

VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE NEWSLETTER

Jan/Feb 2002



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Finding Our Centre



Program of Classes in the Iyengar Approach to Yoga

The VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
#202, 919 Fort St.

Term 3: Jan. 7 – March 3, 2002

Level 1

Day	Time	Instructor
Mon.*	7:30 - 9:00pm	Ann Kilbertus
Mon.	7:30 - 9:00pm	James Currie-Johnson
Tues.**	10:30 - 12:00pm	Leslie Hogya
Tues.	7:30 - 9:00pm	Ty Chandler, Corrine Lowen
Wed.	9:00 - 10:30am	Ty Chandler
Wed.	6:15 - 7:45pm	Ty Chandler
Wed.	7:45 - 9:15pm	Gwynneth Powell
Thurs.	8:30 - 10:00am	Linda Benn
Thurs.	4:30 - 6:00pm	Jo Anna Hope
Fri.	10:30 - 12:00pm	Linda Benn
Fri.	5:00 - 6:30 pm	Gwynneth Powell
Sat.	9:00 - 10:00am	Corrine Lowen
Sun.	10:30 - 12:00pm	Ty Chandler

*This class will run/be priced for two terms.

** Gentle Level 1

Level 2

Day	Time	Instructor
Tues.	5:00 - 6:30pm	Wies Pukesh
Wed.	6:00 - 7:30pm	Gwynneth Powell
Fri.	9:00 - 10:30am	Linda Benn
Sat.	9:00 - 11:00am	Marlene Miller
Sun.	9:00 - 10:30am	Ty Chandler

Level 2/3

Day	Time	Instructor
Mon.	10:30 - 12:00pm	Lauren Cox
Tues.	5:30 - 7:15pm	Leslie Hogya

Level 3

Day	Time	Instructor
Thurs.	10:00 - 12:00pm	Linda Benn
Thurs.	6:00 - 8:00pm	Ann Kilbertus, Leslie Hogya

Level 4

Day	Time	Instructor
Mon.	5:15 - 7:15pm	Senior teachers

Drop-In

Day	Time	Instructor
Tues.	12:00 - 1:00pm	Chris Dimofski
Wed.	12:00 - 1:00pm	Leslie Hogya
Thurs.	12:00 - 1:00pm	Lauren Cox
Fri.	12:00 - 1:00pm	Ty Chandler

Yoga for Runners

Fri.	5:30 - 7:00pm	Li Milne
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Pranayama

Mon.	4:00 - 5:00pm	Leslie Hogya
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Special Needs

Wed.	4:30 - 6:00pm	Ann Kilbertus, Leslie Hogya
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Back Care

Mon.	4:00 - 5:15pm	Linda Benn
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55 + Better

Wed.	10:30 - 12:00pm	Leslie Hogya
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Family Yoga

Wed.	3:30 - 4:30pm	Lauren Cox
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Pre-Natal

Thurs.	8:30 - 10:00am	Robin Cantor
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Restorative

Thurs.	5:30 - 7:00pm	Wendy Boyer
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The VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY is a non-profit society incorporated under the Societies' Act of the Province of British Columbia, whose purpose is "to encourage the physical, mental, and spiritual growth of its members and other interested persons of the society at large by the study and discipline of Yoga." The Society owes its inspiration to Swami Sivananda Radha and Mr. B.K.S. Iyengar.

The Society Newsletter is published regularly, providing current information on events concerning yoga in the Victoria area and the Yasodhara Ashram. Published by the VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY.

Anyone wishing to contribute articles, photographs, drawings, information or suggestions may contact the The Victoria Yoga Centre Newsletter:

202 - 919 Fort Street

Victoria BC V8V 3K3

For more information on Victoria Yoga Centre activities and events, please call 386-YOGA or visit our website at www.victoriayogacentre.bc.ca

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B.K.S. Iyengar

Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute
1107-B/1, Shivajinagar
Pune 411-016
India



September 11, 2001

My dear Victorians of Victoria,

What a glad news it is that you are giving me. It is a delight and an expressionable joy to hear that the Victoria Yoga Centre has found its own place at last, which is not only gratifying but satisfying also. Now the dedicated teachers and students of yoga can practise as taught by me without outside disturbances or influences.

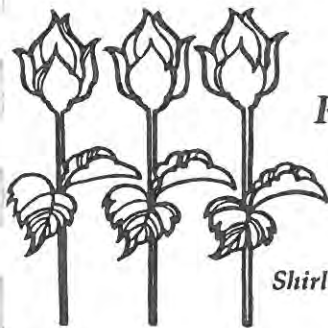
Please carry on the sadhana with zeal from now on and experience the rhythm, dynamism and close understanding of the various parts and particles of the body mechanism in co-ordination and interaction with each other by using the discerning mind so that peace in body, poise in mind and unalloyed bliss in the heart is felt.

Yoga, being a subjective physio-psycho-neuro-spiritual art and philosophy, with precise techniques towards perfection and the realisation of the Seer becomes absorbed into your sadhana. Yoga, a time immemorial subject of practical philosophy, has to be worked out by all with vigour and rigour, so that a suitable adoption and adaptation required for modern fast life is developed without losing the traditional approach so that you all make this as a household spiritual food for all to savour for true happiness and health.

May the codifier of yoga - Patanjali, grace you all in order to develop determined will to maintain and sustain its purity and divinity in your hands, heads and hearts. My heart is with you all for your progress in yoga.

May the Gods blessings be upon you all.

B.K.S. Iyengar



Reflections

by
Shirley Daventry French

I was in Vancouver recently at a Canadian Iyengar Yoga Association assessors' meeting. Two out of three days, we worked from 7 am to 10 pm. Arriving at the Victoria Yoga Centre the following Monday, I was confronted by Greg Sly, the editor of the next newsletter. He enquired about the state of my 'Reflections'. "Not written", I said, "Too busy! Probably won't get to it this week." He tried to look unconcerned, but requires more practice at masking his feelings. "You will be writing about the new centre?" he enquired tentatively. "Well", I replied, "I am not sure." At that moment my mind was full of the work of the past weekend, of national rather than local yoga concerns.



The sixteen teachers at the assessors' weekend were longtime Iyengar Yoga practitioners committed to upholding the integrity of Mr. Iyengar's work in Canada. Ten were already assessors and the rest assessors in training. We had arrived by plane, automobile and, in the case of the Victoria contingent, by ferry. Canada was represented from coast to coast plus a Canadian expatriate and former Victorian, who had travelled all the way from Hong Kong. In that teeming city, so unlike her native land, she has established an Iyengar teacher training program.

Our days began with a yoga practice, laying down a

foundation for all the work we had to do. First and foremost we are students of Yogacharya B.K.S. Iyengar. This must be at the forefront of our minds as we establish a framework for training and assessing teachers in his system of yoga. One woman there had just returned from study in India; others were about to leave, had been there last summer or were going next summer. Our pilgrimages to Pune to study with the Iyengar family provide the thread which ties us together.

Understanding gleaned from our studies with the Iyengars always plays a prominent role in our discussions, just as it should. This is vital in building a structure which will convey the essence of the teaching. We also referred often to the work in our local centres where the actual teaching and teacher training occur, and where we must put into practice the guidelines emanating from Pune.

One of the strengths of working as a group is that we learn from each other's experience. We share a lot. I have come to dislike intensely the current widespread usage of the word 'sharing'. These days the phrase "I want to share something with you", is commonly used as a preamble to the recounting of some experience which, while it may be interesting or funny, is 'telling' rather than 'sharing'. Sometimes it precedes the imposition on others of a particular point of view - definitely not sharing! At these national meetings we do share: details about what works well and what doesn't, information on how to acquire relevant written material and documents, and, if someone has found a good way to define certain objectives or procedures or training methods this is readily made available to all Iyengar Yoga communities.

The Iyengar Yoga family is an international one and this sharing goes on all over the world. Here, we are following in the footsteps of our teacher, who passes on his knowledge liberally. The teachings and the fruits of the teaching do not belong to any one of us. They are universal. However, we do not, nor should we, offer the teaching to everyone. This also follows in the tradition of yoga where the *sadhaka* or aspirant has to earn the right to receive different levels of instruction.

Linda Shevloff, our colleague from Hong Kong,

travelled back to Victoria with us. She was eager to see the new yoga centre space where she was impressed by what we had accomplished in such short time. She was also astonished at our class limits. From the perspective of living in one of the world's most congested cities, she felt our main studio could easily hold at least a hundred students - an opinion not shared by the Victoria City Fire Inspector.

After class on Monday night several of us went out to dinner with Linda, who was about to return to Hong Kong. Old friends, we caught up on the ongoing adventures of our spouses and children, but mostly talked about ourselves and our ups and downs on the yogic path, a journey we embarked on thirty years ago. By North American standards this is a long time, but compared to our teacher and considering the depths of yoga, this is a mere drop in the ocean. We are all constantly being confronted with the limits of our knowledge. This is not false humility but the truth. While we certainly know more about yoga than we did thirty years ago, to a large extent this knowledge has only served to acquaint us with our ignorance. We have learned how much there is to study, to practice, to put into practice in all aspects of our life for the rest of our life. We have found that each discovery opens a door to another area of ignorance needing to be explored. Yoga is an eternal path of revelation.

The four of us dining that night all had our start in the 'stretch as long as you are comfortable' school of yoga. Then, one Christmas at Yashodara Ashram I met a teacher who had studied with B.K.S. Iyengar. Everything changed! Impressed by this teacher, Norma Hodge, I invited her to come to Victoria once a month to train us in the Iyengar method. Norma used the euphemism 'newness' to explain the very intense uncomfortable sensations we experienced in her classes and which we hitherto would have described as 'pain'. During the two years I studied with Norma before going to India I experienced much that was new. I found this exciting while others turned away saying "This is not yoga - yoga is supposed to make you feel good", not realising that a little discomfort now in the short run could lead to feeling much better about yourself in the long run.

One of our teachers, Wies Pukesh, passed on a quotation by the Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore who was talking about individual souls facing pain in order to learn. "When the string of the violin was being tuned it felt the pain at being stretched, but once it was tuned then it knew why it was stretched." She felt it was applicable to yoga, and certainly it describes perfectly my experience.

With the discovery of Iyengar Yoga, effort - a fundamental requirement on the yogic path - was introduced to our yoga practice. As Patanjali says, the stilling of the mind which lies at the heart of yoga is achieved by effort and surrender. In the late 60's and early 70's the yoga being taught in North America was all about letting go and effort became lost in the shuffle. These days, it is the opposite with a focus on sweating and working hard (so hard you feel as if you are going to have a heart attack as, so I am told, one yoga instructor urged on her class). Yoga with no exertion appeals to those hoping for change without struggle. Yoga with no reflection appeals to those seeking a workout to keep them fit, healthy and busy so that nagging questions such as what is the meaning of my life and death can be kept at bay a little longer.

Yoga is really in vogue right now. *The Globe and Mail* devoted a full page to yoga the other day. Time magazine chose yoga as the topic for a recent cover story. Articles have appeared in many newspapers and magazines as well as features on television. The proliferation of interest in yoga is a positive sign in the troubled world we presently inhabit. However, this popularity also has its negative side. Centres are proliferating, and to meet the demand teachers are being trained post-haste, in some cases by people with little training themselves, and let loose on an unsuspecting public. The framework within which we work under the guidance of B.K.S. Iyengar protects us (and the public) from this temptation. It still takes two years of basic training plus a year's internship to train an Iyengar Yoga teacher.

The surge of interest in yoga is, of course, beneficial for the Victoria Yoga Centre as we operate in our new space. Of course, we have had a space for thirty years at the Victoria 'Y' and it has served us well. At first though, there was considerable resistance. Concern was

voiced that we were non-Christian, pagan, too spiritual, too physical, not physical enough, too psychological, too active, too introspective, too much correction, too little care, too much philosophising. From time to time we were called to explain ourselves to various Y staff members. At one meeting we were told to avoid use of the word 'awareness'. Chanting should be restricted to the word om and limited to a maximum of three repetitions. Strange now to recall that climate of suspicion because later, having earned their trust, we were given a free hand in organising the yoga programme. We were also permitted to hold *satsang* in the chapel once a week where we would chant Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, Sufi and other chants and introduce prayers from all spiritual traditions.

Perhaps in the beginning we came on too strongly. Certainly I felt that Iyengar Yoga was light years ahead of all other yoga being taught in Victoria at that time and probably made no secret about my feelings. But we learned to be tactful without compromising our principles and, most importantly, we learned more about yoga.

We stayed at the Y for thirty years to our mutual benefit. We had a pleasant yoga room, well equipped and freedom to teach as we wished. In 1984 B.K.S. Iyengar himself came and observed our classes and teachers. We developed and sustained a strong yoga community and a faculty of well-trained teachers with the Y as our base.

Then why move? Because pleasant as this was, it was not our space. The room was used almost entirely for yoga seven days a week but not entirely. It was becoming increasingly difficult to schedule weekend workshops or extra classes. The Y was bursting its seams. Over the years we had dreamed of our own yoga space and several times had come close to moving out, even to signing a lease on another property, but in the end backed out - wisely, I think, in retrospect. We were not ready. The group was not cohesive enough for such an undertaking, and perhaps we were too comfortable. Several times I explored opening my own studio independently of the yoga centre, but I have always been drawn towards working in a group and was reluctant to disrupt the collegial approach we had

painstakingly developed. Another factor was that my husband carried a heavy overhead in his medical practice which made it difficult to take time off or take long trips, and I did not want to tie myself down and make it difficult to study in India. Many people, have made it possible for me to travel and deserve my gratitude: my husband for supporting the household in my absence and the other teachers who take over classes when I am away either in Pune or teaching out-of-town.

Despite all the benefits of working in co-operation with the Y, I became increasingly restless there over the past couple of years. In my travels I visit many yoga centres, large and small, and saw the benefits of having a place of your own. On the other hand, none of these centres has a stronger spirit of community than we have in Victoria and it is important to all of us to maintain this. What finally made me uncomfortable and eager to start a new push to get our own place was the news that the Y was going to bring in power and other types of yoga. Space had apparently had become available for this. It really is time to go, I thought.

As it happened this thought was also percolating in the minds of others and, in the person of Leslie Hogya, the yoga centre had leadership capable of bringing us to the point of transition and the eventual fruition of our dream to have a space devoted entirely to the teaching of Iyengar Yoga. As Guruji said in his congratulatory letter: "Now the dedicated teachers and students of yoga can practise as taught by me without outside disturbances or influences." From the very first class I taught in our new space, I knew we had made the right decision to move. In fact both Leslie and I, when we first saw this particular yoga space, felt it was "our space". It is a joy to teach there with pictures of Guruji and Patanjali, a library for our collection of books and videos, a staff devoted entirely to our work supported by a team of volunteers. I am happy to say to others "See you at the centre!" and happy to see so many students, new and old, coming there to practise yoga with us.

Guruji's first book by which he is so well known throughout the world is called *Light on Yoga*. It is an appropriate title. A light does emanate from Pune, to our national association and its work, to our local

teacher training program and its work, and into our daily classes. It provides the inspiration and energy for our newsletter, Friday night gatherings, workshops and other activities. With the opening of a costly downtown space with two studios we have entered into new territory. I am optimistic. We bring thirty years of experience to the new centre, and as long as we continue our work in the light of yoga, we have nothing to fear. ☯

Opening Ceremonies

by Greg Sly

While the construction tools used on some finishing touches were just being laid down, the formal asana day was beginning with the new centre's first workshop, "Finding Our Centre", in which Chris Lea worked us with precision and humor. In *Trikonasana*, the front leg rotates outward. Now the belly button, being curious by nature wants to turn and look at the front leg, but we have to discipline the curiosity of the belly button and rotate it away from the front leg. Chris' playfulness and clarity of instruction urge the mind and body to unite for the fun of it, expanding both our outer and inner limits.

The ceremonies began with Dr. Derek French's summary of the evolution of the Victoria Yoga Centre. Shirley spoke of Swami Radha and Mr. Iyengar as the

spiritual guides who have inspired the direction of our community, and then shared Gurujī's letter with us all. Leslie Hoya spoke next, relating the trying and miraculous events that brought us to this opening on Sunday, October 7, 2001.

A musical offering -Om Namah Shivaya- was lead by Ty Chandler in our first *kirtan*, filling the new space with warmth and spirit as everyone joined in.



In the puja that followed, the new centre was blessed through honoring the traditions from which yoga has come. This was an opportunity to personally devote ourselves through the offering of flowers and prayers, and the taking of prasad as a reminder of the blessings of this life. The altar teemed with deities, pictures and flowers, and many prayers were given:

- Gyatri Mantra
(one of the most ancient Indian chants)
- The Divine Light Invocation of Swami Radha
- The Universal Prayer of Gurudev Sivananda
- The Divine Mother Prayer
- Surah Al Faateha (a Muslim prayer)
- Om Tata Tutare (prayer to the Buddhist Goddess of Compassion)



Shirley, Derek and Leslie speak to celebrating yogis.

One that seemed directed specially to the spirit of the day was a Jewish prayer, excerpted from the prayer written by Dr. Adler (*The Daily Prayer Book*), edited by Dr. Hertz:



Sovereign of the universe! Look down from your holy habitation, and in mercy and favor accept the prayer and supplication of your children who are assembled here to consecrate this dwelling and to offer their thanksgiving unto you for all the loving kindness and truth you have shown to them. We beseech you, let not your loving kindness depart, nor the covenant of your peace be removed from them. Shield this their abode that no evil befall it. May sickness and sorrow not come into it, nor the voice of lamentation be heard within its walls. Grant that the members (of the household) may dwell together in this, their habitation in brotherhood and fellowships.

An East Indian pot-luck feast with complimentary somosa and pakora from the Spice Jammer Restaurant, along with chai, coffee and juices gave the day a sense of abundance and completeness. Our community has found its new home.

Many people's lives and energies have converged to bring about today's opening of the new Victoria Yoga Centre. We have had expert process facilitation, abundant volunteer help, happy (miraculous?) coincidences, critical group decision making and visionary leadership. The following articles present these and more perspectives on the process of finding our home. Come and practice, often. ☯



The
VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE'S

Friday Night Gathering

Asana Practice at 6 p.m.

Potluck dinner at 7 p.m.

Bring food to share and
your own plate/cutlery

following the potluck:

**Gil Parker will give a talk
and read from his book
*Aware of the Mountain:
Mountaineering as Yoga***

Date: Friday, Feb. 8

at the Victoria Yoga Centre
202-919 Fort Street

Everyone is welcome to join us.

The
Victoria Yoga Centre
is pleased to welcome

Mahyar Raz

An all-levels workshop
open to those with at least six months
experience in Iyengar Yoga.



One of Canada's most senior teachers, Mahyar Raz is Director of the Iyengar Yoga School of Toronto and founder of the Yoga Institute in Tehran, Iran. Her studies include time in Pune and work with 'Modern Techniques in Medical Yoga' at the Gupta Yoga Hospital in Lonavla, India. She interprets the work of B.K.S.

Iyengar, Prashant and Geeta with artistic flair and promises all a charming and challenging weekend.

January 11-13, 2002

Friday 6:30 - 8:30 pm

Saturday 10am - 1:00pm

3:00 - 5:00pm

Sunday 10:30am - 1:30pm

Registration: Begins Nov. 15, 2001

Cost: Members: \$150.00

Non-members: \$180.00

(includes cost of
membership)

All prices must add 7% GST

Contact: Leslie Hogya
50 Cambridge Street
Victoria BC V8V 4A8
250 383 6301

The Victoria Yoga Centre 202-919 Fort Street 250 386 YOGA

A Generosity of Spirit

An interview with VYCS President, Leslie Hogya

by Melissa Worth

Leslie, when did you first become involved with the Victoria Yoga Centre?

I started in 1972 because that was when I took my first classes at the Y here, when I moved to Victoria. I met Carol Miller, who had introduced Shirley to the yoga

program at the Y. Carol was one of the first people I met when I moved because her husband worked with my husband Giles at UVic. So, an auspicious new beginning – we made friends instantly. I had been doing yoga from a book at that time.

After a while I began to take a yoga class and

I've been going there ever since. Carol and I used to go to yoga classes together. Shirley, Carol and I were all still students of Jessica Tucker. And I think that's the group of us that have remained, are involved and are the only ones still from those days.

