

# Massage therapy: getting started

*The former high school teacher now puts his energies into other instruction.*

By L. CROW  
VINDICATOR CORRESPONDENT

Many people in the area know John Burek as the co-founder (with Diane Alexander) and director of Tri-State College of Massotherapy, which they opened in October 1997.

But his interest in healing and human potential dates to his days as a teacher at Canton Central Catholic High School. It was the influence of Father Joseph Martin that first opened Burek to a new way of thinking. Father Martin ran the retreat program, which focused on human potential and peoples' emotional selves.

At the same time, Burek had also read a book about the Esalen Institute in California, founded in 1962 as part of the human potential movement. It was known as an alternative education center and supported things like organic foods and was also known as a blending of eastern and western philosophies.

Burek had an opportunity to spend a week at Esalen, but his first exposure to massage actually didn't come until 1980, when he began to suffer physical problems because of a high school football injury. He went to Jeanette Ezzo for neuromuscular massage therapy.

"The sessions were very therapeutic — lots of laughs," said Burek. "Jeanette could talk about anything from 'The Tibetan Book of the Dead' to making doughnuts. And I also began to realize the benefits of massage therapy."

By 1989, Burek was studying massage at the Ohio College of Massotherapy in Kenmore (Akron). Ezzo, who eventually earned a Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University, urged him to also study with Paul St. John, the developer of neuromuscular massage. In 1990, he obtained his state license to practice massage therapy and also became certified in neuromuscular massage. He left his high school teaching position in 1992.

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## Training

Burek stresses that the main focus of Tri-State College of Massotherapy has always been to train students in basic Swedish massage according to state requirements, so that graduates are eligible to apply for their license to practice massage in the state of Ohio. "The vast majority of people are here for that reason," Burek said.

However, he also recognizes that other students are interested in a deeper understanding of the mysteries of healing, and his continued exploration of the latest research in therapies through touch has given him a wealth of knowledge to impart to those students. "I want to unlock and unleash peoples' potential as healers," he said. "The theory behind neuromuscular therapy is that you get a build-up of neurological firings in muscles [spasms] when there is too much neurological activity, due to overuse, trauma, strain," Burek said. "It is a very physical approach, which focuses on origins and insertions. The muscle that lifts the leg would have its origin in the hip and insertion in the knee. Supposedly, when you apply human touch, it will affect muscle firing patterns in the nerves and bring about homeostasis [balance]. That balance can actually be measured by a machine."

"The Trager Approach, developed by Milton Trager, was based on the idea that all holding in the musculoskeletal is in the unconscious," Burek said. "In this method, you model the outcome of what you want, always saying, 'how could this be lighter, freer, better. The practitioner's hands, through the unconscious, are making suggestions, rather than trying to manipulate the body into betterment. The essence of Milton's work is not to emphasize the physical, but to change the message of the unconscious."

## MAKING CONTACT

Burek may be reached at Tri-State College of Massotherapy, 9159 Market St., Suite 26, North Lima, OH 44452 (330) 629-9998 or (800) 753-5183. Fall classes will begin at the end of September and people may still register.

"Ortho-Bionomy was developed by Arthur Pauls, a British osteopath and judo instructor," continued Burek. "But he was also a genius, unbelievably perceptive. He opened up possibilities in healing, saying the we have self-corrective reflexes. His training in judo gave him an understanding that there are ways to touch the body that can bring them back to balance. He works on the physical and non-physical dimensions, and believed that if you go in the direction the body is leading you, healing will take place. Lao Tzu said, 'How do you make a crooked man straight? Make him more crooked.' Humans have been manipulated for so long, that sometimes just being there will restore balance."

## Stem cell talk

Perhaps the most fascinating research is that being done by John Upledger, D.O., internationally known as the founder of the Upledger Institute in Florida, and developer of the CranioSacral technique. "Upledger has begun 'talking' to stem cells," Burek said. (The understanding is that stem cells, produced in the thymus, are able to become whatever they need to be.)

"He is experimenting with getting the cells to migrate where they are needed. He said there is no need to grow the cells in a test tube. Much of his work has been based on the idea of the 'Inner Physician,' and when he begins talking to people, he finds he can access that eternal knowledge. He is working with Alzheimer, Parkinson's Disease, cancer patients, and others." Upledger has also written a book called "Cell Talk."

■ Laughing Crow is a practitioner of holistic healing. She may be reached at [laughingcrow@neo.rr.com](mailto:laughingcrow@neo.rr.com).

**Esalen Institute:** [www.esalen.org](http://www.esalen.org)  
[www.esalenctr.org](http://www.esalenctr.org)  
[www.well.com/user/suscon/esalen/bg/finale.html](http://www.well.com/user/suscon/esalen/bg/finale.html)

**Johns Hopkins University:**  
[www.jhu.edu](http://www.jhu.edu); [www.hopkinsmedicine.org](http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org)  
**A Web search on Jeanette Ezzo results in numerous articles written by her on various aspects of healing.**

**Is massage therapy useful in the management of diabetes?**  
<http://spectrum.diabetesjournals.org/cgi/content/full/14/4/218>  
<http://ama-assn.org/cgi/content/abstract/280/18/1628>  
[www.doctorbob.com/2001k\\_05\\_08newso5.html](http://www.doctorbob.com/2001k_05_08newso5.html)

**Paul St. John:**  
<http://stjohnseminars.com> (neuro-muscular therapy)

**Deepak Chopra:**  
[www.myprimetime.com/work/life/constant/chopra/index.shtml](http://www.myprimetime.com/work/life/constant/chopra/index.shtml);  
[www.chopra.com](http://www.chopra.com)

**Andrew Weil, M.D.:** [www.drweil.com](http://www.drweil.com);  
[www.drweilselfhealing.com](http://www.drweilselfhealing.com)

**Jim Oschman, Ph.D.:**  
[www.issseem.org/joschmanBio.html](http://www.issseem.org/joschmanBio.html);  
[www.holographic.org/oschman.html](http://www.holographic.org/oschman.html)

**Valerie Hunt, Ph.D.:**  
[www.spiritmaat.com/archive/nov/nh.htm](http://www.spiritmaat.com/archive/nov/nh.htm)

**Julie Motz:**  
[www.deaction.org/Pages/SearchablePages/1999Newsletter/Newsletter055k.html](http://www.deaction.org/Pages/SearchablePages/1999Newsletter/Newsletter055k.html); [www.spiritisle.com/writing/julmot/index.shtml](http://www.spiritisle.com/writing/julmot/index.shtml)

**Eric Peart:** [www.thereconnection.com](http://www.thereconnection.com)

**Milton Trager:** [www.trager.com](http://www.trager.com)

**Arthur Pauls – Ortho-Bionomy:**  
[www.ortho-bionomy.org/development.htm](http://www.ortho-bionomy.org/development.htm)

**Lao Tzu:**  
[www.lucidcafe.com/library/96jun/laotzu.html](http://www.lucidcafe.com/library/96jun/laotzu.html)

**Upledger Institute:** [www.jaha.com/consumer/pressReleaseDisplay?id=10005](http://www.jaha.com/consumer/pressReleaseDisplay?id=10005)  
[www.upledger.com](http://www.upledger.com)

**BOOKS**

**Larry Dossey, M.D.:** "Prayer is Good Medicine," "Healing Beyond the Body: Medicine and the Infinite Reach of the Mind," and "Healing Through Prayer."