

# EASTON COURIER

Incorporating News From The Town of Monroe

VOL. XXXIII NO. 18 \$1 SINGLE COPY

www.eastoncourier.com

28 PAGES

THURSDAY, MAY 4, 2006

## Easton and Monroe, Connecticut Thursday May 4 2006 Pages 4, 5

### Imagine meditating on a better self

When my editors asked me to cover a conference on the use of transcendental meditation (TM) in the mainstream American classroom this week, I was instantly excited.

Now, I get excited easily, but this was an exceptional level of excitement.

There is nothing I enjoy writing about more than education issues, from new curriculum to profiles of outstanding students.

In addition, I've had more than a few friends tell me how powerfully meditation has affected their lives.

So the opportunity to explore the subject further in an educational context appealed to me.

I really wasn't sure what to expect.



Larissa Lytwyn  
Perspective

The room was filled with educators, including several speakers from the Connecticut chapter of the international Consciousness-Based Education Association (CBEA).

Flashes of skepticism at first

threatened to mar my objectivity. Is this some kind of New Age gimmick I wondered.

I quickly reviewed the thick packet of TM literature I'd been given and promised to fulfill my journalistic responsibility to keep an open mind.

When the discussion began, I was impressed by the assorted researchers, educators and professors who expressed, in plain language, an irrefutable belief in what they were talking about.

Essentially, TM is a mental exercise that people practice for a few minutes twice a day to help them settle the mind and body and create a deep rest state. Its purpose is to rejuvenate and reduce stress.

Its roots are in Hindi philosophy. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, a spiritual leader perhaps best

known for his influence — however brief — on the Beatles, founded the so-called TM movement.

The speakers wisely distinguished between the TM movement and the TM technique itself.

They focused on university research into the powerfully positive effects on people who regularly practice TM.

It can help people recapture their creativity, their focus, motivation and drive, they said.

So often in today's society we are looking outward for satisfaction, constantly in search of the "quick fix," be it a pill or a drink.

We base our happiness on outside events.

If those events don't turn out (See "Perspective" on page 5)

### "Perspective"—

(Continued from page 4)

the way we want them to, we are too easily thrown into a chasm of disappointment.

This mindset filters down to children. They start to believe they would fit in better with their group of friends, for example, if they bought a certain style of clothes.

Or they think they would be more "liked" by their teacher if they got a good grade.

They are constantly pursuing external goals to achieve internal pleasure. Their entire self-esteem becomes based on whether their external goals are met.

But, as any good psychologist will tell you, self-confidence has to come from within.

Transcendental meditation can give a person the power to look inside themselves for strength, instead of outside for reassurance.

Bob Roth, a member of the CBEA board of advisors,

reminded the audience that TM was an ancient practice.

It's something we've always had but don't always access, he said.

I know how challenging it is to incorporate anything new into the curriculum — even 10 minutes, twice a day to close

your eyes and reflect.

But the possibilities have been demonstrated by actual comparative brainscans.

This stuff apparently works.

It could be a beneficial salve to our stressed-out, outward-seeking minds.

We all need to find satisfac-

tion from within, and TM might just be more than a fad from the '60s. I'll keep that open mind while I find out more about it.

*This column reflects the opinion of Editor Larissa Lytwyn and does not necessarily represent the views of Hometown Publications.*