And it wasn't Iyengar Yoga then, was it?

No. They used Mr. Iyengar's book for inspiration, but there was no understanding of how explicit everything needed to be. In fact, I don't know if you've heard me say this, but I actually have no idea how I used to teach. I can't remember how we used to teach, if we didn't study what to do! Stretch your legs, lift your kneecaps! We did not demonstrate, and we didn't have any of those words that we use - those action words. I don't know what we did. We used to lie down a lot! I liked it. It was good. It kept me interested.

How did the centre come to be? I understand that a centre nearly opened in 1985. Can you tell me about this?

The yoga centre started, informally, with people gathering at Shirley's house to talk about yoga and do a practice together. Shirley and Derek had been to the Yasodhara Ashram and I had been to the Ashram also. When they came home from one of the courses – the teachers' course – they decided that they wanted to keep the yoga community more present in their lives, instead of just some place you went to. So, they started having informal gatherings at their house. My children were young then and I didn't go that often, but it was comforting to know that they were meeting and I could go on Friday when I could make it. Then they incorporated at some point in 1978 because they started to organize things that generated money and they had to have a legal organization to take care of the money, instead of having it in their personal bank accounts! So that was, actually, one of the reasons they started formalizing. It was because there were, suddenly, things going on that had legal implications. Fortunately for us now, they formed a society and it is part of the Society's Act. That's actually been very good for us all these years. We are a non-profit society, legally. We fit all the qualifications.

In 1984, Mr. Iyengar was on a worldwide tour and he came to visit us in Victoria. About that time, there was a lot of impetus to get a yoga centre started and we began looking at places. I actually wasn't that involved in that because my children were still small and I had had some major health problems. We didn't really understand the therapeutic and restorative benefits of being able to do the asanas on bolsters. So, I wasn't doing a lot of yoga because I thought you had to just jump around and stand on your head! Yoga has really evolved. What's interesting is that the other method wasn't that vigorous, but we didn't understand how you could use props that Mr. Iyengar has developed. We hadn't been exposed to that kind of teaching, yet. When Shirley had been to India, they hadn't really done it too much. So, when Mr. Iyengar came, there was so much energy required to get this event organized, with him visiting – you can imagine - with himself here. He was right in Victoria and we had events at the Y and he was teaching there in the big gymnasium. He stood up on a table and taught the whole group.

How many were there? Maybe sixty or seventy people, which was a lot in those days. Upon reflection it seems small, but at the time it seemed huge, because no one had ever taught a class with more than thirty, probably. So, I think what happened, was there was a huge amount of energy put out by that visit and then it was depleted. And the impetus for opening the centre got lost, which is too bad. There is actually a very good article written about that in the last newsletter by Dennis Fafard.

How do you think the new space will affect the Victoria Yoga Centre?

Well, everything is changing since we've moved into the centre. And I have had to re-arrange myself and everyone has had to do things, I think, a little bit differently. The fact that it's our place has made a huge impact on the community. I think people come here and they feel so much more like they are at home than when you're at the Y. The Y was wonderful, but it wasn't our place. Everything is being done a little bit differently. We don't want to bother having students order props from several different people. We want the props at the centre, so we're building up a network of props. And the books – the same thing. People don't want to find out they have to wait a week for their book. It's just...everything is different! And it's evolving everyday!

Leslie, could you talk about the process of opening a yoga centre. Can you further comment on how the yoga that you had practiced for so many years was able to sustain you and keep you going?

I think I've done yoga for so long now that it's so much a part of me. That is what we've been talking about here, all through this. And I can't 'slump'. I can't stand with my feet pointed out, you know! I think that yoga is just so interwoven in all I do. And, certainly, I can still lose my temper or be in a bad mood and I'll be unmindful but I'm so aware of me that I know I'm doing that. And so, I think that definitely yoga was my inspiration to do this work, and sustained me in so many ways through the process. Knowing that, as Mr. Iyengar and Swami Radha say, it is our duty to share what we've learned and that you just take and then you

give back. It's a circle. You don't just keep taking. So, giving back to the community is a natural thing after awhile. How my practice sustained me? I just did whatever I could do, in those first few weeks, you know, standing on my head and doing Shoulder Stand. Even that short time that was devoted just to asanas or just to pranayama was very, very important. It's nurturing to find that time of stillness any way. But I took a couple of days off and I notice that I really liked having my whole morning to myself to do my practice, as long as it took. And not think about what time it was to rush off. Not that most people get that leisure, but still, it's nice to have and I hope they can. I'm reminded how difficult it is, when you have a 9 to 5 job, to do your yoga practice. It reminds me of the challenges that people have to overcome to get their practice in. I guess we have to be reminded of what other people are doing, so that we're more accommodating to what they need. Like, when they come into the yoga class at 5:30 and they've been at work all day.

You consistently recognize and praise the work done by volunteers. Can you talk about the importance of volunteers in opening the new centre?

Well, first of all, starting with the Board of Directors – we met very minimally. A few times a year and we made some decisions. We used to have long discussions. It was mainly just keeping track of things. And then, this year, opening the centre, we've had so many meetings. And some of them are called on very short notice. Without the board we couldn't have done what we've done. Each one of the board members took on huge tasks to get us open. And they really worked together to do that and people crossed over and did other jobs to help out. Connie Barker is our membership secretary, but she was bashing out the chair backs and helped a lot with props and things. Drew Yallop has done a huge amount of work setting up all the computer stuff that we've needed. He's there all the time at the yoga centre. Britta Poisson works – she's the only paid employee right now in our new centre, but she only is paid for a certain number of hours and she is always there more hours than that. Amanda Mills supervised all the construction people and so on. On all of those beautiful weekends that we had in the fall, Amanda was organizing work crews. I don't want to leave anyone out. You guys in

your committee [Weis Pukesh's *Values Group*] organized the big opening ceremonies. Doug Hart and Martha Chick organized more volunteers for other jobs... it just goes on and on. Linda Benn has done so many things. She just always has a finger on the program and the teachers and what they need and we'll forget about this or that – she's always reminding us. So, it's huge. A huge amount of effort went into opening this centre. That's the first layer... Then there's the whole layer of teachers – all of them have helped in some way to open the centre. And then beyond that, there are the people who helped in other ways, like the students – the people who are on teams. We had all those team meetings, and that went on and on. And then, beyond that, there were other people *they* brought in. Now we have a new group of volunteers who are helping out at the desk on evenings because we haven't had money to pay. We didn't know how much we would have to pay someone to be at the desk and you need someone sitting there. So, the people who are interested – they maybe start with one thing, like helping clean up after a Friday Night Gathering. Maybe they come and staple newsletters one time. At our last board meeting we laughed a lot. The people in the community, we work together. You know you can rely on that person so then you trust them, and you enjoy being with them, and so on. So it's that community feeling over and over. And when you see each other, you are happy to see them. It's fun to be together...

I want to talk about your volunteer work, too. Why do you volunteer as the President?

When we started this whole process of opening our own centre after fifteen years went by from the last time, or twenty years, or however long it's been—every time it's come up in the past, someone always asked the question about who was going to have the time and the energy to carry it through? And when I came back from my trip in Asia, I thought a lot about it because I worked in a yoga centre there and I just thought, "We need to have our own centre." It just felt so good to go to that yoga centre. And so, I came home and started talking about it and was willing to be the one to carry it through because it did need to have one person who said, "Okay, I'm going to be the one who is focused on this." And

since I was the president, it seemed easy to be the one. It worked out that I had the time and I had the interest and I had the motivation to carry it through. I have had so much fun doing this. It's been so interesting – it's like everything I've learned in my life, I've drawn upon for this enterprise. And I had no idea – as I said at one teachers' meeting – I had no idea what I was getting myself into. I absolutely did not realize what it was going to mean when we opened up the doors in September and started getting ready to open for October classes. There were just so many things to do and think about and decide and – It was like a roller coaster! "Oh, well, we have to have a plumber! And we have to have an electrician! And we have to tear out these walls! And we have to put in some kind of floor! And we can't afford that!"¹²

I remember you saying you had no idea what things you would actually have to be doing or what things would be coming your way. So everyday there was something new.

Absolutely. Everyday was something new – and still is. And things like the fluorescent lights – the fluorescent lights flickering – it's very irritating. So we had to take care of it. Well, we couldn't just call those wonderful men who work at the Y, whom I miss always – all those maintenance people – and say "This light's flickering, we need it fixed." We had to figure it out. Luckily, we had Greg Sly come and fix it – at least temporarily. So it's just been on and on and on. I used to just stand here, do pranayama and the Divine Light Invocation and sort of suck in energy from some place to keep going because I had so little time for myself to do my usual practices! So, my practice was Divine Light Invocation, some pranayama, maybe some inversions, try to do some seated poses when I came home. It's just been very interesting. My whole life's sort of been upside-down. And, then that door opened... Well, one of the things you said – How many hours do I spend there? I don't really know! I work there every Monday morning. Every Monday morning regularly and I'm there almost every day of the week, except the weekends. I don't go there on the weekend unless I go to a teachers' meeting. And sometimes I'm there for twelve hours. It's been really fun, though. I took a few days off and I realized I can't continue this! I Have to

work out a new system.

How is your role going to change? Are you looking for a successor to the presidency?

Well, now what we're talking about is that with most organizations the president of the board doesn't necessarily oversee day-to-day operations. That's often two separate people. So that's what I'm thinking is that I would like to have somebody trained to be just the board person and not necessarily have to think that they would have to do all the overseeing at the Yoga Centre. I'm not sure how it's going to evolve, but I'm willing to keep doing the overseeing of the Yoga Centre. It's too much to do both of these. I am fortunate that Giles, my husband, is able to pay a lot of my basic expenses. He pays the mortgage payments. Otherwise I wouldn't have been able to afford to do what I've been doing. Because I haven't had a real job since I got back from Thailand.

Your presence in the community is unmistakable. I would like you to comment on how the new centre has changed your role in the community? And how has this changed your practice and your teaching?

Well, what's interesting is that I always have known most of the people in the Yoga Centre. Usually, if I look at the membership list – unless they're from out of town and somebody Shirley met somewhere and gave them the newsletter and they sign up – most people's names on the membership list, I know who they are. And because I'm answering the phone so much and meeting people when they come in to pay, I'm also meeting a lot of the new students who weren't members of the Yoga Centre and weren't part of our community before we moved here. More and more people come to our Yoga Centre who weren't involved with us before, which is pretty outstanding in six weeks of being open!

My practice – that's one of the reasons why I have to



change some things. I feel like my practice has suffered a bit. And I'm working on bringing that into balance, but it is important that my practice is strong. Without my practice there is no yoga and there's no Yoga Centre and there's no me teaching. And I do practice, it's just that it's been affected for sure. I've had to change. I might have to say, "I only have an hour. So, I'll do this kind of a practice now and when I come home, I'll do some more practice then." But sometimes, as we all know, you come home and you don't always get to do that practice. And, some days I think, "Well, I'll practice at the Yoga Centre." And sometimes, that doesn't work.

And your teaching? Has it affected your teaching at all? Have you become a better teacher?

You know, I don't think that it has affected my teaching. But I could be proven wrong!

You say that you are not practicing asanas as much as you should but you still practice other aspects of yoga.

Everything is yoga. In the last newsletter, Swami Radha talks about that when she started her centre. She didn't have time to do her practices, so everything was her practice. And that's what I said. I said I felt like I would just stand here in this room and do the Divine Light Invocation and do my pranayama and I could just feel that the energy that I needed for the day was just coming to me from some source of whatever you want to call it. And that answering the phone and being polite to people and all of that is part of yoga. It's all about the *yamas* and *niyamas* and about being mindful about what you do in everything.

Is there a particular sutra that comes to mind?

Yes, truthfulness – *satya*. One of the interesting things about starting a yoga centre is that you have to deal with the public and they are not used to dealing with us! And I think that we have touched people in the

community because they see we're so eager and we're sort of like the green kids on the block! You know, we're all scrubbed and clean and we want to do the best! And we're trying our hardest. We're asking all these naive questions and it's really important to me that we keep the sutras and the honesty as the core beliefs through everything.

Can we talk about the commercialization of yoga? Do you think the teachings are compromised when people teach solely to make money?



It's so interesting. Every article in the November/December issue talks about something to do with this and the Yoga Centre – it's Neil, it's brilliant. The articles he pulled together, which he and Greg found are very good. There's an article in

which Prashant talks about if you rely on yoga as your income, then you can please the students and get more income and more students but then are you teaching yoga? It would be so easy to please certain people and get more students because people call us – and this is one of the things we were laughing about at our meeting the other day – people call us and ask us all these questions like, "Can I come any day and just drop in?" "No." And then they want to know, "You pay fifty-nine dollars and you can only come once a week? For how many weeks? Is that all? Is that all I can do?" So, we could offer all kinds of things. And then they want to know if we do flow yoga and if we do Ashtanga yoga and if we do this yoga and do we do hot yoga, and we say "No. No. No. No." So we've lost a lot of people who aren't interested in following a methodical path and doing Iyengar Yoga, which is maybe not as fun or not as appealing or not as trendy as some of the stuff that is out there in the commercial world. People come and find out that they have to confront some things about themselves again, in their own truths, and they don't always want that. They just want to come and feel

better and then go home and sit and watch tv and drink their beer or whatever. Not really engage in the process.

So in a sort of a commercial setting, satya is not going to be realized.

No. It would get watered down even if you didn't mean to do that. It's just interesting, you know. There will always be new people. There will always be people who don't really want to do that and they'll go away. So, that's what has to be. And then sometimes – it's funny, you know, because sometimes it does depend on what you call something. We called Lauren's class an 'All Levels' class. No one signed up. Then we thought there were students who'd been in a 'Level 2' before – maybe we'll call it a 'Level 1-2'. And there were students that had been in 'Level 2' that didn't want to be in a '1-2' because it felt like a step backwards to them. So then we called it a '2-3'. All this happened over about four days! And in those four days, it went from having nobody signed up to having about eight people signing up and now there's about twelve people in the class in the second week. So sometimes – even though we're being honest – sometimes what you do call it makes a difference. Swami Radha talked about that in her workshops. She said, "I always teach what needs to be taught, but sometimes I call it a Straight Walk and sometimes I call it a Life Seal and sometimes I call it a music unconsciousness, but it's still the same work."

Mr. Iyengar says too, if the students don't come then you have more time to practice, right?!

And that's what we told people who are our teachers. Again, without the teachers, we wouldn't be there. The board and teachers are the foundation of how we are there. Without their sincerity and dedication and practice, we wouldn't have the solid foundation. We understand that if people want that, that's what they'll recognize. If they don't want that, then they'll go elsewhere. That solid commitment, the sincerity, the seriousness of their practice, their dedication. Shirley is behind that so much, too. Inspiration. I see already a difference in the level of commitment of students, because it is a yoga centre, so they had to make a bit of a leap to come here. It's not a community centre. It's not the fitness club or somewhere that's easy to park.

You have to work a little bit harder to get here. You have to be a little bit more interested in following something a little bit deeper to sign up here. So I'm seeing a difference in the level of interest in the students.

How have the classroom demographics and students changed over the years? Who is coming to the new centre?

What's interesting to me is that Shirley's class on Monday nights has been fairly steady in population. There's probably been twenty-five people in the last couple years. A lot of them the same twenty-five people. A few new ones occasionally, like you, have moved up from other levels. But, now, there's thirty people in the room. And there's never been thirty people at the Y – maybe once in a blue moon there would be thirty people in that class. And now there's usually thirty people, so I think that's very interesting. We've had interest from people who have studied other methods. We do have a reputation – Shirley's reputation led some people to call us. And they don't necessarily have an Iyengar background and it doesn't always work if they try and come to a higher level class, even if they know yoga, because our method is very specific. Even if you know how to do a Dog pose, you

might not do a Dog pose the way Mr. Iyengar teaches it. I don't like to turn people away. I just like to encourage them to go to a lower-level class, but some people don't like that. They may get annoyed.

I've noticed as well, some of my friends, they come to me now after they know that I've done yoga all these years. There's probably fifteen people coming to classes there who are my personal friends or people that I've known. There's something that has changed in the new community of people who are coming. Sandra Harper, one of our students said to me, "It's like people think it's more serious now and that you're taking yourselves more seriously by doing this, even though you're not necessarily taking yourselves more seriously. But it's perceived as that." And, so, suddenly, there's these people that I've known for years that have known that I've done yoga for years that are suddenly calling up and deciding to come to the Yoga Centre. That's the way it goes. Year after year they still see you doing yoga and they think, "Well maybe there's something to this. She always looks so perky! Her back is straight!"

Can you compare the surge of popularity in yoga in the seventies to the surge in popularity today? Why is it so popular today?

From My Dream Journal

by Doug Hart

Tuesday, February 13, 2001.

This is an excerpt from my dream journal.

It is a beautiful sunny summer evening, just finished work, feeling good, heading for home.

Walking up Fort Street I see a friend of mine gardening, I cross the street to say hello and offer my help. My friend is happy to have the help and accepts my offer. We plant and water flowers in a large patio-like area set back from the street beside the Blue Fox Restaurant. While we put in this new garden we combine yoga asanas with our planting

and watering. We offer each other advice such as: while in *Utthita Trikonasana* the upper arm, holding the watering can, is to reach high in the sky so the water falls on the garden like rain from the clouds...we do adjustments on each other while continuing to garden. We finish putting the garden in, clean up and say goodbye to each other...I continue on my journey home.

By coincidence the Victoria Yoga Centre Society found its new home on the second floor right above the space we planted the garden in my dream.

That's a good question. I think when I started doing yoga in the seventies, there was not as much understanding of – at least for me – of where yoga comes from and what it leads to. No, I can't say that. That's not true. I did understand that. A lot of people who started yoga in the seventies were looking for a quick fix and I think that's still true. They're looking for a quick fix. So I don't know how many differences there are, but I know that Iyengar Yoga wasn't as well known then and when I started doing yoga it was a lot physically easier than it is now. So I think in the seventies there was not as much challenge to body, mind and spirit. Yeah, the same thing is happening. There's this whole thing of trying to please people, so it's sort of been watered down and that's what Prashant is talking about in that article, the watering down of the teachings to please people.

That happened in the Seventies, as well?

Oh, definitely. There were a lot of teachers who were teaching yoga without any training. I started teaching yoga with practically no training. The first class I took from someone – not at the Y here, but where I lived before – the woman had the book open beside her. She'd read a little bit and then she'd tell us what to do. Then she'd turn the page! Then she'd read and she'd tell us something else to do! One thing I've seen has changed over the years is Mr. Iyengar's method has influenced so many other styles – even though they say they don't follow his method, his method has influenced the other styles of yoga so much. And a lot of the big names in yoga had a foundation with him and then broke away, but they still have that sort of core teaching from him. There are a lot of very famous yoga teachers, like Angela Farmer. Maybe she didn't study with Mr. Iyengar, but she studied with people who used to study with him so that influence is there – the alignment, the sequence, the form, the emphasis on stability, strength, stamina, the awareness of the proper use of the body. I see the difference in the yoga magazines from over the years. Now there's so much more of the poses that look like Iyengar poses, even though they're not. So that influence has come through – a huge impact, even if people don't want to

admit it, from other schools. I just found it and stayed with it. As I said at the beginning, all yoga is good as are all teachers. As long as they've been trained and they are sincere, then you're going to learn something from them. It might be a path that suits you more, your personality or your body style, then go for it.

The more it's practiced, the better off the world's going to be.

That's right!

What do you envision for the Yoga Centre? Do you see it expanding? I've already noticed that we seem to be bursting at the seams!

I know! Our second studio isn't really big enough. It would be good to have another studio that was bigger than the small studio and then, still having that one, it would be nice to have a third studio that was in-between the two. Of course things are uncertain economically in Victoria, because of all these threats of cutbacks and the downturn of the economy. But it doesn't seem to stop people from coming to yoga. And people say that's when they need yoga the most. Unfortunately though, you do have to pay for it. But, sometimes, when you're down, that's when you need yoga the most.

