fleenor has taken more than 700 hours of hot yoga instruction, traveling to Costa Rica and Thailand for certifications.

"I have received as many hot yoga certifications as are available right now," he said.

"About a year ago, Allyson took a 16-day 200-hour certification program in Santa Barbara at the White Lotus Yoga Foundation to study Hatha Yoga," Fleenor said. "In the primary yoga tree, Hot Yoga is underneath Hatha Yoga."

Fleenor explained that in traditional yoga practice there are approximately 98 positions. The hot yoga classes Fleenor and Byrd teach generally practice 26 of those positions.

He described the hot yoga classes as a non-judgmental, non-competitive environment.

"In hot yoga, we try and maintain the same sequence each session so that people are able to perfect their practice,"



JACK DAVIS/SUSLAW NEWS

**Yoga instructor Allyson Byrd, far right, helps practitioners warm up during the beginning of a 90-minute hot yoga class at Studio Florence. Hot yoga is practiced in a room heated to 100 degrees, with humidity kept below 40 percent.**

he said.

Unlike regular yoga classes, in addition to the heat, hot yoga is practiced in front of mirrors. All the yoga classes are held in a private 21-by-16-foot room with floor-to-ceiling mirrors on two walls. The classes are small, averaging six or seven practitioners each.

"Unlike some yoga where you meditate with your eyes closed, in hot yoga, your eyes are wide open, because you are trying to maintain mindfulness," Fleenor said.

There is a separate, private women's changing room adja-

cent to the yoga room. Men and women's restrooms are nearby.

The studio has recently installed a tanning bed, for the purpose of increasing vitamin D absorption, according to Fleenor.

In addition to the 90-minute regular and hot yoga classes taught by Byrd, Fleenor instructs a more intense one-hour hot yoga class called Hot

Yoga Flow.

A variety of music is played, from meditative to some more progressive music, depending on the intensity of the class.

Since opening in February, Fleenor estimates more than 100 people have come in to experience hot yoga.

One of the first couples to try hot yoga at Studio Florence was elementary principal Mike Harklerode and his wife Nikki.

"I started doing yoga with my wife," Harklerode said. "She is an occupational therapist with PeaceHealth Peace Harbor and she thought it would be good for joint pain and stress relief. We have been going almost every week since February and we have been having a great time. It's hot work and hard work, but well worth it."

Studio Florence and Hybrid Real Estate are located at 1845 Highway 126, at the corner of Quince Street.

For more information, call 541-902-3082 or email manager@studioflorence.com.

Follow Jack on Twitter @SNews\_Jack. Email him at jack@thesiuslawnews.com.



JACK DAVIS/SUSLAW NEWS

**Siuslaw Outreach Services (SOS) Executive Director David Wiegman (left) emcees the burning of the nonprofit's building mortgage as SOS board members and supporters celebrate with chilled apple cider.**

## SOS from 1A

SOS has also helped more than 150 domestic violence survivors in the past 12 months.

According to Wiegman, domestic violence does not just happen to the underprivileged.

"Domestic violence affects all levels of society," he said.

Wiegman continued, "Just in the past few weeks, we have

seen more people in difficult circumstances. Many have had hours cut back or are laid off this time of year. The onset of the cold winter months is our busiest season. December is our busiest month and Christmas Eve was our busiest day last year."

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## Market from 1A

that this is a really good barometer or sign of development, building activity and sales — and the recession

finally coming to an end in Florence."

Ahdab's report indicated that the rise was "not an anomaly," but a new phase in the market.

"The current expansion phase is surprising in its strength," he said.

"In other words, now is a good time to sell," FarleyCampbell said.

City councilors brought up additional issues, such as ensuring that housing is affordable for families hoping to buy first homes.

Mayor Joe Henry said, "Now would be a good time for us to encourage somebody to build some affordable housing in Florence."

Reynolds agreed and said, "With (the council's) support and direction, I know Wendy has been trying to help people make some connections with property owners and developers from outside the area."

According to FarleyCampbell, this year's new construction of single-family homes has already exceeded last year's number.

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*What's your favorite part of Halloween?*



"My favorite part of Halloween is the candy."  
—EVAN, FOURTH GRADE,  
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"The candy. I'm going down to Old Town to trick or treat."  
—JAZLYN, THIRD GRADE,  
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"Spending time with my family, getting all dressed up and, yes, the candy."  
—PAIGE, THIRD GRADE,  
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