I think we definitely could grow. We have the



Leslie with her grandson Austin.

potential to grow as long as things keep going the way we are. I can't believe in our second term we've got so many classes that are full. Classes that had one or two people first term now have enough to make them viable. And some teachers volunteered their first term because we said that if we didn't get five students it wasn't recovering the cost of paying them. So because we did alright the first term, we gave everyone who was in that situation at least some money. They all got something back for the time they spent coming to the class and parking – whether they had five students or twenty-five. I think things are looking good. There are other yoga centres opening. Somebody showed me an ad in the paper. My first reaction was, "Oh, Gosh! Horrible!" But then, on the other hand, they'll offer the things we don't offer and we can send people there who ask for flow yoga and hot yoga. I can say, "Well, try the other yoga centre."

In some of the meetings I have attended some people have suggested building a centre. Do you see that ever happening?

I am so glad that we are leasing right now because there are so many things that we didn't foresee. It's a huge operation – setting up the office. We didn't budget nearly enough money for that. Just buying the paper that you need and pens, just little things like that all add up. I would really like to talk to some other people who have opened yoga centres. It's something I'd like to spend some time doing because there are some things that we haven't really worked out yet. We haven't solved a lot of problems that have come up, and we haven't figured out the best way to do everything. It was important for me that everyone came together as a community and did this, instead of just one or two of us opening the centre as teachers and then whatever money that came from my class went to me and whatever Shirley got went to her. All the money is pooled, and we get paid just a certain amount per hour. This allows us to offer small classes, like Pre-Natal and Special Needs and I'm not competing against you or Ann or someone else for students because my class isn't at a better time. That's been the foundation of our group – we are cooperating and one

of us isn't bringing in more money than the other because of having more students.

All the years we've worked together, we've been building such a strong group of teachers and working together that there hasn't been, from my perspective, problems between people. Or issues. Or conflicts. They are so seldom or so minor that if they happen, people aren't telling me about them! And I think that that's huge. I'm sure that that's one of the issues that comes up at other centres.

I thought the energy would be different at the new centre because yoga hadn't been practiced there before. But it seems we brought all the energy with us. We just filled it. It's great.

I know. Some people come in and say, "I didn't know it was going to be this nice!" So, that's good. Some of the decisions that I've had to make and things I've noticed – it just astounds me sometimes. Out of the blue, I'll remember that something has to be done, or hasn't been taken care of. And, I just have this huge, sort of network of brainwaves going on and they just flash, "Remember to do this! Remember to do that!" We need the rope wall. And we have to talk to this guy. And we have to call that person. And we have to talk to the landlord. And we have to get the sign up. And I didn't like the design of the sign, so we had to redesign the sign. And the brochures that they were doing. It just comes to me – solutions for things. It seems to be that I was at the right place at the right time, and I wanted to thank, also, my father. My father was a businessman. He worked with engineers and they did some specialized machinery, and he was not trained as an engineer. He knew nothing – I mean not that he knew nothing – he had no formal education. He was the president of his company. And he used to walk out into the shop when there'd be a huddle of engineers and foremen standing around trying to figure out how to make something work. And he'd walk up and say, "What's the problem?" And they'd tell him the problem and he'd say, "Well, try it this way." He'd walk away and they'd try it that way; it usually worked! So, I think that my father's genetic code has been passed on to me about running things. And he's a great example of what you were recognizing. I mean, to be un-modest for the moment,

that inclusivity and generosity of spirit, my dad has. Such abundance of it, I feel so grateful for that inspiration. Everybody loves my dad! He's always got something good to say. If you've got a problem with him, something must be wrong with you, because he has certainly not got a problem with you!

Thank you, Leslie. Is there anything else that you want to talk about?

Not really. I'm really happy I could do it... I just have to say, "Thanks."

And we all thank you, from the bottom of our hearts. It's been an honour interviewing you and having you do all that you have done. Thank you.

¹ Many thanks to Byron Smith for transcribing the taped interview.

² See Leslie's article in this issue about the Trials and Tribulations of opening a yoga centre. ☯

Volunteers Needed!

We need volunteers:

- to learn to run the desk in the evenings
- answer phones during registration times
- help keep the centre tidy
- work on the newsletter
- run errands
- help with publicity
- maintain props
- fund-raise for a new floor
- staple/mail newsletter
- coordinate volunteers
- file, etc!

Volunteer forms available at the yoga centre.

Congratulations Chris!



Chris Lea has completed the 3 year Teacher Training Program with the Victoria Yoga Centre. Chris has brought zeal to his practice, and dedication and hard work to his apprenticeship. He finished all his papers, observations and supervised teaching. He added much to our community by instituting Friday Night Videos, monthly peer teaching, and a sutra study group. He also helped bring Youth Yoga to life at the YM-YWCA. Chris has taught many classes and helped in many ways around the Yoga Centre. He assisted the Treasurer for two years. In the past few months, Chris has done many things to help us launch the new space. He beautifully finished the tables we use for Special Needs classes and came up with a safe solution for the threshold to Studio B. He helped pick up and deliver countless items and has always been willing to lend a hand where needed.

On behalf of the Victoria Yoga Centre - congratulations and thank-you! We look forward to your return from India.

Leslie Hogya, Supervising Teacher

The Victoria Yoga Centre presents

Further Inspirations from India

with

Leslie Hogya, Ann Kilbertus and Ty Chandler

Leslie, Ann and Ty have spent time in India in the past two years. The teachings take time to penetrate. They have been instructed by the Iyengars to practice what they have been given, and not rush to teach too quickly. Working together, these three teachers will explore further what they have learned in Pune.

March 15 - 17, 2002

Friday 6:30 - 8:30 pm

Saturday 11:00 am - 2:00 pm

4:00 - 6:00 pm

Sunday 10:30 am - 1:00 pm

Fees

Members \$140 (includes GST)

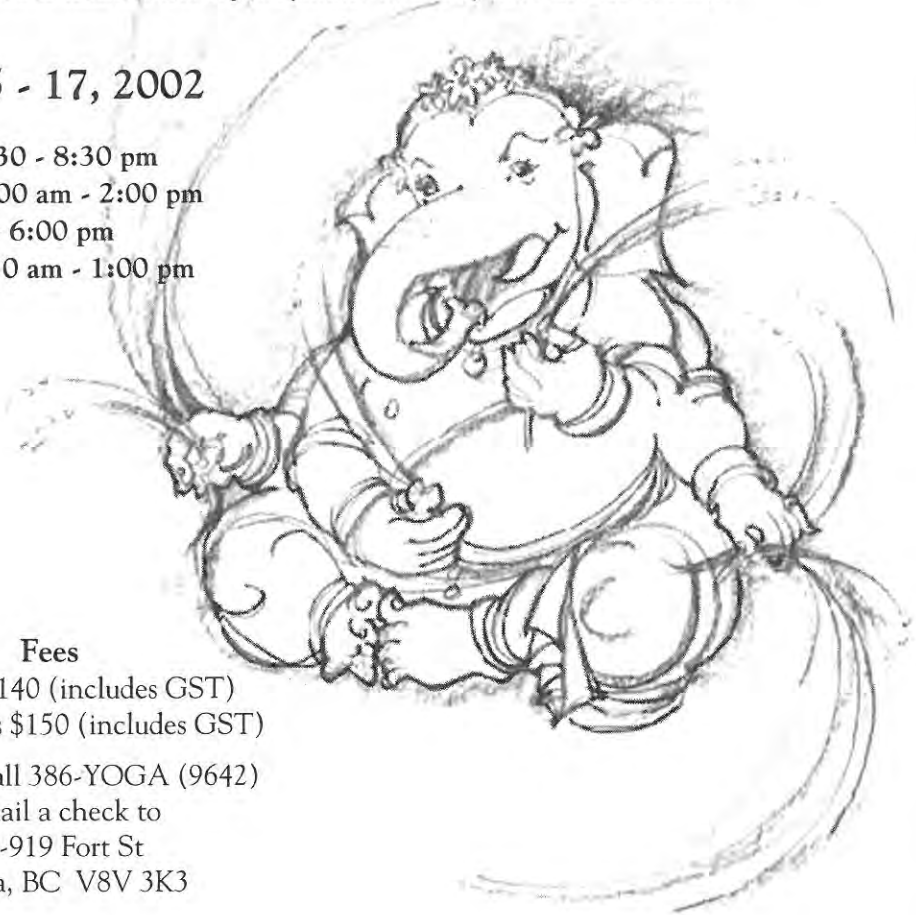
Non members \$150 (includes GST)

To register, call 386-YOGA (9642)

Or mail a check to

202-919 Fort St

Victoria, BC V8V 3K3



Strategic Planning the Yogic Way!

by Nathen Bernshaw

The Victoria Yoga Centre Society's purpose is to encourage the physical, mental, and spiritual growth of its members and other interested persons of the society at large by the study and discipline of yoga.

A few years ago the Yoga Centre sponsored a course in Group Facilitation, which was delivered in Victoria by Mr. Bill Staples of ICA Canada, a Toronto company. The national Canadian Iyengar Teachers Association had used ICA Canada's facilitator services to good effect, so it was decided by the Yoga Centre we could use some of their training locally. I continued with additional ICA training over the next few years in Alberta and Ontario. I was pleased to be involved as Group Facilitator in the process to expand Iyengar Yoga teaching in Victoria.

After a "visioning" lunch meeting with Shirley Daventry French in the fall of 2000, I was invited to meet with Corrine Lowen, Linda Benn, and Leslie Hoya. That meeting on January 19, 2001 produced the following focus question, which was to be the foundation for our strategic planning process:

What are all the ways we can effectively expand Iyengar Yoga class delivery, maintain the strength of our community and move into a new centre?

Corrine Lowen, who had taken Group Facilitation skills training, acted as our Co-Facilitator and Wayne Nelson of ICA Canada in Toronto was our mentor and design consultant.

We used the following ICA techniques:

JANUARY 27, 2001

Historical Scan	What is the history of the Victoria Yoga Centre Society?
Practical Vision	What is our visionary thinking for 3 – 5 – 10 years from now?
Workshop	What are all the ways we can effectively expand Iyengar Yoga class delivery, etc.?

FEBRUARY 24, 2001

Obstacles Workshop	What's blocking our vision?
Strategic Planning	What can we do to deal with the obstacles and realize workshop vision?

APRIL 7, 2001

Action Planning	What action plans are realistic and can be carried out?
	What are the measurable accomplishments?
Team Framework	Who are the members of the team which will actuate our strategic directions?

JUNE 8, 2001

Team Leadership	How will we claim our victory?
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Throughout the strategic planning process we followed the ICA Canada working assumptions:

"Everyone Is Working Towards Consensus"

Everyone has wisdom.

We need everyone's wisdom for the wisest result.

There are no wrong answers.

The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.
Everyone will hear others and be heard.

By October 2001 the **TEAM** opened the new centre and virtually doubled its membership. Congratulations everyone, the outcome you produced is a gift to all of us forever. ☺

*Process facilitators
Corrine Lowen and
Nathen Bernshaw*



The Birth of Our Yoga Centre

by Corrine Lowen

The courtship began in the mid 1970's when Shirley Daventry French, by a fortuitous accident ended up in a yoga class at the YMCA. Her ballet class had been unexpectedly canceled. Yoga filled the void.

From this beginning, a small nucleus of students began to grow. Before long a community began to take root. The community formalized its existence with the incorporation of the Victoria Yoga Centre Society (VYCS) in 1978. A plan to house this new society in a building of its own was conceived. The very long and fruitful period of gestation began.

A physical womb was provided by Victoria YMCA. Spiritually and in practice, the community grew and flourished under Shirley's direction. A core of dedicated teachers honed their art and in turn inspired an ever growing body of grateful students. During the following years the Victoria Yoga Centre produced this newsletter, held numerous workshops, expanded class

offerings and hosted a visit from Mr. Iyengar himself. Other well regarded Iyengar teachers from around the world have also come to share their knowledge with us. Many times in those years, serious discussions took place about opening our own space.

In the 23 years since the Victoria Yoga Centre Society was officially formed, the practice of yoga in the Iyengar tradition has grown and thrived right across the country. During his visit to Toronto for the Canadian Iyengar Teacher's Conference in 1993, Mr. Iyengar expressed his desire for Canadian teachers to begin to implement the process of teacher certification. The mere thought of the amount of work required to set this project up was a daunting one to the senior Canadian teachers who heard Mr. Iyengar's words.

This process would require much effort from everyone, including our core group of teachers from Victoria. A diversity of opinions within the group presented obstacles, and made for difficult decision making. Help was required. A trained facilitator from ICA Canada recommended by Val Paape, came on board to assist with the process.

Like the magic that yoga works upon the body, the principles of group interaction that are practiced in the ICA's facilitated workshop method also work magic upon people. The facilitator's work allowed the the new National Association to access the diverse wisdom of the group in a constructive way. The process was reinvigorated.

Marlene Mahwhinney from Toronto and Val Paape from Winnipeg were so impressed with the results of the ICA facilitators help, they undertook the training themselves. Marlene used her training to help with the Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers Association AGM on Salt Spring Island where the model for teacher certification in Canada was finalized.

After experiencing the effects of working this way, our own Leslie Hogya arranged to have Bill Staples from ICA Canada come to Victoria. He taught the Victoria Yoga Centre Board and interested Yoga Centre members (among them was Nathen Bernshaw), the focused conversation and workshop methods. It was

1998 and the VYCS was still comfortably gestating in the womb of the Yoga Lounge at the local YMCA. The baby was getting bigger and bigger, and multiples of yogis were emerging from the lounge. The subject of our own center rose and receded, rose and receded. A healthy baby is born fully formed when it is good and ready, and not before it is ready. The birth of our own centre was still waiting.

By January of 2001, the first pangs of true labour were felt. By then Nathen Bernshaw had traveled to eastern point of the country many times to further the facilitation training he began with the Yoga Centre workshop. He had practiced his art in his work with other organizations, and found the method to be very effective. He was ready and willing to help guide our center through the birthing process.

The labour lasted for almost nine months. During that time a group of Yoga Centre members came together, made a commitment to a goal and realized that goal though a series of workshops and meetings that used the facilitated planning process. It was amazing to those of us who were directly involved, and perhaps even more so to those who were not. Was it already June when we set a timeline that would have us operating in a new space by September 1st? Of 2001!!? Less than 3 months to go, and the location team had just begun to scout out possible locations. In the weeks that followed some wondered if this was a slightly unrealistic, perhaps even nutty and unattainable ideal.

Yet, the wisdom of the group decided that September 1st was our goal. All were agreed, and all were committed (to seeing it though). During this time I learned to *trust* the wisdom of the group. I learned to see how the magic of consensus building draws out this wisdom in a whole that is truly greater than the sum of its parts. There *was* wisdom in that crazy decision to make it all happen, (finally after all these years) in less than 3 months. The baby was fully formed, ready for the birthing process. The delivery team was ready for the final push.

Now, at the beginning of 2002, the third term of classes in our new home is about to begin. It was a lovely birth, the baby is healthy, well loved and cared

for by the many volunteers and members who have donated, time, resources and good wishes.

What is the magic that coached us through this labour? The principles of group facilitation closely resemble the ethical disciplines of yoga. Respect, compassion, and a sequence to the practice. All our work followed an order. First we laid a foundation then built upon it. The process was magical, and brought us through the sequences we needed to practice to achieve our goal. Of course, none of this would have happened at all were it not for the strong community, its long history, and the numerous dedicated individuals who devoted so much to realizing our dream. We are all a part of this birth.

We owe much gratitude for the life of our centre particularly to Shirley Daventry French and to Leslie Hogya. Never wavering in their commitment they inspired, encouraged, cajoled and sometimes applied a little push to each of us to ensure that this baby would be born. Grandmother and Mother of all of our work, we salute your dedication, your faith. You continue to inspire us all. ☺

Yoga Props

For sale during office hours
9 am -12:30 pm Monday to Saturday
at the Victoria Yoga Centre

Wooden Blocks \$20 each
Belts \$10
Long Belts \$15
Sticky Mats \$37.50

Prices not including PST and GST
More props available soon
Some books also for sale



THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

is pleased to announce two

IYENGAR YOGA TEACHER TRAINING INTENSIVES

July 15 to 20, 2002

with Leslie Hogya, Ann Kilbertus, Linda Benn, Marlene Miller

This six-day intensive will focus on preparing teachers for assessment in Iyengar Yoga at Introductory Level 1 or 2. If space is available and with the teachers' permission, students may also attend to enjoy a week of yoga. Leslie, Ann and Linda are experienced teachers certified at the Intermediate Level through the Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers' Association. They are all involved in teacher training in Victoria and several rural British Columbia communities.

August 19 to 23, 2002

with Shirley Daventry French

This course is for certified Iyengar Yoga teachers who wish to prepare for assessment at Junior Intermediate Level 1, 2 or 3. Shirley is a long-time student of B.K.S. Iyengar who has awarded her a senior teaching credential. She has been teaching Yoga for thirty years and is one of North America's most experienced teachers in the Iyengar tradition. Shirley has been training teachers in Victoria and throughout Canada for many years.

- * In both Intensives there will be daily classes in asana and pranayama, yoga philosophy and the art and science of teaching.
- * As in previous years, Iyengar Yoga teachers and experienced students from other countries are also invited to attend.

Fees: \$475.00 + 7% GST

To receive the application and registration forms, please contact:
Victoria Yoga Centre, 202- 919 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C. V8V 3K3
Telephone: 250-386-9642
or Ann: 250-598-0976 Linda: 250-478-0757
Email: Linda: lbenn@islandnet.com or Ann: stpatrick@entirety.ca

Finding The Centre

by Amanda Mills

- Year:** 2001
Mandate: Find our yoga centre
How: By consensus among members of the Victoria Yoga Centre Society
Deadline: By September, 2001
Challenge: How to locate, view, select, negotiate, finalize real estate decisions by a committee/community process?

From our Strategic Planning workshops in January 2001 through June 2001, the determination and conviction were apparent that we did indeed want our own yoga centre, that we have the initial financial resources to fund such a centre, that we have a vision of what it should be in terms of metaphysical, philosophical and physical terms, and that we have lots of eager members to work toward "finding the centre".

Finding the centre is not a new idea. From the most recent newsletter, we know that as early as 1981 (and probably earlier), Shirley was exploring the question "Where is the Victoria Yoga Centre?"

Twenty years later, we were embarking on the daunting task of actually securing our new centre. Through May, June and July, a core group of searchers - Leslie Hogya, Linda Benn, Rosemary Barritt and myself - would meet at various addresses in the city. We worked with the most patient commercial real estate agent, Gail Reaney of Colliers International. The search pattern became familiar: a time would be set to meet at a particular address, the 'building team' and available VYC members would gather and thoroughly walk-through the premises. Much time was spent in testing acoustics for resonance and echo, spreading arms and reaching upward for ceiling height tests, locating the washrooms, discussing the available parking facilities and Shirley's ease in finding a nearby space, approving or disapproving the safety of a location for night classes, and of course, can we afford it?

We saw two churches, a squash club, an architect's offices, a non-profit organization's offices, empty space

on Meares St., Fan Tan Alley offices, large space near Royal Athletic Park and, finally, 919 Fort St. All potential yoga centres were put through the various rigorous tests. And time was passing, September was getting closer.

My experience in real estate equipped me with the knowledge that decisions inevitably must be made quickly and decisively, and with one recognized voice in the transaction. And we were a consensus community of enthusiasts! How is it possible to find the place, negotiate the terms, sign the lease and get moved in by early September?

Well, thank goodness for Doug Hart's dream (he actually dreamt about our new centre - courtyard and all!) brick walls and workable space! 919 Fort St. was available and just waiting for our inspection!

Of course, the myriad details of - satisfying the City of Victoria Inspections, Fire and Zoning Departments' requirements, preparing the floor for yoga practice, being able to also finance additional space (now Studio B), organizing work crews to prepare the centre for opening, and finally, believing ourselves (sic, the Victoria Yoga Centre Society) able to attract sufficient students to guarantee the payment of our new overheads - all finally lead to a signing of a three year lease. After we got possession at the end of August, then a hectic month of preparing the centre - painting walls, having the floors levelled, construction of shelving units, sewing of cushions and curtains, semi-destroying chairs and filing them, cleaning, cleaning, and still ongoing customizing of the space. All with the help of many dedicated volunteers.

Just look up, way up, above the Blue Fox, and there is our sign! VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE. We are there, our rooms bustle with life and students, we have room to grow, and we are filling the calendar with classes and workshops, all days of the week, throughout the year.

I salute everyone who worked so hard to get us our address - 919 Fort St. ☺

Donors and Volunteers Thank You!

by Leslie Hogya

Thank you to our donors that helped open our new centre!

Close to \$7000.00 has been raised so far.

And it is not too late. We need a permanent floor!

Tadasana (Up to \$200):

Alison Reeve
Donna Guftason
Karen Fletcher
Julie Stauffer
Keith and Mignon Lundmark
Ann Kilbertus
Kevin Aldous

Hilda Pezzaro
Sheila Howard
Noreen Braiden
Shirley Daventry French
Setty Shobha
Kathryn Wiggins
Carole Miller

Jerrilyn Wass
Giles Bixler and Amanda Mills
Michael and Judith Monroe
North Island Teachers Group
Robin Cantor
Glenda Hingley
Rosemary Short

Sirsasana (\$200 and over):

Weis Pukesh
Betty McNaughton
Doug Hart
Drew Yallop

Maggi Feehan
Rob Walker
Wendy Boyer
Thomas Knutson
William Hall and Kelly Mager

Jim and Sue Riddell
Nancy Green
Leslie Hogya
Derek French

In Kind (Donations of specialized services, or goods):

Rachele Rey (web page)
Bruce Cox
Lauren Cox
Stephanie Clark
Prince George Teachers Group
Jane Francis Designs
Greg Johnson
Debra Johnson
J and R Westside Contractors
Greg Sly
Mabee Realty Appraisers

Shirley Daventry French
Linda Benn
Spicejammer Restaurant
Rosemary Barritt
Chris Lea
Drew Yallop
Nina Zak
Nancy Searing
Martha Chick
Glenda Hingley

Jim and Sue Riddell
Connie Barker
Britta Poisson
Nathen Bernshaw
Corrine Lowen
Sandra Harper
Bev Ripley
Flo Simpson
Slipstream Adventures
Brooks Hogya
Haute Cuisine

The following businesses have done excellent work for us:

Room by Room (deep cleaning)
Gillespie Electric
Price's Locks and Safe
Spicejammer Restaurant
Rada Resurfacing
(floor repair and skim coat)

Island Blue Print (copying)
Monk's Office Supply (copying and
equipment)
J and R Westside
(finishing repairs to
the space)

Collier's International
(finding our space)
Bank of Montreal
Jane Francis Designs (brochure)
Jeune Bros. (signage)

Volunteers:

Thank you, thank you, thank you to everyone who helped the yoga centre come into its own space! I hesitate to name names, because I might leave someone out. Every time I go over this list, I think of someone else. One person who spent dozens of hours working almost got left off the list. This might be a compliment. If your name does not appear where it should, it is perhaps because you worked unobtrusively, with quiet humility. Thank you all for jobs done both large and small. If your name should be on this list, please forgive the oversight and know we appreciate all of your efforts.

Board of Directors
Linda Benn
Martha Chick
James Rischmiller
Ted Mather
Rosemary Barritt
Wies Pukesh
Connie Barker
Leslie Hogya
Doug Hart
Amanda Mills
Britta Poisson
Drew Yallop
Carolyn Taylor
Melissa Worth
Gwynneth Powell

Karen Coleman
Ty Chandler
Kevin Aldous
Dave Skillings
Amy Rutherford
Betty McNaughton
Wendy Boyer
Elizabeth Bannister
Janine Beckner
Nathen Bernshaw
Melina Boucher
Robin Cantor
Lauren Cox
Christine Dimofski
Veronica Dimofski
Maggi Feehan

Derek French
Shirley Daventry French
Sandra Harper
Hillary Ann Higgins
Glenda Hingley
Karin Holtkamp
Debra Johnson
Ann Kilbertus
Douglas Frazier
Chris Lea
Caren Liedtke
Neil McKinlay
Corrine Lowen
Marlene Miller
Carole Miller
Li Milne

John
Nancy Poole
Rachelle Ray
Jennifer Rischmiller
Keiko Alkire
Greg Sly
Sue Riddell
Jim Riddell
Caroline Sophonow
Joan Wade
Jerrilyn Wass
Kelly Dodds
Orleen McClulich
Shannon Mc Murchie
Sarah Tomlinson
Anna Rasmussen
Doug Patterson



Victoria Yoga Centre Society

Annual General Meeting

Friday January 18, 2002

6:30 pm Meeting

Reports of Committees

Election of Board of Directors

6:50 pm Potluck Supper

Bring food to share

Your own plate/cutlery

Everyone welcome

Come and enjoy our new space

202-919 Fort Street

(250) 386 YOGA



Victoria Yoga Centre Society

Applications for Board of Directors

Would you like to serve on the Board of Directors?

You need to be able to attend monthly meetings.

Do you attend classes at the centre? Have you volunteered for the centre? Do you have energy and enthusiasm for helping the centre?

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

What classes are you attending? How long have you been attending class? What volunteer jobs have you done for the centre? Why do you want to serve on the board?

Please submit to Leslie Hogya at the Yoga Centre.

The Joy of Service

by Martha Chick

My role as volunteer coordinator began at one of our facilitated community meeting / workshops. We were asked to form into groups and a call for team leaders was made. Four of us stepped tentatively up to the plate. I think we were all having a hard time with the title 'Team Leader' and therefore chose instead to be called 'Those Who Report To Leslie'— it just seemed a little less overwhelming that way! Even so. I have to admit to having moments of anxiety about my ability to be a leader of a group, and to find people who would be willing to volunteer their valuable time!

I believe the inner strength I drew on to take on the role as leader came from my desire to help create a space for our teachers to teach and for the Iyengar Yoga community to unite and grow stronger. I'd like to think that I inspired my team to feel the same way. As far as being concerned about finding people to volunteer, so far I have been overwhelmed by people's willingness to help in any way possible. If there is a job to be done, there are people standing by to help. I have belonged to other volunteer organizations and I've never encountered such enthusiasm.

My awesome team included Doug Hart, Betty McNaughton, Nancy Searing and Rosemary Barritt. One exercise that we worked on was titled 'Claiming the Team's Victory'. Our team victory statement was: "Creating a resource base that will support the Victoria Yoga Centre to allow continual spiritual growth". Our slogan was: "A strong foundation of people creates a community in which we can work towards spiritual growth through the practice of Iyengar Yoga". I believe that the work spent on creating these two statements helped to solidify our goals.

If you would like to volunteer in any way, please e-mail me at martha.chick@shaw.ca or leave a message at the front desk!

Finally, I would like to give special thanks to Nathan Bernshaw and Corrine Lowen who gently lead us through this sometimes difficult process. ☺

Trials and Tribulations

by Leslie Hoya

In the spring and summer, we were searching for buildings. There was seemingly lots to look at. But few buildings that had the right zoning. We found a really great spot on North Park. There was room for two large studios, offices, there were large washrooms. There was even some parking. We were sure this would be ok because it had been a business college. But again, the city said area wasn't zoned for what we wanted.

I had to go to Halifax in June and nothing happened while I was gone, and it occurred to me that nothing would happen unless I pushed it though. I looked at my calendar and realized we had to move quickly. I had a big family wedding coming up and knew I would not have time to work on anything for another period of time. September was getting closer. By chance, I went into 919 Fort St. I said no because of its proximity to the Y. However, the courtyard was so appealing and we thought the zoning would work. However, again the city said we had to get approval for right to assemble. And change of use. The inspector came and said we couldn't use it because there was only one fire exit. This was a real low point.

It was becoming obvious that anything we looked at was going to be the same problem unless by some miracle we found a dance studio that was empty. The same building inspector would have to give the approval for no matter which space we looked at. Should we move to neighboring municipality? Since so many of our students came from downtown, this didn't seem like a good idea. There was pressure also knowing we had planned Shirley's birthday surprise for the first week in September. The newsletter committee did a fantastic job of organizing this – and of not asking me to do anything to prepare for it. But I asked Neil, 'Don't you want to know where you might be holding this event? As of now we have no place!'

Back to 919 Fort. The city told us to consult an architect, which we did. While he was there we happened to find out there was a small empty office



Leslie receives her multi-tasking safety equipment.

attached to the suite in question. Gail, our realtor had the key. We could go through a wall and have not only a fire exit, but perhaps a place for a library. It turned out to be a perfect second studio. But again, we didn't know if the wall could be pierced—we had to get further approval, not only from the city, but the landlord. This would increase the rent. Could we afford it? Back and forth and around we went between the city, the realtor, the landlord, the architect. Tick tock.

Another low point was when we realized all this negotiation wasn't going to get finished in time to open for September. Should we rent a place for one night for Shirley's party? Should we rent a hall for the month and run some classes? Then Neil and Caren's meditation group came to the rescue. The Shambala Centre was willing to let us sublet their space and one of the times available was Monday nights. What a relief that was. Some of the pressure was off and the party could proceed. Then we got the call, we could go ahead with 919 Fort St. We had a month to prepare for classes in September. We got the keys!

We signed the lease, but still didn't have an occupancy permit. We couldn't get the permit until the work was done and inspected. So we began to work, and started draining the bank account of all that hard earned money. A few dollars from each book and mat sold over many years, profits from workshops. We still had

to wait until all the work was done to get our permit.

The floor problem loomed very soon. The carpets were ripped out by the landlord. And the flooring expert arrived and said we couldn't lay the tile we had bought. The floor required a skim coat to prepare it for any type of final floor.

The people we hired to do the skim coat were willing to seal this temporary floor while we regrouped and found out what we could do, what we could afford and what we wanted. But this step would take our whole flooring budget.

Delays plagued us. The dry wall wasn't finished. The kitchen sink was standing in the middle of the floor. The wires were hanging from the ceiling. The electrician couldn't work until the floor was cured. The days were going by. People would be showing up for classes in ten days, nine days, eight days...

Then a flurry of activity began. Amanda Mills called all the trades people, got them to commit to days and times. Greg Johnson supplied the carpenters, the dry wallers, the plumber at cost. Everyday, one more thing got done. The paint was drying. The phone was ringing. The props began to arrive. We had a huge work party seemingly minutes before the first class. The backs of chairs were bashed out and finished, the prop shelf went up and got filled. Cushions and curtains appeared. The city said our work permits were ok, but what about the electrical inspection!!? This is the day before the long weekend, classes would begin the day after. But it was on the day to begin, we opened the doors cautiously, we taught a class, the approval came. I collapsed in relief. We could occupy our space. The doors opened wider. More students appeared. We went to the bank and deposited money!

The work continues. The floor is temporary, there is still no rope wall as the old brick is not ideal to work on and we must do some more research on that. Everyday there is something—a check bounced, the garbage is not emptied, a florescent light is flickering, the floor is wet, the ceiling tile is stained, there aren't enough bolsters, the floor is cold, the small studio has a sound problem. Yikes! We need to finish the schedule for next term! There's no one to teach this class! The

windows are drafty, and the sink is plugged!

But there are students on the phone, there are teachers gathered in the library, there are people sitting in the tiny change room tucking their shoes away before class. The sound of Om spills into the lobby... ☯

Yoga Space

Private classes, available upon request.
If you would like a private class, speak to your teacher to make arrangements.

Short Workshops at the Victoria Yoga Centre

New Year's Day Practice
with James Currie-Johnson

Tuesday, January 1
11:00 am – 1:00 pm

Celebrate 2002 with a fresh start to your yoga practice. Come to the Yoga Centre on New Year's Day to practice classical yoga postures.



Open Shoulders, Open Armpits, Open Chest
with Wies Pukesh

Saturday, February 2
12:00 pm – 2:00 pm

This workshop will focus on the shoulder girdle and how yoga can help to lighten the load on your shoulders. This practice will free up your breathing and generally increase your energy and well-being.

Celebrate the Volunteers!

with Leslie Hogya

Friday, January 4

5:30 pm – 7:00 pm

In gratitude of all the work done by volunteers, without whom we would not be practicing in our new centre! All volunteers welcome.

Practice at 5:30 pm, followed by refreshments and conversation.

Forward Bends with Linda Benn

Saturday, January 19

12:00 pm – 3:00 pm

The standing and seated forward bends will be practiced in order to explore the challenges and releases that can be presented by these poses.

The thoughtful practice of these asanas can contribute to a generalized quieting and cooling of the body and mind.

Asana From the Base with Sheri Berkowitz

Sunday, February 24

1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Intention is the base of our practice. As Prashant Iyengar says, "Why do we do a posture? The 'how' depends on the 'why'." What came before? What will come next? Are we doing backbends, forward bends, preparation for pranayama? These aspects define the technique. This workshop will explore how our intention influences our asanas.

Cost for workshops is:

2 hours: \$30 + GST members
\$35 + GST non-members
3 hours: \$45 + GST members
\$50 + GST non-members

The Victoria Yoga Centre

202-919 Fort Street

250 386 YOGA

India Returned: A Workshop Review

by Jim and Sue Riddell

What an exciting month October 2001 was for members of the

Victoria Yoga Center and members of the community as well. We not only opened our new center on Fort Street but also had some excellent workshops including Ty Chandler's "India Returned". The workshop was full and Studio A was cozy and warm with many enthusiastic students and friends from all over Victoria and the peninsula attending.

We were warmly welcomed by Ty and did the Invocation to Patanjali by call and response, the Oms reverberating loud and long in our new setting. What a great way to start!

Ty got us up and moving towards our inner centre in *Tadasana*, the Mountain pose. Wanting us to feel the heat of India for ourselves she then took us into *Utthita Trikonasana* and then came *Utthita Parsvakonasana* and the education of our little toes, lifting them up and planting them down firmly as our anchor. "Straighten

that elbow, straighter than ever before," was another helpful hint. Then on to the finer points of *Virabhadrasana I and II*. With "Lift those arms, higher!" and "Five more minutes - why are you laughing?" reverberating in our ears, the windows began to fog - a sure sign we were giving it our all.

After the standing poses we moved on to *Adho Mukha*

Svanasana Ty's "Rock & Roll" version of *Padangustha Danurasana*, *Paschimottanasana*, *Janu Sirsasana*, *Eka Pada Setu Bandha*, *Salamba Sarvangasana*, and finally, finishing with *Savasana*.



"Rock & Roll" in *Padangustha Danarasana*

Interspersed throughout the practice were inspiring quotes from instructions given at the Institute in Pune:

From Prashant:

"Take a dip in the lake of consciousness"

"Periscopically watch the breath, watch it without it knowing it is being watched"

"Aspiring to do a pose is stealing (*asteya*) and hoarding (*aparigraha*). The yogi comes to practice neutral – the yogi knows all things are coming."

From Geeta

"Knots in the belly are formed by holding/gripping. Nothing is ours, we have ownership of nothing."

"Raise the sternum, lift the mind. When the chest is closed, the mind is roaming. When the chest is lifted, the mind is focused."

"We breathe like coming to the Institute the first time – timid, unsure. This is how we breathe at first. Then become confident, invite the guest in, make room, space for the guest."

"When the teeth are hard, the mind is active. Look at a tiger, when it is hungry, ready for food it bares its teeth. When the mind is hungry, the teeth become tense."

"Alignment of the body must come from alignment of the mind."

"Where your awareness is, your vital energy is."

From Ty and Anton:

"Geeta is like an immaculate house cleaner and when all is clean Prashant is like opening the windows letting the fresh air in."

Receiving these gems while in the asanas brings joy to the heart and soul, while at the same time giving the feeling of actually being at the Institute in India. Thank you Ty for sharing these with us.

Next came a wonderful Indian potluck supper. The dishes were many and varied, giving the SpiceJammer

Restaurant some competition. While we ate we enjoyed the showing of Ty's slides from India. Sipping chamomile tea (some of us in various reclined positions), we were treated to wonderful images of the moon, mountains and the Taj Mahal along with the reality of India with its many faces, sights, sounds and smells. Afterwards, many comments were made on the unique perspectives of the shots, photography appearing to be another of Ty's talents. Many thanks from us all, you outdid yourself again.

Erich Schiffmann says in his book *Yoga, The Spirit and Practice of Moving into Stillness*, "the purpose of yoga is to facilitate the profound inner relaxation that accompanies fearlessness. The release from fear is what finally precipitates the full flowering of love." We love you Ty. ☺

Yoga Library



The Victoria Yoga Centre has a library. It can be used at any time the Centre is open to sit quietly and look at books. Occasionally it will be closed for meetings. Books can be checked out using a simple self-serve system. Follow the directions in the booklet on top of the bookcase.

Borrowing is for Yoga Centre members only. Non-members may feel free to browse. Anyone can become a member by paying \$30 and filling out a membership form.

Please return borrowed materials promptly. Thanks to Maggi Feehan who kept the library in her home for many years.

Julie Gudmestad's Workshop

by Linda Benn

The new Victoria Yoga Centre hosted our first out-of-town workshop with Julie Gudmestad in October. Amongst those attending were visitors from Alberta and San Francisco. Julie wove her knowledge of anatomy into a weekend sequence of ever more challenging asanas. On Friday evening, some of the standing poses were carefully aligned on the floor. Saturday was balancings and forward bends, while on Sunday we explored backbendings. The logical sequencing and precise repetition of important points was a good lesson in clarity and discipline. This was balanced by her delightful sense of humour.



Julie gets *Paripurna Navasana* up and afloat.

Home

by Shannon McMurchy

Ever since I can remember I have relied heavily on my physical experience for a sense of place and purpose in the world. From a childhood spent running through years of neighbours' yards, back alleys, and northern Alberta brush, to my eventual path as a dancer and choreographer, physicality has been my entry into presence – into wonder at, and commitment to, being

alive. Certainly through my study of dance and martial disciplines, of mind-body centering and experiential anatomy, I knew of a cellular intelligence, of the inter-relationship of mind and body. And I have always had a very physical sense of the spiritual. The container for all these disparate inklings, however, remained illusive, the spiritual aspect largely unarticulated. Perhaps what kept me contentedly vague about my own spirituality was that it seemed no one talked enough about the body, other than to deny it. No one articulated *that feeling*, so specific and yet so hard to define. The transcendent. Outside the field of space and time, certainly beyond words.

Enter Victoria, a particular time-and-space bubble where I found something that at last gave my experience philosophical shape, a grounding of spiritual experience in the body, both metaphorically and practically. Yes, I found yoga.

I am in Victoria by grace of a strange interruption of what I thought I was doing with, and where I thought I was going in, my life. Taken quite by surprise by a glacially slow immigration process, my original three week visit with my aging mother has, well, stretched somewhat - I have been here now seven months waiting to join my husband in San Francisco. I began practising yoga simply to deal with time, to maintain a sense of being in my body, and to complement my running habit. And somehow it seems I fell, quite completely, into the depths of serious yogic pursuits: a daily practise, study of

Patanjali's Yoga Sutras and of everything I could find by Mr. B.K.S. Iyengar. I took classes at the 'Y' during the summer, and then fall brought the new and beautiful centre and the opportunity to study under the mastery of Shirley Davenport French.

To be clear, I had *done* yoga before, even regularly. But it seems that I had not been ready to receive its gift in full. For all the lip service paid to wanting change in my life, I was not actually ready for freedom. It sounds New Age-y, I know, but this is how I see the discipline of yoga, as an invitation to choose how and to what end we use our minds and our

bodies. We of the West are not raised with a sense of choice regarding what passes for natural human behavior and normal psychology. Nor do I think we are given a sense of our own potential as spiritual beings. Yoga gives us all of this, and with it the understanding that this is at once a liberating choice and also our duty. We can choose to think and act as the divine beings we are and our divinity in fact demands this of us.

This interlude in my life could well have been a disaster, but yoga has given meaning to my time here, and has even strengthened the connection between

myself and my husband (also a yogi) in spite of our prolonged separation. I have also found, in the Victoria Yoga Centre Society, a community of warm, generous, and welcoming individuals that, to me, positively shine in their humble and honest commitment to yoga. I have been challenged and inspired during this bizarre and extended p-a-u-s-e in my life, and for all of the frustration, I continue to feel thankful - for the gifts of yoga and human community, and for the opportunity to share *your* joy at finally coming Home.

Namaste Victoria. ☉

To My Little Ones A Prayer For Ishvara Pranidana

by Jim and Sue Riddell

As I gaze upon your peaceful faces
In perfect tranquil repose
My heart aches knowing that this serenity
Is but a fleeting moment.

For I know
You will struggle
And you will hurt
And you will doubt the truths that I have given you.

So I pray
That when all your strength and resources
Have run dry
That you will turn to that greater power
So that bhakti can begin
Empty your minds of personal gratification
And be filled with Divine Love.

As I watch your beautiful little bodies grow
I pray that your eager acts of kindness
And consideration
Will not be for a colorful sticker
Or a sweet treat
Or even for me.
But for that Universal Goodness
And that you bow down your wee heads
Not in a dazed or docile nod
But with true devotion
And the faith that
Into this surrender
Suffuses goodness and truth
And in place of despair
Springs clarity and light
That will shine within you
As the little stars that you are.



Radha Yoga Centre

Kundalini Yoga

Kundalini yoga is the path of conscious cooperation with the evolutionary forces inherent in all of us. Working with Swami Radha's method, we develop self-awareness, discovering the workings of our imagination, self-image, emotions, heart, will. With the freedom that comes from self-understanding, we discover our own source of inner power. This is a safe and practical way to approach the serpent power of Kundalini.

Dream Yoga

Many spiritual teachers say our unconscious knows the answers and our dreams are trying to tell us what they are. Learn how to decipher your personal dream symbols and how to read the messages of your dreams.

Hidden Language Hatha Yoga

Swami Radha's gentle, profound approach incorporates symbolism and reflection, leading to intuitive awareness of the spiritual level of Hatha Yoga. Stretching both the body and mind, Hidden Language reveals deeper meanings of the hatha poses. The focus is on expanding awareness of ourselves at every step.

Class Schedule for Winter Term

Classes start week of January 21

Basic Hatha Yoga

Fee: \$80 for 10 weeks

Monday 7:30 - 9:00 pm

Wednesday 5:30 - 7:00 pm

Thursday 7:30 - 9:00 pm

Hidden Language

Hatha

Fee: \$100 for 10 weeks

Monday 5:30 - 7:00 pm

Wednesday 7:30 - 9:00 pm

Thursday 10:00 - 11:30 am

Kundalini Yoga

Fee: \$110 for 10 weeks

Power of Choice

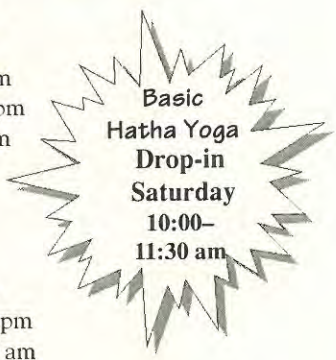
Overview of Kundalini System

Tuesday 7:30-9:30 pm

Dreams

Fee: \$110 for 10 weeks

Wednesday 10:00 - Noon



**Basic
Hatha Yoga
Drop-in
Saturday
10:00-
11:30 am**

Workshops Schedule for the Winter Term

Relaxation Workshop

Sunday, February 10 11:00 am - 3:00 pm

Learn relaxation techniques for life's stressful occasions. Practise yoga's ancient, classical relaxation pose, and other techniques you can use at work, at home, even waiting for a bus.

Call to register

Fee: \$30

Special Intro to Hidden Language

Saturday, February 16 10:00 am - Noon

Interested in taking your Hatha Yoga practice a step further? Drop in for an introduction to Swami Radha's reflective approach to the classical poses.

Fee: \$8.00

Radha House Victoria • 1500 Shasta Place (off St. Charles, south of Fort) • 250-595-0177

YOGA CALENDAR

JANUARY 2002

- 1 New Year's Day Practice
with James Currie-Johnson
- 4 Celebrate the Volunteers
practice with Leslie Hogya
- 11-13 Workshop with Mahyar Raz
- 18 AGM
- 19 Forward Bends with Linda Benn
- 26 Teachers' Meeting

MARCH 2002

- 2 Yoga Fore Golf with Marlene Miller
- 15-17 Inspirations From India with Leslie
Hogya, Ann Kilbertus, Ty Chandler
- 23 Teachers' Meeting

APRIL 2002

- 19-22 Junior Intermediate Assessment
in Victoria
- 27 Teachers' Meeting

FEBRUARY 2002

- 2 Open Shoulders, Open Armpits,
Open Chests with Wies Pukesh
- 8 Friday Night Gathering
Mountaineering as Yoga
with Gil Parker
- 15 Friday Night Video
- 23 Teachers' Meeting
- 24 Asana From the Base
with Sheri Berkowitz

MAY 2002

- 17 Big, Big Practice
- 25 Teachers' Meeting

JUNE 2002

- 7-9 Salt Spring Retreat
with Shirley Daventry French
- 14-17 Introductory Assessment in Saskatoon
- 22 Teachers' Meeting
- 15-20 Teacher Training Intensive

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION FORM:

Please complete this form and send it with your cheque or money order to the Victoria Yoga Centre Society,
c/o Constance Barker, 202-919 Fort Street, Victoria BC V8V 3K3

Membership/Subscription fee is \$30 and renewable each January

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____ Country: _____ Phone: _____

☐ Do not mail me my newsletter during sessions, I'll pick one up at my class.

☐ Receipt Required.

VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

NEWSLETTER



March/April 2002

Please Subscribe





The VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
#202, 919 Fort St.

Program of Classes in the Iyengar Approach to Yoga

Term 4: March 4 – April 19, 2002

Note: Regularly scheduled classes March 29 - April 1 will be suspended. There will be a class break April 20-28. Interim classes will be offered.
Cancellation Policy: Refunds less \$10.00 will be given only in the case of a family emergency.

Level 1

Day	Time	Instructor
Mon.*	7:30 - 9:00pm	Ann Kilbertus
Mon.	7:30 - 9:00pm	James Currie-Johnson
Tues.**	10:30 - 12:00pm	Leslie Hogya
Tues.	7:30 - 9:00pm	Ty Chandler, Corrine Lowen
Wed.	9:00 - 10:30am	Ty Chandler
Wed.	6:15 - 7:45pm	Ty Chandler
Wed.	7:45 - 9:15pm	Gwynneth Powell
Thurs.	8:30 - 10:00am	Linda Benn
Thurs.	4:30 - 6:00pm	Jo Anna Hope
Fri.	10:30 - 12:00pm	Linda Benn
Fri.	5:00 - 6:30 pm	Gwynneth Powell
Sat.	9:00 - 10:00am	Corrine Lowen
Sun.	10:30 - 12:00pm	Ty Chandler

*This class will run/be priced for two terms.

** Gentle Level 1

Level 2

Day	Time	Instructor
Tues.	5:00 - 6:30pm	Wies Pukesh
Wed.	6:00 - 7:30pm	Gwynneth Powell
Fri.	9:00 - 10:30am	Linda Benn
Sat.	9:00 - 11:00am	Marlene Miller
Sun.	9:00 - 10:30am	Ty Chandler

Level 2/3

Day	Time	Instructor
Mon.	10:30 - 12:00pm	Lauren Cox
Tues.	5:30 - 7:15pm	Leslie Hogya

Level 3

Day	Time	Instructor
Thurs.	10:00 - 12:00pm	Shirley Daventry French & Linda Benn
Thurs.	6:00 - 8:00pm	Ann Kilbertus, Leslie Hogya

Level 4

Day	Time	Instructor
Mon.	5:15 - 7:15pm	Shirley Daventry French

Drop-In

Day	Time	Instructor
Tues.	12:00 - 1:00pm	Chris Dimofski
Wed.	12:00 - 1:00pm	Leslie Hogya
Thurs.	12:00 - 1:00pm	Lauren Cox
Fri.	12:00 - 1:00pm	Ty Chandler

Pranayama

Thurs	7:00 - 8:00am	Shirley Daventry French
Mon.	4:00 - 5:00pm	Leslie Hogya, 4 weeks

Special Needs

Wed.	4:30 - 6:00pm	Ann Kilbertus, Leslie Hogya
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Back Care

Mon.	4:00 - 5:15pm	Linda Benn
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55 + Better

Wed.	10:30 - 12:00pm	Leslie Hogya
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Family Yoga

Wed.	3:30 - 4:30pm	Lauren Cox
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Pre-Natal

Thurs.	8:30 - 10:00am	Robin Cantor
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Restorative

Thurs.	5:30 - 7:00pm	Wendy Boyer
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The VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE #202, 919 Fort St. 386-YOGA (9642)

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The VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY is a non-profit society incorporated under the Societies' Act of the Province of British Columbia, whose purpose is "to encourage the physical, mental, and spiritual growth of its members and other interested persons of the society at large by the study and discipline of Yoga." The Society owes its inspiration to Swami Sivananda Radha and Mr. B.K.S. Iyengar.

The Society Newsletter is published regularly, providing current information on events concerning yoga in the Victoria area and the Yasodhara Ashram. Published by the VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY.

Anyone wishing to contribute articles, photographs, drawings, information or suggestions may contact the

Victoria Yoga Centre Newsletter:
202 - 919 Fort Street
Victoria BC V8V 3K3

For more information on Victoria Yoga Centre activities and events, please call 386-YOGA or visit our website:
www.victoriaiyengaryoga.com

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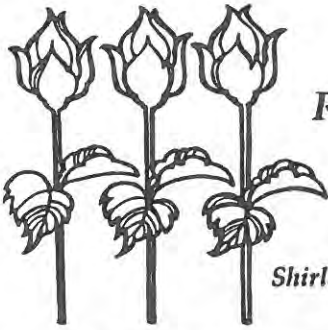
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Reflections

by
Shirley Daventry French

Dear Readers, as this issue goes to print, Shirley Daventry French is in Pune, India studying with her teacher, Mr. Iyengar, his daughter Geeta and son Prashant. In the absence of her regular column here, the archives have been searched to bring forth this from our June 1988 issue.



I have been writing regularly for this newsletter for six and a half years, a different column each month, yet when you look at them they are all variations on a few themes:

- respect the teachings
- acknowledge your teacher
- express gratitude
- practice what you have been given
- pass on what you have understood
- develop your own potential
- use your individual talents for the good of the whole
- involve yourself in the work

Perhaps, instead of trying to come up with fresh ideas, we should simply reprint these phrases again and again so they can be read and reread until they have been absorbed. Writing them down would be a form of

Likhita Japa, reading them, Mantra or Japa Yoga. Who would read them though, more than once?

At one time I was told a story about Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh. Swami Sivananda wrote many books. When one particular book was ready for publication, his secretary, Swami Venketesananda said to him: "Gurudev this manuscript is almost identical to the previous one." Swami Sivananda replied laughingly that this was true. His purpose was to spread the teachings of yoga. They remain constant. Few people would read the same book again and again until they understood its message, but they might read a new book with a different title. Therefore, he wrapped the message in a different form in the hope that having read several books on the same topic there would be some understanding.

My columns were not planned in this way, but it's not surprising the same topics crop up again and again. They are the focus of my struggles to change. They constitute the lessons I need to learn, which constantly manifest in my life and my relations with others. Sometimes I deliberately start out to write something new and original, nothing to do with respect, gratitude etc. etc., but before I have finished there they are again!

Take this month, for instance. At our last newsletter meeting, when we planned an issue on teachers and teaching, I anticipated writing about the noble art of teaching or about my teacher or colleagues. I played around with several ideas. There were many ways I could approach this. What would be most valuable? The answer (as always): respect the teachings, do the work and so on.

The teachings and the work: it's virtually impossible to write about one without the other. Through yoga we learn that they are inseparable. "The teachings" are the body of philosophy on which the practice of yoga is based; "the work" is applying this formula in one's life. The formula is very simple: find a teacher who teaches

out of their own experience, practice what they teach you, develop your own understanding, pass this on. This newsletter is one way of attempting to acquaint people with the teachings of yoga and their relevance to life in late 20th (and early 21st) century Canada. How can we make practical use of this ancient wisdom in our lives? What we are searching for is a working knowledge of these teachings, not esoteric or intellectual understanding. Do they really work? Yes, they do, if you practise.

The form of the practice, like the form of the message, may vary considerably, but the truth that they contain never varies and neither do the yogic principles. The teachings are equally applicable to all cultures, all climates, people of all ages, both sexes. Rich or poor - to everyone and everything.

The same is true of the work. Everyone can become involved in the work in some way or another. Perhaps it is your destiny to become a professional yoga teacher, a role which has many twists and turns. Yesterday I had an interesting conversation with my mother-in-law. I had spent the afternoon searching, with no success, for blankets to replenish our stocks in the "Y" Yoga programme, and mentioned this at dinnertime. My mother-in-law, who is a student in this programme enquired whether "they" ever washed the blankets and mats we were currently using. I answered "Yes, *we* do!" We do - those of us who have learned that the role of a teacher doesn't end when you leave the classroom, but spills over into many other tasks.

Even if you have no talent for teaching, there will be some form of the work which suits your unique talents and will afford you the opportunity to fulfill your own destiny. Ask any member of the executive! ☯

Correction to the Jan/Feb 2002 newsletter:

The poem entitled "To My Little Ones - A Prayer for Ishvara Pranidana" was wrongly credited. The poem was in fact authored by Niki Karmali.



The VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE'S

Friday Night Gathering

Asana Practice at 6 p.m.

Potluck dinner at 7 p.m.

Bring food to share and
your own plate/cutlery

following the potluck:

Meet the teachers and the Victoria
Yoga Centre Board! Watch an
inspiring yoga asana demonstration.
Come to one part or the whole evening.

Date: Friday, March 8

at the Victoria Yoga Centre
202-919 Fort Street

*Everyone is welcome to join us.
Bring a friend, partner or family member.
By donation. Free to members.*

Message from the President

by Leslie Hogya

A new year of the Yoga Centre begins with the addition of some new Board members: Drew Yallop officially joins the Board after serving as temporary Treasurer for the past six months. Drew has set up the entire accounting system for our office. Debra Johnson and Corrine Lowen are also joining the Victoria Yoga Centre Society Board of Directors. Both Debra and Corrine helped work towards the goal of opening our own space. We welcome you and your continued commitment. And continuing on the Board are Weis Pukesh, Linda Benn, Constance Barker, Doug Hart, Amanda Mills, Martha Chick, Rosemary Barritt, Britta Poisson and Ted Mather. Thank you for agreeing to stay on for 2002.

Jim Rischmiller is resigning from the Board after many years of service. Jim served as both President and Treasurer. He helped keep the Yoga Centre alive in the mid-eighties when there were few Board members and little energy to keep it going. This year he has helped set up our computers and attended many of the meetings that were needed to launch our new space. Thank you Jim for your dedication and hard work for all these years!

This will be my last year as President. I will, however, continue my work in overseeing daily operations of the Yoga Centre. I will also help to train the new President to take over before this coming summer, as I will be departing for India at that time.

I am very grateful to the Victoria Yoga Centre Scholarship Committee for assisting me in my next journey to Pune, where I am registered to take public classes at the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute.

Thank you to all the members of the community who go unmentioned here but continue to volunteer and

support the Yoga Centre.

P.S. I need to make a correction to the interview done with me in the Jan/ Feb 2002 newsletter. When I was speaking about Swami Radha's workshops I mentioned Life Seals, Straight Walk® and Music and Consciousness. When this section was transcribed there was an error and it came out Music and Unconsciousness. Swami Radha was always trying to get us to be more conscious! ☺

The Victoria Yoga Centre
is pleased to offer

Free Introductory Yoga Classes



Saturdays, 3–4pm
March 9, April 6 & May 4

Bring a Friend!
Please call and preregister

202-919 Fort Street 250 386 YOGA (9642)

Patanjali's Yoga Sutras – Chapter One

by James Currie-Johnson

"It is very hard for practitioners of yoga
to know the depths of its meaning"

-BKS Iyengar, *The Tree of Yoga*

The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali were originally written in Sanskrit which is an Indo-European language. Sanskrit is the oldest of the Indo-European languages still in active use. It is very difficult to translate Sanskrit into English with a word for word literal equality. Literalness often fails to convey the point of what was being said in Sanskrit texts. Excellent translations with detailed commentaries are now available and contemporary readers can now consult these different translations for comparison. Each Sanskrit word requires attention, including the title of Chapter One: *Samadhi*.

In *Yoga, A Gem for Women* Geeta Iyengar writes, "The eighth and final stage of Yoga is Samadhi - Self-Realization."

The term 'self' in yoga differs from the 'self' of Western psychology. The self of yoga is not a personal identity, but an evolved state of eternal beatitude, beyond any personal attachments or ego involvements. In translation it is often called the 'true self.'

Sue Hamilton in her recent book *Indian Philosophy* writes, "It is the true self that is of the highest and 'truest' reality; realizing it is the *summum bonum* (highest good) to which human beings can aspire."

Chapter One was written for those who have been attracted to yoga and are actively practicing it. It is an exposition of the primary aim and purpose of yoga.

Based on comparative readings, the following is my paraphrase in ordinary English of the 51 short verses which make up *Samadhi Pada*, the first chapter of the Yoga Sutras.

Self-Realization

1. This is the description of yoga.
2. Yoga is the intentional stilling of the activities of the mind.
3. Then one abides in one's true enlightened nature.
4. Otherwise, one remains identified with the activities of the mind.
5. Five kinds of activities of the mind can be described. They may or may not result in suffering.
6. The five activities are understanding, error, fanciful knowledge, sleep and memory.
7. Understanding is based on direct perception, inference and proof.
8. Error is based on a misinterpretation of reality.
9. Fanciful knowledge is based on abstract words or imagination.
10. Sleep is the state of unconscious mental activity.
11. Memory is the carrying around of whatever one has experienced.
12. One stills the activities of the mind by both yogic practice and nonattachment.
13. Stilling the activities of the mind requires steadfast effort.
14. It takes long, devoted, attentive effort to establish yogic practice.
15. Nonattachment is the escape from constant desire.
16. At its highest level, nonattachment means having no desire for worldly attractions. As a result, one can perceive the Self.
17. Self-Realization begins in different ways, through Self-Analysis, Synthesis, Bliss and Pure Being.
18. Also a higher Self-Realization can come which does not identify with any object.
19. One who attains this state of higher Self-Realization still requires nonattachment.
20. Faith, energy, keen memory and concentration are needed to achieve Self-Realization.
21. The yogic state is near for those with intense zeal.
22. Success follows from one's zeal regardless of one's temperament.
23. Complete devotion to God also leads to the state of

yoga.

24. God alone is free from all causes of suffering, untouched by cause and effect.
25. God is the source of all knowledge.
26. God is the supreme spiritual guide.
27. God can be evoked with the sacred word Om.
28. Om is to be repeated while pondering its meaning.
29. This removes obstacles to yoga.
30. There are nine inner obstacles to knowledge. They are sickness, lack of mental effort, self-doubt, lack of enthusiasm, idleness, overindulgence, false perception, inability to hold on to what is achieved, and unsteady concentration.
31. Grief, despondency, unsteadiness of the body and irregular breathing all accompany these obstacles.
32. They can be removed by single-minded perseverance.
33. Cultivating friendliness, compassion, joy and indifference toward pleasure and pain, virtue and vice will bring stability to the mind.
34. The mind also attains stability through prolonged exhalation and holding the breath.
35. And through contemplating upon an object, thereby developing awareness and sensitivity
36. And through serenity, concentrating on the heart center.
37. And through adoration of enlightened beings and divine images.
38. And through attention to the wisdom of dreams.
39. And through a form of meditation that one desires to practice.
40. Yoga brings mastery of all things great and small.
41. When the activities of the mind are stilled the mind is like a pure crystal.
42. In the first stage of Self-Realization, the identification with a coarse object is accompanied by spontaneous mental activity.
43. The second stage of Self-Realization is unmarked by this kind of mental activity; memory is cleansed and one is no longer conscious of one's own particular identity.
44. In the third stage, the identification with a subtle

object is accompanied by reflection, while in the fourth stage identification with a subtle object is free of reflection.

45. Thus the Self, which is changeless, perceives the most subtle aspects of nature, which is ever-changing.
46. All of the preceding stages of Self-Realization are bounded by a dependency upon an object.
47. When one moves beyond those stages of Self-Realization, one transcends all attachment and achieves serenity.
48. Then one is filled with pure truth and wisdom.
49. This truth and wisdom is grasped instantaneously.
50. Old habits and previous conditioning are transformed. A new life begins.
51. With the activities of the mind stilled, everything is transcended and one enters a completely unbounded level of Self-Realization. This is the yoga state. ☯



The Victoria Yoga Centre

Is pleased to offer scholarships for the following two workshops:

Saltspring Retreat

June 7-9, 2002

Please apply by May 1

Intensive

July 15-20, 2002

Please apply by May 15

Intensive

August 19-23, 2002

Please apply by June 15

Apply in writing to The Scholarship Committee and give to your teacher or mail to:

Scholarship Committee

Victoria Yoga Centre Society

202-919 Fort St. Victoria BC V8V 3K3

All applicants must be members of the Victoria Yoga Centre and supply a current phone number and address.

For additional information contact Amanda Mills or Wendy Boyer at 386-9642

Chris Saudek's Workshop

by Gwynneth Powell

Participants were very pleased to meet Chris Saudek, a Senior Iyengar teacher from La Crosse, Wisconsin. Chris led an Intermediate Workshop over the course of an autumn weekend. Chris' personal touch will not be forgotten as she completed the successful task of learning each and every participant's name. Chris brought not only her clear understanding of Mr. Iyengar's teachings, but she also brought freshness to precision and encouraged our sincere accountability as we reflected on our self-discipline. Chris has been invited back for a second workshop at the end of this year and we look forward to her return.



The Victoria Yoga centre is pleased to present
the 18th Annual Retreat at the Saltspring Centre
with Shirley Daventry French
June 7 - June 9, 2002



Expert yoga instruction for all levels
with Shirley Daventry French.

Shirley is a senior student of B.K.S. Iyengar
and has studied with him many times, most
recently she spent one month studying at
the Ramamani Memorial Institute, Pune,
India in February of this year.

*Pranayama, asana, chanting,
sauna, delicious vegetarian cuisine!
Shared accommodation in a
beautiful, tranquil setting*

Registration

Begins March 15th

Fees: \$315.65

\$288.90 campers

\$230.05 commuters

- Non-members add \$30.00 membership fee
- All fees include GST
- Cancellation Policy: Refunds minus 10% if
your space can be filled

Please make cheques for the full amount
payable to the Victoria Yoga Centre,
include your phone number and address
on the cheque and mail to:

Corrine Lowen
3731 Winston Cr.
Victoria, V8X 1S2

For more information phone Corinne
at (250) 389-0644 or Robin at (250) 382-4111

Looking for a Weekend Get-Away? Come With Us to Salt Spring Island

by Glenda Hingley

I was thrilled to be able to attend the Victoria Yoga Centre's Annual Retreat at the Salt Spring Centre last year. My first visit three years ago was such a wonderful experience I was eager to do everything again, to learn more and have even more fun.

Of course nothing can be experienced exactly the same way twice! Last year's retreat turned into a lesson for me in letting go of expectations and living in the present moment.

The wet and blustery weather of last June immediately reminded me to let go of the expectation of the sunshine, blue skies and long walks I had been looking forward to. Instead I enjoyed the warm, inviting atmosphere inside the centre with its long conversations over amazing meals with yoga friends old and new.

Like many of the participants, I had been looking forward to a massage or reflexology treatment from one of the gifted practitioners at the centre. Unfortunately for us, they were involved in the production of a major school play and unable to offer their services on that particular weekend. Letting go of that disappointment, instead a friend and I enjoyed a trip to the Ganges Summer Market. Savouring the sights and sounds, tastes and smells of the market, with the special Salt Spring Island atmosphere a treat in itself.

While the Saturday evening *satsang* of my first retreat had many musicians and a festive atmosphere, last year's smaller, quieter event gave me a deeper sense of the spiritual commitment in both the Salt Spring Centre and Victoria Yoga Centre communities. We were also touched and inspired by a video of the orphanage in India supported by the Salt Spring Centre. Many of the children in the video had had

little hope of survival in their first few months of life. Seeing their smiling, healthy faces now and hearing them sing "We Shall Overcome" left many of us close to tears.

Living in the present moment is a catchy phrase with a lovely sentiment. It is heard everywhere these days from daytime talk shows to ads for bank loans. In actuality, "walking the talk" can be a challenge. Shirley

reminded us many times, especially during *Savasana*, that while we were at the retreat our usual responsibilities, duties and family obligations were not what we needed to be concerned with. Our greatest responsibility at that moment was to ourselves, to work, to practice, to become stronger, healthier, more focused so that when we return to our day to day lives we can take a better version of ourselves into that new present moment.

I believe that, at least to a small degree, I was able to do that. And while I continue to focus on each new present moment and try not to live in the past or the future, I must confess that I find myself eagerly looking forward to the next retreat in June 2002! ☺



Commitment

by Traci Skuce

Jim walks ahead of me, his long stride widening the distance between us with every step. The dog pulls at his arm. I am left to enjoy the swooping whistles of the whiskey jacks; only I can't. Jim has been away three months, and this our first walk into the mountains since he came back.

I want him to slow down, to stop and wait. I want him to ease my discomfort, to turn around and speak directly to my heart. To give me evidence that whatever it is between us is not broken. But he doesn't and my heart sinks into a sea of resentment.

Uh-oh, I think, *don't let this happen this time*. Each step I take is filled with doubt. He has been back four days and yet somehow we are not back on the same wavelength; our conversations hang in midair, it's just not the same. I let the theatre troupe of my mind play out schemes conjured up for the future. We'll break up... I'll move to a new town... I keep the car...

As we wind through alpine meadows, a breeze ripples over the glacier lilies and a flash of yellow temporarily breaks my thoughts. Up ahead, Jim has stopped. Two hikers walk toward us. They pause at Jim and as I approach them I hear a conversation about weather and the lake up ahead. I covet their easy connection with him the way flowers aspiring to grow beneath the boardwalk must envy those in the field. I grab at whatever sunlight I can get - greedy for its affection.

This is my relationship history - hoarding what I can until, inevitably, the well turns septic or runs dry.

As my practice of yoga has deepened, I have realized that it is my expectation of love that escorts me to the brink of a barren reservoir. Time and again, I count on quenching my thirst without tending to the source. I have sought to change this pattern and thought that with Jim, things were different. We communicated with ease, our connection flowed the way it can in

asana, when alignment and breath work in communion.

As we drive back into the valley, I wonder if we have sipped the last drop from our well?

My breath quickens, each inhalation stabbing my chest. My eyes sting. *It's coming*, I think. *The end*. The floodgates open and a flurry of tears slither across my cheeks.

Jim turns his head from the road, places his hand on my knee. I sob like a toddler whose world has crumbled. Gulping, I say: "It's ... just... that... I ... don't feel ... connected... to ... you..."

He smiles. "I feel it too, you know. But I'm not freaking out," he says. "I trust our relationship. We'll connect again."

A rush of calm washes over me and my sobs cease. I almost laugh at his wisdom and at my own folly. I had forgotten to simply sit in the uncomfortable silence. Instead of breathing through it, I held my breath like the way a miser clutches her money.

I take a deep breath and all my previous fears and resentments fall away. My relationship with yoga has shown me over and over that I can endure hardship. If I can deepen my understanding of *Trikonasana*, by holding it through periods of discomfort and adjustment then I can, in the awkward moments of my relationship, remain committed.

As we continue on the drive home, silence seeps back into the car. It's quality has shifted though, no longer stifled. Instead it is wide open, ripe with possibility. ☯

2002 Upcoming Assessment Dates:

April 19-22	Junior Intermediate II	Victoria
June 14-17	Introductory Syllabus	Saskatoon
Oct. 18-21	Introductory Syllabus	Montreal
Nov. 15-18	Junior Intermediate I	Calgary

Special Needs Class

by Sandy Jacobsen

I had always been curious about the Special Needs yoga class - who attended and why? But I had never had occasion to ask these questions or meet anyone who had participated in the class. Then after surgery for a leg and back injury, and knowing I would be facing another, I found myself thinking that the Special Needs class would be a good place to get my body back into balance.

I had done a lot of physio and pool exercises to build up my strength. I had even practised some yoga asanas at home during my rehabilitation, but I soon realized that I didn't know where to begin to restore my overall balance. And I had some specific questions such as which asanas would be helpful, should they be done in a specific order and which ones might possibly do harm if done incorrectly? I was hoping to find some answers in my new class.

What is the Special Needs Class like?

Walking into the class, the first thing I noticed, unlike a regular class, was that all those 'lovely' props were carefully spread out on the floor, ready for each participant. Sticky mats with blankets were neatly folded and lined up. No need to fetch them from the storage area myself. Being in a lot of discomfort, I really appreciated being able to come into class and immediately lay down. I was then invited to 'leave the busy world outside' and go into *Savasana*, a place where I could find my breath and relax.

Another difference about this class are the number of teachers and assistants present. Since participants come with their own specific health issues, several assistants are necessary to carry out the teachers' instructions in helping each person make adaptations or adjustments to the asanas. For example, in the beginning because standing poses were difficult due to the swelling in my leg, I was directed to an alternative position. I was asked to lay down with my legs up the wall and then the assistant was instructed to place a sandbag weight onto the bottoms of my feet. It was an equivalent pose to what the rest of the class was doing, very similar except I was not weight-bearing on my sore leg. It felt good and I was still able to work my legs by pressing up into the weight the sandbag offered.

Props, alignment and support seem to sum up the focus of these classes. A glance around the studio and the large room is wall-to-wall props: bolsters, chairs, foam and wooden blocks, straps, blankets and sticky mats.

Teachers select appropriate props to align, support and assist participants to move into positions that would be most beneficial for their particular healing concern. Gentle corrections or an extra blanket are offered when needed by knowledgeable and observant teachers.

One woman stretched out in *Setubandha* had her legs positioned together with several straps from ankle to thigh and a sticky mat to maintain alignment of the legs. Two others were using the 'pony' and 'horse' (wooden structures resembling their name-sake) to support their backs and arms while the teachers guided and supported them to move into *Trikonasana*.



Who Attends the Special Needs classes?

Realizing I would be writing an article for the VYC newsletter, I approached a few members of the class for an interview. I asked them what health issues had precipitated their signing up and what changes had occurred since attending. John (pseudonyms are used in this article) had come on recommendation of his friend, a yoga teacher. Having an arthritic hip for a few years, John was hoping to achieve some pain relief and increase flexibility. John had been finding it increasingly difficult, once down on the floor to get back up to his feet, something he does regularly in his job. Also, he had had to give up tennis which began aggravating this condition. Coming to this class once a week, John had noticed changes. First, he was experiencing a decrease in pain. Second, he felt more limber with an increased range of motion in his hip. With such promising results, John plans to continue with the class.

In the recent past, Mary had attended the Gentle Yoga class which she found helpful for a back problem. But then she had a tear to the meniscus in her knee which had caused considerable pain and swelling, affecting her mobility as well as her ability to do regular exercise. Attending a pool physio program and using an exercise ball for strengthening, Mary wanted to make sure she was getting her body back into alignment and so signed up for the Special Needs class. She believes she has made good progress and has begun to participate in more of the standing poses since some of the swelling and inflammation has begun to subside. Although physicians have explained to Mary that her condition was unlikely to repair on its own, she



continues with the class because she would, "love to avoid knee surgery".

Discovering Mona's reason for coming, was informative for me. Having practiced yoga for a number of years, Mona was in training to become a yoga teacher. Learning that she had a metabolic imbalance after having a diagnostic test, Mona came with a desire to consult with senior teachers to find out which asanas might help her. What struck me about this was, first, that she had faith that yoga could help her with this kind of health issue and, second, that she obviously had a deep understanding of the benefits of yoga.

I have always believed that yoga could help with healing. Having never taken the time to delve more deeply into yoga philosophy, I had considered the benefits of yoga from a more or less physiotherapy perspective: exercise the limb and the limb improves. It was only after I had delved into Mr. Iyengar's newest book, *Yoga - The Path to Holistic Health* that I began to glimpse the full potential of a yoga practice. Aside from alleviating ailments and offering prevention through regular commitment, one's practice has a direct effect on the body's glands, chakras and organs. In essence yoga practice effects all the systems of the body, the mind and the emotions.

It was during my third session in the Special Needs class that I discovered and subsequently purchased *Yoga - The Path to Holistic Health*. A clear and comprehensive text, it appears to be designed for both the beginner and more experienced practitioner. Photos of the asanas are illustrated in full colour and from several angles. The text offers detailed descriptions of the asanas and their benefits. Yoga philosophy and a twenty week general practise are also



outlined. What's more is a comprehensive section on yoga therapy profiling over seventy specific sequences. Ailments ranging from skin rashes and blood pressure abnormalities to mental fatigue and irritability. There are even practices laid out for the digestive and reproductive

organs, and so much more. And to ensure the book is user-friendly, each sequence is laid out with photos to guide.

I have used this book to work with health concerns whenever something crops up. One day experiencing what felt like a migraine headache, I consulted the *Brain and Nervous System* section of the book. Following the eighteen asanas in order as outlined for migraine headache, I was pain free within an hour. How thankful I was to have 'moved' the headache out of my body without needing to use medication.

"Yoga is a light which, once lit, will never dim.

*The better your practice,
the brighter the flame."*

— B.K.S. Iyengar

I am beginning to reap the benefits of my hard work in this class and appreciate the knowledge gained. A significant and unanticipated outcome has been the beginning of a regular home practice. As someone who has practiced yoga off and on for a number of years, this is a significant change. Something within me has been

opened to comprehend that a regular practice is the most important thing I can do for myself. I find myself willingly (most of the time) seeking out my tights and props - feeling somehow incomplete when I miss a practice day.

The Special Needs classes have been rich with a lot of laughter and sense of camaraderie. There are people with splints, braces, tensors, twists in limbs, swellings, limitations and pain. Being present with my own limitation in the class, somehow has lessened the sense of isolation I have sometimes felt. And now after having attended four terms, I am taking my yoga and my limitations with a good dose of hope and gratitude. Yoga is providing me with the tools to respond to pain and discomfort. And I find myself becoming more confident in listening to the wisdom of my body.

I would like to extend my great appreciation to the teachers who show up each week to guide us with care, concern and a good sense of humour. And of course I wish to extend my deep gratitude to Mr. Iyengar for sharing his love, knowledge and

experience with the world. ☯





The
VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE'S

Friday Night Gathering

Asana Practice at 6 p.m.

Potluck dinner at 7 p.m.

Bring food to share and
your own plate/cutlery

Date: Friday, April 5

at the Victoria Yoga Centre
202-919 Fort Street

*Everyone is welcome to join us.
Bring a friend, partner or family member.
By donation. Free to members.*

CIYTA Assessors Meeting

(Or How I Flew To Vancouver and Worked
My Butt off and Returned to Hong Kong)

by Linda Shevloff

The Park Royal Hotel in West Vancouver was the venue for a three-day meeting of assessors and those in training as assessors for the certification of Iyengar teachers in Canada. It was the beginning of December with a feeling of Christmas in the cold, damp air as teachers began to arrive from all quarters of the country. I was a bit of an anomaly, having come from Hong Kong to participate, wishing to maintain my connection with my Canadian colleagues, and hoping to improve the teacher training I'm doing abroad. Those coming from afar all came in a bit travel weary - Marlene Mawhinney and Mahyar Raz-Khorzad from Toronto, Margot Kitchen from Calgary, Marie-Andree Morin from Montreal, Beverley Winsor from Newfoundland, Pamela Stewart from P.E.I., Donna Fornelli from Ottawa, and myself. We met with our West Coast companions - Shirley Daventry French, Ingelise Nherlan, Marlene Miller, Linda Benn, Ann Kilbertus, Barbara Yates and Sheri Berkowitz, and after a bit of rest began to work.

Our purpose was to review and discuss the entire certification method and to consider new directives from Pune. The senior assessors (Marlene Mawhinney, Shirley, Marie-Andree, Ingelise and Mahyar) began in advance and for much of the weekend met as a separate group to make major decisions about the direction certification should take in Canada. Over the course of the weekend they reviewed the marking procedure, considering the process and content of examinations, and the learning objectives of the Junior Intermediate I, II & III curriculum. They also looked at the most recent syllabus from Pune and worked on the upcoming Junior Intermediate III assessment.

The Junior Assessors (Leslie, Marlene Miller, Margot, Barbara and Sheri) and those of us in training as assessors (Ann, Beverley, Linda B, Donna, Pamela and myself) reviewed the assessment procedures and did a walk through of an actual marking weekend by running a mock practice and a teaching session that was graded. We divided into two small groups alternating between being exam candidates and assessors. In the process, we worked with the grading forms and the terminology used. In the marked practice component of an assessment, for example, candidates are rated according to various categories: "Accuracy & Knowledge of Asana", "Maturity of Practice", "Clarity" and "Stability". To evaluate the teaching component of the assessment we considered the "Accuracy & Knowledge of Asana", the "Clarity of Instruction", the "Observation & Correction of Students", "Demonstration Effectiveness", "Teacher Presence & Class Control" and "Pacing". We came to a consensus and then applied the ratings of "excellent, good, poor and very poor" to the mock sessions we saw. Assessors need to make quick judgements about what they see and then be able to support their opinions with specific reference to the teaching and the practice sessions. The task requires tremendous concentration. The instructor's word choice, tone and emphasis are discussed, as is their body language. The fine details of the instruction and demonstration are debated in great detail.

Assessors look not only at the teacher but also at the



C.I.Y.T.A. Assessors Meeting, Vancouver, Nov. 2001
Standing: Ann Kilbertus, Margot Kitchen, Beverley Winsor, Linda Shevloff, Donna Fornelli, Marie-Andrée Morin, Sheri Berkowitz, Shirley Daventry French. **Kneeling:** Linda Benn, Leslie Hogya. **Front:** Barbara Yates, Marlene Miller, Marlene Mawhinney, Pamela Stewart, Mahyar Raz-Khorzad, Ingelise Nherlan

students who are receiving the teaching. What did the teacher see or miss? How was the teaching received? How effectively did the teacher correct and adjust the students? There is so much to consider and evaluate.

All of us had been candidates in assessments where the adrenaline runs pretty high and everyone is nervous and primed for performance. Iyengar teacher assessments for certification are challenging, demanding tests that one never forgets. The assessors meeting revealed a new perspective to me: the assessors themselves have to be just as prepared as the candidates and their work is equally demanding. It is also ongoing. These assessments take place several times a year across the country, and the same small group of teachers has been flying to these various locations, working arduously for days, fitting these

sessions into their own busy teaching schedules without remuneration other than expenses. And yet they have done it and continue to do it with tremendous dedication, hoping to improve the standard of teaching within the country. They have taken the hero's path, giving of themselves for the greater good of the community. For them, the satisfaction must come in seeing the development of teachers in Canada, and of course there must be a personal reward in their own growth as yoga teachers and practitioners. Clearly, however, as the new levels of assessment are being put in place and more candidates are ready to be evaluated, the number of assessors must also increase: hence, the importance of our weekend training in Vancouver. It will be one of many training sessions.

During the weekend we took some time to practice together. Shirley led a session based on the Junior Intermediate III curriculum, and later in the weekend when we were all rather exhausted, Margot took us through a restorative sequence she had recently done in Pune. Although the agenda for the weekend was full, we had time for friendly chat at mealtimes and during breaks or in the middle of the night when we couldn't sleep because of jet lag. Ingelise had made excellent arrangements with the hotel, so our meals were brought to us in the meeting room and the food was good. On Saturday evening we took a two hour break and went out to dinner, but then came back to continue our meeting until late in the night.

On Sunday, the senior assessors presented the results of their meetings. They had developed a plan to revise the way the current written components of the exams are to be done in future. By 2003 there will be no more written exam at the Introductory I and II levels, and instead this work will have to be done during teacher training, giving training teachers more responsibility in preparing candidates. A new take home exam for the Junior Intermediate Level I will be designed, but there will be no written exam for Junior Intermediate Levels II or III. The senior assessors also recommended that

the application forms for the Junior Intermediate assessment must now include specific information about what teacher training a candidate has had since the previous assessment.

In light of the change in the exam procedures, the learning objectives for the Introductory I through to the Junior Intermediate III curriculums need to be reviewed and revised. A committee was struck to work on this. Later, letters will be sent to yoga communities around the country to explain these and other changes.

The weekend was full and fruitful, and everyone worked very hard. To other guests in the hotel we probably seemed a strange lot – barefoot women in tights all over the hotel at all hours of the day and night. And then it was over. With many hugs on Sunday afternoon we went our separate ways, flying in every direction, knowing that we'd meet again at assessments, workshops, or in Pune, both on and off the yoga mats. I left feeling both exhausted and extremely fortunate to be part of this dedicated group. ☺

A Weekend Workshop

with

Aadil Palkhivalla

in

Cumberland, BC

Dates: April 12-14, 2002

Location: Cumberland Cultural Centre

Cost: \$200.00

For information and registration
contact:

Vicky Catchpole

250 338 7973

vjpalmpole@hotmail.com

The Victoria Yoga Centre presents

Further Inspirations from India

with

Leslie Hogya, Ann Kilbertus and Ty Chandler

Leslie, Ann and Ty have spent time in India in the past two years. The teachings take time to penetrate. They have been instructed by the Iyengars to practice what they have been given - and not rush to teach too quickly. Working together, these three teachers will explore further what they have learned in Pune.

March 15 - 17, 2002

Friday 6:30 - 8:30 pm

Saturday 11:00 am - 2:00 pm

4:00 - 6:00 pm

Sunday 10:30 am - 1:00 pm

Fees:

Members \$140 (includes GST)

Non members \$150 (includes GST)

Cancellation Policy:

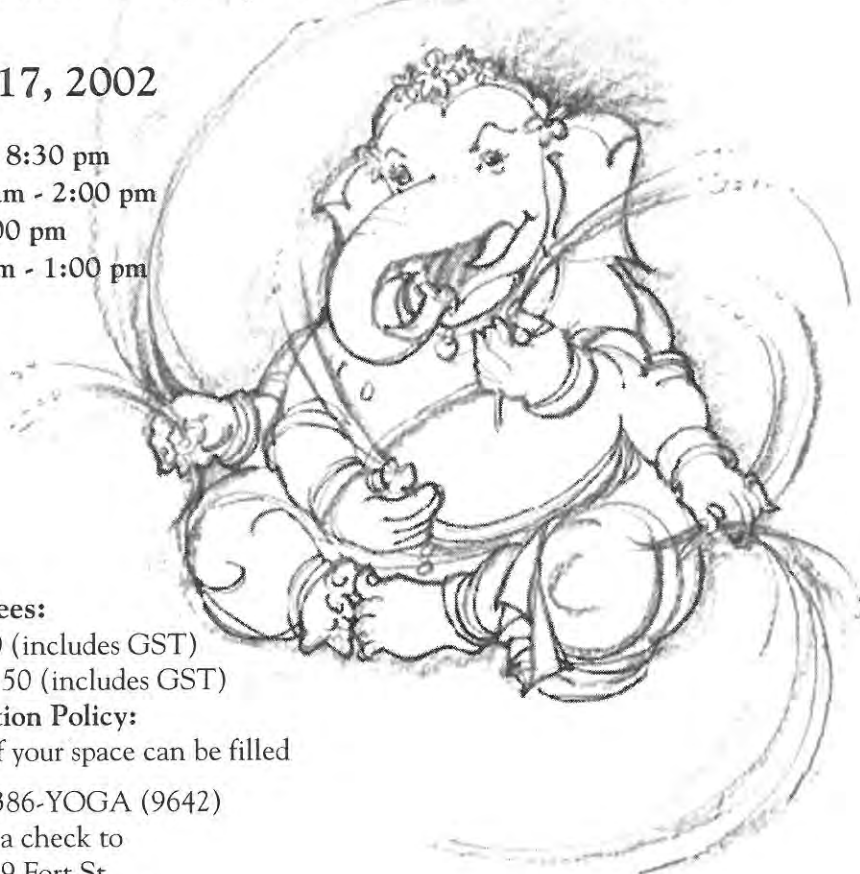
Refunds minus 10% if your space can be filled

To register, call 386-YOGA (9642)

Or mail a check to

202-919 Fort St

Victoria, BC V8V 3K3





Not Today

by Chris Lea

I do not think I will practice today
There just isn't enough time
Conscience, who cares what you say,
I have earned every dime

I do not think I will practice today
I'm under great duress
Even though I try to let come what may,
I feel so much stress

I do not think I will practice today
This body is just too lazy
Let me sleep a little longer...okay,
This yoga practice is crazy

I do not think I will practice today
Who will ever know?
None of my friends live this way
Please let me believe my show

I do not think I will practice today
It is just too difficult
Why, this job does not even pay!
And besides it is not my fault

I do not think I will practice today
There always is a reason
Do not say I have lost my way
It's too late...too dark...it's just the wrong season

No, I will not practice today
They're burying me in the ground
This body is cold and here it shall lay
Never again will this heart pound

Yes, I *will* practice today!
This human life is a rare gift
Time ticks so quickly away
To allow my attention to drift. ☯

YOGA PROPS FOR SALE

Blankets (Grey Wool)	\$37.45
Bolsters	\$55.00
Eyebags (Barley)	\$ 8.03
Eyebags (Flax)	\$10.70
Foam Blocks (Pkg. Of 4)	\$26.75
Sandbags	\$21.40
Sticky Mats (Blue, Green, Purple)	\$42.80
Straps (Regular length)	\$10.70
Wooden Blocks	\$21.40

(All prices include GST)

For sale during office hours
9am - 12:30pm, Monday to Saturday
at the Victoria Yoga Centre
202 - 919 Fort Street

Phone orders are welcome
250 - 386 - YOGA (9642)

Donors and Volunteers Thank You!

Since our original thank you in the January / February 2002 newsletter the following people have generously contributed to the Victoria Yoga Centre.

The donor list grows, add your name to our list to help us build a new floor!

Tadasana (Up to \$200):

Eileen Rutherford
Keiko Alkire
Jill Roberts
Debra Lamond (Kelowna)

Sirsasana (\$200 and over):

Jo Anna Hope

In Kind

(Donations of specialized services, or goods):

Lauren Cox

Volunteers:

Erin McKay
Michelle Randles
Mira Schiff
Beatrice Amstutz
Bev Clarke
Janna

A Call For Recipes

Inspired by the wonderful dishes prepared at Friday Night Gatherings, this is a call for your favorite original vegetarian recipes which will be compiled into a cookbook as a fundraiser for VYC.

Please send your recipes to: martha.chick@shaw.ca with "recipe" in the subject line.



Inner Peace for Global Peace

An experiential

INTERFAITH MEDITATION CONFERENCE

June 14 – 16, 2002

Vancouver School of Theology (UBC)

A conference to promote universal spirituality by bringing together outstanding teachers and practitioners in meditation and interfaith dialogue. We believe in the unbreakable link between the dignity of the individual and the integrity of the community. By promoting a shared inner peace among followers of all creeds we can begin to make a contribution towards global peace.

Presenters include:

Sylvia Boorstein, Dom Laurence Freeman OSB,
Lynn Greenhough, Swami Hridayananda,
Amir O'Loughlin

This is an experiential silent retreat with daily meditation periods, keynote speakers on Friday, concurrent workshops on Saturday. Both beginners and experienced meditators are welcome.

For further information, contact:

*Dr. H. Mayoh (Vancouver) 604-263-9675 or
Dr. E. Van Tilburg (Victoria) 250-381-8797*

Volunteer Appreciation Night

Draw Winners

\$60.00 Credit
One Free Class

Jane Beauchamp
Dave Scott
Valentina Chubak

REVIEW WORKSHOP

"Throw All Your Information In The Ocean"

"Practice Yoga From Your Heart"

- Mahyar Raz

by Nancy Searing

The introduction to Mahyar Raz both in the advertisement in the Victoria Yoga Centre

Newsletter and by Leslie Hogya at the beginning of the workshop promised that Mahyar would be sweet, charming and challenging. Mahyar's charm

and 'sweetness' appeared to manifest from the love so obviously radiating from her heart. Her fresh approach, sharp intellect and keen ability to see subtleties in asana was inspiring. Her ardent desire to give the workshop participants more than instructions for performing asanas challenged everyone not only to practice using their intelligence but also their hearts.

Mahyar clearly stated at the beginning of her workshop that it was not her duty to impart information to the participants, but rather to assist us in waking up our own intelligence. From the moment she brought her hands together in *namaste*, stating that the base of the thumbs at the base of the sternum was the key to lifting the sternum, she generously gave us the key to many asanas. She said



Nancy is shown where her intelligence is needed

information is acquiring knowledge (insight) about something while intelligence is the deep feeling of (wisdom) understanding oneself. Mr. Iyengar says in his translation of the Sutras, *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* that, "The mind acquires knowledge objectively, whereas intelligence learns through subjective experience, which becomes wisdom." Over the course of the weekend Mahyar continually reminded us that yoga was not about gathering information, techniques or instructions on how to do the asanas. She steadily challenged us to find the key to the asana and extend our intelligence into our bodies in order to know our innermost selves. Mahyar's statement, "Attention is extension" reflects Mr. Iyengar's quote, "Extension brings space, space brings freedom, freedom brings precision. Precision is truth and truth is God." Yoga is often defined as the union of the individual self with the universal self or God. According to Mr. Iyengar, yoga means *samadhi* and *samhadi* means yoga. *Samadhi*, or absorption into universal consciousness, is the culmination of the eight limbs, or stages, of yoga.

Patanjali tells us in *Samadhi Pada* (in his Yoga Sutras) that "*yoga cittavrtti nirodhah*", or that yoga is the cessation of movements in the consciousness. *Citta* (consciousness), is comprised of three aspects: the first is the mind, the second is intelligence, and the third is ego. In yoga thought, the individual entity is known as





the self which, depending upon the individual's spiritual development, is separate from the *citta*. Mr. Iyengar tells us in his translation of the Sutras that the self is the subject and the object is the experience and that through the practice of yoga and quieting the mind, one penetrates the layers of their own being to reach the soul (one's true or higher self or the universal or cosmic consciousness).

Mahyar implored us to "see" all of our different bodies or layers of being, and to connect the inner body to the outer body in the practice of our asana. She indicated that by taking our intelligence into the darkness of our inner being, our *prana* (breath or life force) would follow and bring life and illumination to our inner selves, to our souls. Mahyar talked about the three bodies: the Gross Physical Body,

the Subtle Body and the Casual Body. She said that all of these bodies are connected and interact with each other. We need to bring action to the physical body to connect to the physiological body in order to be able to create a perception and recognition of the sensation of our inner bodies and thus how our inner bodies move with our outer bodies.

In *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, Mr. Iyengar states that, "The *ahamkara* (ego/ individual self) or the sense of 'I' is the knot that binds the consciousness and the body through the inner sense, the mind. In this way the levels of being are connected by the mind, from the soul, through the internal parts, to the external senses. The mind thus acts as a link between objects seen, and the seer. It is the unifying factor between the soul and the body which helps us to uncover layer after layer of our being until the sheath of the *Jivatman* (universal self) is reached." He goes on to say, "The yoga aspirant tries to understand the functions of all these sheaths of the soul as well as the soul itself, and thereby begins his quest to experience the divine core of being."

The three bodies that Mahyar spoke of are also known as the *sariras*. These *sariras* are comprised of five sheaths known as *koshas*, which relate to the five elements of nature.



Utthita Hasta Padasana

The Casual Body or *Karana Sarira* - is thought to 'cover' the soul. It relates to the *Anandamaya Kosha* (blissful sheath), and the element ether. The Subtle Body or *Suksma Sarira* - relates to the *Pranamaya Kosha* (physiological sheath), the *Manomaya Kosha* (mental/emotional sheath), and the



Vijnanamaya Kosha (intellectual sheath), and the elements water, fire and air. The Gross Physical Body or *Karya Sarira* - relates to the *Annamaya Kosha* (anatomical sheath) and the element earth.

Mahyar encouraged us to take our intelligence to different parts of our bodies. Over and over she was able to show examples of areas in the bodies of workshop participants where the intelligence had not yet penetrated. She pointed out 'lumps' on the chest and back of the neck and described these areas as being *tamasic*, or areas of darkness where the light of intelligence had not yet penetrated. As the *ahamkara* (ego) evolves towards the *jivatman* (self), its qualities can change from *tamasic* to *rajasic* to *sattvic*. Mahyar reinforced the need to use our intelligence to move through the inertia of the *tamasic* quality, into the vibrancy of the *rajasic* quality and ultimately find balance in the *sattvic* quality of illumination. Mahyar skillfully moved the participants to find their inner intelligence and bring life to the dull *tamasic* areas in their individual bodies. Reflecting her deep knowledge of the inner workings of the poses she provided the keys for bringing the intelligence to the asanas. For example, in *Tadasana* she worked diligently with us to learn how to lift our outer arches, broaden our metatarsals, and move our shin bones back to "compact" our ankles in order to create the roots of the

pose. She said that just as a tree has a tap root that must spread out and down to allow the tree to reach up and out, so in the poses when something goes up something else must move down. "Yoga is cause and effect," she said

While Mahyar's inner intelligence, loving presence and ability to transmit her understanding of the poses was inspiring, there was one statement that challenged us to move out of our heads and into our hearts, "You don't need techniques, you need to learn to read yourself and ask what is happening here?" She also reminded us that, "Your intelligence should radiate from the inner body outwards." And prompting us further she shared, "You can't do yoga with your brain cells all the time, you need to move your intelligence to where you want to work and do yoga with your heart."

Mahyar is one of Canada's most senior teachers and the Director of the Iyengar Yoga School in Toronto. She is also the founder of The Yoga Institute in Tehran, Iran. Mahyar studies annually with the Iyengar family in India. ☺

Yoga Library



The Victoria Yoga Centre has a library. It can be used at any time the Centre is open to sit quietly and look at books. Occassionally it will be closed for meetings. Books can be checked out using a simple self-serve system. Follow the directions in the booklet on top of the bookcase.

Borrowing is for Yoga Centre members only. Non-members may feel free to browse. Anyone can become a member by paying \$30 and filling out a membership form.

Please return borrowed materials promptly. Thanks to Maggi Feehan who kept the library in her home for many years.

The
VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE'S



BIG BIG PRACTICE



Date: Friday, May 17

at the Victoria Yoga Centre
202-919 Fort Street

Asana Practice 6 -7:30pm

Potluck dinner to follow

Bring food to share and
your own plate/cutlery

*Everyone is welcome to join us.
Bring a friend, partner or family member.
By donation. Free to members.*

When in Doubt Refer to the Manual

by Kelly Murphy

"As long as the mind is muddled with wandering thoughts, it is impossible to discriminate between what is essential and what is adventitious."

— The Dharmapada

1. The first test I can remember was when my favourite aunt placed a tape recorder in front of me and asked me to recite a poem. I was three years old and I did not know that I could pause or make a mistake which would go undetected in the final cut. Aunt Norma was going to take the recording to my grandmother. I could tell it was important to her that I get it right. She praised me as I lisped my way through. I do not know why she was laughing when I finished.

2. Deciding to take the Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers' Association (CIYTA) Certification challenge brought up this memory. It's a test too. I say "test" but I could just as easily say "judgement" or "appraisal" or "evaluation". Each of these words has a slightly different nuance. But in the end, the quality of my work would be scrutinized by others, based on a set of standards and criteria.

3. I failed my drivers' test the first time by following the car in front of me as it glided through a stop sign. I taught the wrong asana in two separate peer teaching sessions.

4. Job interviews are a kind of test. My first important one was for a teaching job in North Vancouver. The Superintendent wanted to chat about fly fishing on the Oyster River, near where I had been raised. I had only the foggiest notions of the topic. I came away thinking I'd failed.

5. There's a pattern here. As life progressed, I felt less confident in testing situations. Less certain that I

knew what was being tested. I often thought that something beyond my efforts clinched the outcome. Job demographics maybe, political decisions, quotas.

6. The CIYTA gives applicants plenty of information about test preparation. Former applicants will discuss their experiences. Test situations are simulated at the teachers' Intensive in Victoria and at teachers' meetings, feedback on one's yoga is available, and peer teaching is arranged and evaluated.

7. I had the driver's manual in advance of that test too. I had practiced.

8. Pranayama helped to alleviate the fear. Mostly of public failure. What does it mean to fail? What does failure offer us? I had lots of time to think about those questions. In the meantime, my palms sweat when I thought about certification. Sometimes I'd wake in the night thinking, "I don't know how to teach that pose." Or worse, "I can't do that one. Please don't let them give me that one." My rapid heart beat would keep me awake til I promised myself that I'd work harder.

9. Yoga certification is a long way from rote recitation of a children's poem. Although originally, candidates did the written component of the assessment from memory after the timed practice.

10. Prior to certification I recruited supporters. My sister Norma, my partner who practiced with me, timed my practice and allowed me to teach him the poses.

I asked questions of the teachers whose generosity and straightforwardness were helpful.

I went to workshops: Vicky Catchpole's, Leslie's on Lasqueti, Julie Gudmested's, the Teachers' Intensive.

I taught 20 minute segments, linking the poses.

I doubted myself out loud. Vicky said, "It doesn't get better with time." I kept going.

I gave myself lots of time with the written exam.

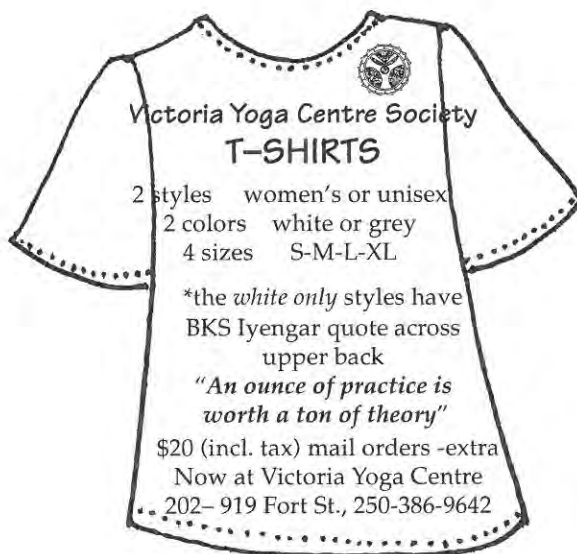
11. Fear is one of the *kleshas*. It is also a spur to work harder.

12. Finally I needed to be sure I had done what I could to prepare. I told myself that if I were unsuccessful, at least it would be a learning experience not an opportunity for self recrimination... Maybe.....

13. There had been reports that the actual assessment weekend is drenched in fear for the participants. That would be difficult to disengage from.

14. When I arrived at the Yoga Space in Vancouver, Louie Ettling welcomed me warmly. She said that her experience of certification had been very positive. Her face and tone of voice suggested a deep pleasure in the memory of it.

15. Ingelise Nherlan led the Invocation. Participants sat in *Sukhasana*, facing her, the assessors and those in training. Her voice filled the studio. I felt that we were being initiated into something very old, special,



impossible to grasp fully.

16. My timer was pressed into service by the time-keeper. Its familiar voice offered encouragement during the timed practice. At the end of the practice, Lauren Cox gave me a reddish amber Japanese maple leaf. I have kept it.

17. I had Saturday off - the luck of the draw. Sunday was demonstration teaching day for Ty, Joanna, Chris and I. We were given a room to prepare for our observed teaching. It was a Motorcycle Club's office. There were club posters, a case of beer, gauntlet gloves, studded leather clothing. One by one, we were led to the studio to teach. I was first each time, the draw at work again.

18. During the inversions portion of my teaching segment, one of the volunteer students carefully folded a face cloth and set her head on it for *Salamba Sirsasana*. For a second I thought she might have been a deliberate challenge, inserted by the assessors to test my mettle further. She agreed to set it aside at first. But I saw her use it the second time she went into the pose.

19. Lauren Cox gave me a paper cut-out of a unicorn as I was rushing off to catch the ferry. On it she had printed, "I Did It!"

20. Driving through Stanley Park I thought, "Maybe I'll get Level 1." That was the best I could hope for. I felt free.

21. After the letters came, and the debriefing conversation with Ingelise had taken place, there was a flat time. Not exactly depressed, but something like that. I had not failed. No one was more surprised than I. It is humbling, mysterious, beyond me to fathom. ☯

Short Workshops at the Victoria Yoga Centre



Yoga 'Fore Golfers'
With Marlene Miller
Saturday, March 2, 2002
11:30am - 2:30pm

All levels, no experience necessary
...Yoga or Golf!

Focus is on the body's actions that will help increase concentration and attention of the mind.

Beginning with a series of poses to free up the body, in order to have easier flowing movements before taking that first swing with the club, then the focus will shift to precise movements to increase concentration and attention. This is followed by asanas (poses) that will leave you relaxed and refreshed at the end of each game.

(Bring your own favourite "iron"!)

Cost for workshops is:

2 hours: \$30 + GST members
\$35 + GST non-members
3 hours: \$45 + GST members
\$50 + GST non-members

The Victoria Yoga Centre
202-919 Fort Street 250 386 YOGA



THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

is pleased to announce two

IYENGAR YOGA TEACHER TRAINING INTENSIVES

July 15 to 20, 2002

with Leslie Hogya, Ann Kilbertus, Linda Benn, Marlene Miller

This six-day intensive will focus on preparing teachers for assessment in Iyengar Yoga at Introductory Level 1 or 2. If space is available and with the teachers' permission, students may also attend to enjoy a week of yoga. Leslie, Ann, Linda and Marlene are experienced teachers certified at the Intermediate Level through the Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers' Association. They are all involved in teacher training in Victoria and several rural British Columbia communities.

August 19 to 23, 2002

with Shirley Daventry French

This course is for certified Iyengar Yoga teachers who wish to prepare for assessment at Junior Intermediate Level 1, 2 or 3. Shirley is a long-time student of B.K.S. Iyengar who has awarded her a senior teaching credential. She has been teaching Yoga for thirty years and is one of North America's most experienced teachers in the Iyengar tradition. Shirley has been training teachers in Victoria and throughout Canada for many years.

- * In both Intensives there will be daily classes in asana and pranayama, yoga philosophy and the art and science of teaching.
- * As in previous years, Iyengar Yoga teachers and experienced students from other countries are also invited to attend.

Fees: \$475.00 + 7% GST

To receive the application and registration forms, please contact:
Victoria Yoga Centre, 202- 919 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C. V8V 3K3
Telephone: 250-386-9642

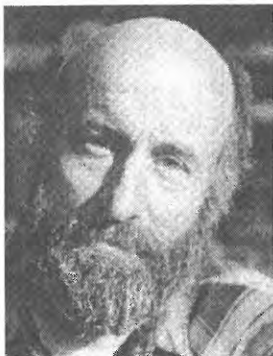
or Ann: 250-598-0976 Linda: 250-478-0757

Email: Linda: lbenn@islandnet.com or Ann: stpatrick@entirety.ca

Victoria Yoga Centre Society Directors



Constance Barker
Membership Coordinator



Ted Mather



Leslie Hogya
President



Doug Hart
Volunteer Coordinator



Amanda Mills



Debra Johnson



Drew Yallop
Treasurer



Corinne Lowen
Past President



Britta Poisson
Publicity Coordinator



Wies Pukesh
Program Coordinator



Rosemary Barritt
Vice President



Martha Chick
Secretary



Linda Benn
Teachers'/Scholarship Liaison

Reports from Annual General Meeting, 2002

President's Report

by Leslie Hogya

The Victoria Yoga Centre went through an incredible transformation this year. Here we sit in our new centre one year from our first meeting about moving out of the Y. The last newsletter describes this process and thanks the many people involved. This particular report will focus on the role of the Board of Directors in this process. Please know that all of you who were on teams, or have been volunteering in other capacities, we thank you sincerely!

In years past, the Victoria Yoga Centre Society Board met five or six times a year at the most. This year's Board has attended many, many meetings, often called at short notice. There were also the hectic days in September, where Board members, teachers, and other members were down here painting, cleaning, repairing, using sweat equity to get ready to open the doors for our first classes Oct. 1st. We held three or four whole community meetings to bring the group together that were led by Nathan Bernshaw. He helped us create a vision about what we wanted and how to get there. Corrine Lowen agreed to assist him in that process. The Board of Directors stepped forward and collectively donated hundreds of hours of their time. There are also another 50 volunteers beyond the Board and teachers. We have hired one office administrator, Britta Poisson, who is assisted by some paid and some volunteer help to run the front desk. Britta volunteers her time to do publicity above her regular hours, plus she helps in special needs class regularly.

On the Board unofficially is Drew Yallop, who stepped into the Treasurer's shoes when Ted Mather was moving away. Drew has set up our books and class schedules on the computer, prepares deposits, pays the bills, etc. We are very fortunate to have someone with his abilities among us! Linda Benn sets up the program

and supervises the Teachers' Group and the teachers-in-training. Linda served on the Building Team. Amanda Mills headed up the Building Team, supervised construction and repairs, and helps keep everything maintained. She is also on the Scholarship Committee. Wies Pukesh was the Values Team leader and her team organized the very beautiful opening ceremonies. Weis also coordinates the Program/Workshop/Special Events Committee. Martha Chick and Doug Hart's team focused on human resources and coordinates volunteers. Martha is Secretary for the Board, produces minutes, keeps us stocked with letterhead, etc. Doug is also organizing retail sales, comes often to special needs class, or sits at the desk when other volunteers are unavailable. Connie Barker oversees memberships and has helped with props, notably ripping the backs out of the new chairs. Rosemary Barrit, our Vice President, makes sure the insurance is up to date, and has taken on the task of prop maintenance. Rosemary is a fabric artist and the beauty of our centre has been greatly enhanced by her donations of curtains, cushions, sand bags, and the beautiful OM in the lobby. (The fabric for the curtains was donated by Nina Zak.) Ted Mather has served as treasurer for several years, until he moved out of town this summer; thank you, Ted, for all of your help. Jim Rischmiller helped with computer set up, is one of our Past Presidents, and served on the Board for a very long time. Gwynneth Powell is our liaison with the Newsletter Committee, which meant double meetings for her! The newsletters have been fantastic this year with many special issues. Melissa Worth, another adjunct to the Board, answers email.

I have served as President for too many years; it is time for someone to take over the job of overseeing the Board. Assuming I am reelected, this will be my last year as President, though my role in daily operations of the yoga centre is still to be defined! I have found the job of opening the new centre challenging and fun and

exciting! As our classes fill to overflowing, the work goes on. None of what you see around you could have been realized without the wisdom and energy of the whole community. ☯

Teachers' Group Report

by Linda Benn

This has been a most positive year for the teachers and trainees who work under the umbrella of the Victoria Yoga Centre. Currently there are 43 members of our group, 18 of whom are now certified by CIYTA, the national association.

In the last year the following people were certified at the Introductory Level: James Currie-Johnson, Jo Anna Hope, Chris Lea, Ty Chandler and Kelly Murphy (Nanaimo). Now we have more people preparing for the Introductory Level, and others working towards the Junior Intermediate Levels 1, 2, or 3.

There are 14 people doing teacher training, including those in Prince George and one in Whitehorse. It is a real challenge to do teacher training from an outlying area, not only for the trainee but also for the training teachers. Those who are working with us here in Victoria are very fortunate.

At our monthly meetings (about 9 each year) we do a 2-hour practice followed by discussions focusing on areas such as pranayama, sequencing, philosophy, personal practice, ethics, peer teaching, timed practices, teaching asanas, common problems, etc. The teachers who lead these sessions put a great deal of thought and work into preparing for them.

Of course, the highlight of this year was the conference with Geeta Iyengar in Vancouver. Several of our group were very key in the organization of the conference, especially Shirley Daventry French, Leslie Hoya and Marlene Miller. Most of us ended up taking on some responsibilities when the conference got under way. Thank you to the Newsletter Committee who produced a beautiful conference magazine. The notes

for the conference should be available sometime this spring and they will be a great resource. I think there is some confusion as to what will be done with the videos; I have a copy of them now and am going through them slowly.

In the past year the Yoga Centre has assisted Ann Kilbertus, Ty Chandler, and Chris Lea on their journeys to Pune to study at the source. Shirley Daventry French will also be at the Institute for the next month. The value of studying in India is evident in the quality of teaching and workshops led by these people since their return from India. It is this constant connection to the Iyengar family that has kept the standards and quality of our teaching so respected.

In so many ways, Shirley Daventry French is our guiding light. We on the Teacher Training Committee—teachers, trainees, and students—are constantly seeking her guidance and clarity on many issues. Our respect and gratitude to her ever increases.

The teacher training Intensive in July went well with participants from all over B.C. and one from Minnesota. Shirley was in great form and kept all of us working hard.

This year, it is wonderful to have our own place to do the Intensive. We have planned two Intensives for 2002. The July Intensive—with Ann, Leslie, Marlene and Linda as teachers—will focus on the Introductory syllabus; then, Shirley will lead an August Intensive for those working to the Junior Intermediate levels. The brochure has recently been mailed and we are already receiving registrations and inquiries.

In conclusion, the teachers are a very strong component of the Victoria Yoga Centre and they take on many of the responsibilities for its operation. However, the teachers also appreciate the work of others in our yoga community. Without the support of the Board, the students, and also our very patient partners in life, we would find it very difficult to do the actual teaching. ☯

Membership Report

by Constance K. Barker

The role of the Co-ordinator of the Membership Committee is to maintain a list of members who pay an annual fee and to provide labels for the newsletter mail-out. The move to our new centre and the acquisition of a new computer program has afforded an opportunity to amalgamate a number of functions of the co-ordinating role, thereby simplifying many of the tasks.

A membership subscription assists with the cost of publishing and mailing out bi-monthly newsletters, it offers pre-registration, discounts and scholarships to workshops, it provides library and video borrowing privileges and it affords space to practice at designated times. Outreach is vital to the life of the Victoria Yoga Centre and our newsletter is held in high esteem worldwide for it's insightful and educational articles.

At the end of 2001 there were 360 members from many countries around the world including India, England, France, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Thailand, China, Canada, and the United States. In Victoria alone, there were 166 members and those numbers are expected to grow steadily in our new centre. ☯



Victoria Yoga Centre

Has a variety of yoga publications for sale.
Call or come in to get the listing.

For sale during office hours
9am - 12:30pm, Monday to Saturday
at the Victoria Yoga Centre
202 - 919 Fort Street

Phone orders are welcome
250 - 386 - YOGA (9642)

Finance Report

by Drew Yallop

For year ending October 31, 2001

Assets

<i>Current Assets</i>	
Total Chequing/Savings	25,218.92
Total Accounts Receivable	(1,103.13)
Total Other Current Assets	33,436.60
Total Current Assets	57,552.39
Total Fixed Assets	16,714.99
Total Assets	74,267.38

Liabilities & Equity

<i>Liabilities</i>	
Total Accounts Payable	5,117.71
Total Other Current Liabilities	5,753.36
Total Current Liabilities	10,871.07
Total Liabilities	10,871.07
Total Equity	63,396.31
Total Liabilities & Equities	74,267.38 ☯

Volunteers Report

by Martha Chick

As a result of the move to the new centre, a volunteers list was created and is ever-growing (presently over 70 volunteers on the list, although not all are active volunteers).

We have volunteers sitting at the desk on weeknight evenings to help teachers out with students arriving for class and with registrations.

Volunteers are also required for cleaning and maintaining the centre, ensuring props are tidy and clean, assisting with the VYC library, distributing flyers, taking photographs of the space (before and after), knocking out the backs of metal chairs, building shelving, painting walls, and so much more!

The willingness of people to volunteer has been overwhelming. ☯

Program Committee

by Weis Pukesh

The Program Committee is made up of five members, namely: Robin Cantor, Lauren Cox, Ann Kilbertus, Leslie Hogya and Wies Pukesh as committee coordinator.

We plan and schedule all events outside the regular classes. These include events such as Friday Night Gatherings, long workshops, and short workshops. All people invited to do workshops follow the teaching of Mr. Iyengar very closely.

Last year we had seven long workshops in a variety of different places. Felicity Green's workshop, the Summer Intensive workshop (with Shirley, Leslie, Ann and Linda), and Shirley's Going Deeper workshops were all held in the YMCA building. The yearly retreat was held on Salt Spring Island. A lot of organizing for Geeta Iyengars workshop in Vancouver, May 2001, was done by our people in Victoria. In the fall the new centre on Fort Street started out with two great long workshops by Julie Gudmestad followed by Chris Saudek.

The short workshops held in October, November, and December 2001 were organized by Linda Benn. ☺

Publicity Report

by Britta Poisson

Publicity Volunteers

BIG thanks to: Elizabeth Bannister, Ty Chandler, Martha Chick, Lauren Cox, Shirley Daventry French, Hillary Ann Higgins, Doug Hart, Leslie Hogya, Chris Lea, Shannon McMurphy, Li Milne, Gwynneth Powell, Wies Pukesh, Anna Rassmussen, Sue Riddell, Amy Rutherford, Caroline Sophonow.

Publicity Goals

1. To attract new members, students and volunteers to the VYCS.
2. To bring the opening of the new centre to the

attention of the public and encourage attendance.

3. To raise public awareness about the VYCS about the Iyengar method of yoga.

4. To establish the reputation and credibility of Iyengar Yoga and its teachers.

Events and Activities

1. Production and distribution of a VYCS brochure, flyers and hand-outs.
2. VYCS t-shirts.
3. On-going public service announcements in calendars of local and regional newspapers, magazines.
4. Advertising - local, regional and national.
5. Open houses and free intro classes.
6. Santas Anonymous Fundraiser.
7. Web site.
8. Information booths at local markets, events.

Publicity Highlights

1. Feature article, *Times Colonist*: Chris Lea and Youth Yoga.
2. Feature article, *Focus on Women*: Shirley Daventry French, Yoga and the VYCS.
3. Feature story, *GO! Magazine*, CHTV: Ty Chandler and the VYC.
4. Feature article, *Ascent Magazine*: Geeta Iyengar and the May 2001 Iyengar Yoga Conference.
5. Feature article, *Times Colonist*: Shirley Daventry French and Pranayama. ☺

YOGA VIDEO NIGHT – At the Victoria Yoga Centre

Bring your own popcorn and a friend.
Be inspired!

Friday, March 22nd 6:45–8:15pm

Friday, May 10th 6:45–8:15pm

Scholarship Report

Scholarship Committee: Ty Chandler, Wendy Boyer
Liaison: Amanda Mills.

November 1, 2000 - October 31, 2001

Going Deeper	Nov. 00	\$ 60	Not disbursed
Ingelise Nherlan	Feb. 01	\$ 100	Greg Sly
Felicity Green	Mar. 01	\$ 100	J. Merryfield
Geetaji	May 01	4 @ \$ 100	

Constance Barker, Caren Liedtke, Corrine Lowen, Mona Keddy (P. George)
4 @ \$ 200

Lauren Cox, Robin Cantor, Li Milne, Linda Benn, (from teachers budget)

Salt Spring	June 01	\$ 150	W. Wimbush
		\$ 150	Glenda Hingley
		\$ 275	Presidents Fee
Intensive	July 2001	\$ 300	G. Powell
		\$ 200	Norma James
		\$ 200	Damon Klein
Going Deeper	Sept. 01	\$ 60	Rachelle Rhey
Julie Gudmestad	Oct. 01	\$ 100	Not disbursed
Chris Saudek	Nov. 01	\$ 100	Britta Poisson

Budget Total \$ 2,995

Actual Disbursed \$ 2,835

B.K.S. Iyengar Scholarship Fund

Funds raised at Dec. 2000 workshop \$ 1,253

2001 Recipients: Leslie Hogya \$ 753

Robin Cantor \$ 500 ☺



**Thank you for supporting
the Victoria Yoga Centre**

Your ongoing support is very much appreciated.

Please renew your membership to the Victoria Yoga Centre. This will be your last newsletter for 2002 until you renew your membership for 2002.

Newsletter Committee Report

by Gwynneth Powell

1. There have been many changes in the Newsletter Committee. We are now thirteen people strong. The continuing members are Shirley Daventry French, Lauren Cox, Neil McKinlay, Caren Liedtke, Greg Sly and Gwynneth Powell. There are seven new members of the committee: Nancy Searing, Melissa Worth, Veronica Dimofski, Taimi Mulder, Sandy Jacobson, Joy Steemers and Jane Munro.

2. Shirley actively continues her role as protocol advisor for the newsletter committee.

3. Lauren and Neil have retired as rotating editors but remain on the committee as artistic director and final proofing editor, respectively.

4. By the fall 2002, Caren will retire as an editor after she trains Melissa over the summer and fall issues.

5. Nancy is now our permanent advertising contact for any and all ads/notices ranging from workshops to assessment dates. This will not only lighten the load of each editor, but it is a more user friendly way for all committees to place or make changes to announcements.

6. Layout costs have gone up to include an hourly rate for time spent over and above what was originally factored into our final proofing edits.

7. We would like to consider the purchase of (or look for a donation of) a digital camera. Over the past year we have spent hundreds of dollars on film and developing and a digital camera would pay itself off within a year.

8. Douglas Fraser has volunteered his time to head up the technical advancement of our committee in terms of archiving digital photos that we have (taken on borrowed equipment). This will also be beneficial in keeping Rachelle, our web-master, updated with current photos. ☺

Radha Yoga Centre



Hatha Yoga, The Hidden Language

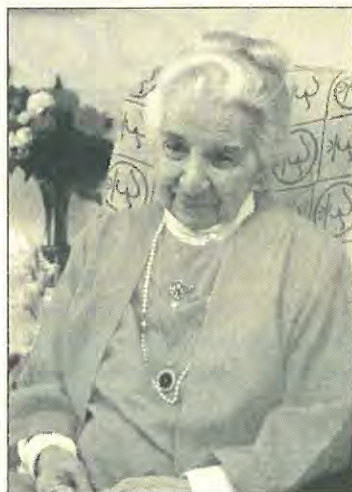
Most people approach hatha yoga simply for health. What is the reason you want to be healthy? What is the purpose of living? What is the meaning of being alive? What is your duty? What do you need a healthy body for? To continue having fun, to continue your selfishness and self-importance? You have to assess your life. What do you want to do with it?

Hatha yoga belongs to the kundalini system, which is so vast it cannot be presented in all its aspects at once. Originally hatha yoga was developed for yogis who investigated the body and tried to attain a higher state of consciousness. They asked: Why do we have a body? What is its function? Can mind or consciousness be separated from the body?

The asanas definitely benefit our health, but there it ends unless it is understood that the asanas are meant to be stepping-stones to higher consciousness. Asanas have an effect on the mind and the mind has an effect on the body. If you want to know the truth you can no longer be unaware of what is hidden in your mind.

Be diligent, and keep going, even if it's a slow one-step-at-a-time process. If you approach hatha yoga with the right intent your intuition will give you the signals. In the process of hatha yoga, insights come.

Adapted from *Hidden Language Hatha Yoga, a Teacher's Manual*, by Swami Sivananda Radha.



Swami Sivananda Radha at the Mantra Initiation ceremony, September 8, 1995.

A Life of Service

Sunday, February 3 8:00-9:00 pm

On February 2, 1956 Swami Radha received sanyas initiation from her Guru, Swami Sivananda. You are welcome to join us as we commemorate her life of service.

No charge

Workshops Schedule for the Winter Term

Relaxation Workshop

Sunday, February 10 11:00 am - 3:00 pm

Learn relaxation techniques for life's stressful occasions. Practise yoga's ancient, classical relaxation pose, and other techniques you can use at work, at home, even waiting for a bus.

Call to register

Fee: \$30

Special Intro to Hidden Language

Saturday, February 16 10:00 am - Noon

Interested in taking your hatha yoga practice a step further? Drop in for an introduction to Swami Radha's reflective approach to the classical poses.

Fee: \$8.00

Radha House Victoria • 1500 Shasta Place (off St. Charles, south of Fort) • 250-595-0177

YOGA CALENDAR

MARCH 2002

- 2 Yoga For Golfers' with Marlene Miller
11:30am - 2:30pm
- 8 Friday Night Gathering
Meet the teachers and Yoga Centre
Board, Asana Demo 6 - 8 pm
- 9 Free Class 3 - 4pm
- 15-17 Inspirations From India with Leslie
Hogya, Ann Kilbertus, Ty Chandler
- 22 Friday Night Video 6:45 - 8:15pm
- 23 Teachers' Meeting

APRIL 2002

- 5 Friday Night Gathering 6 - 8pm
- 6 Free Class 3 - 4pm
- 19-22 Junior Intermediate Assessment
in Victoria
- 27 Teachers' Meeting

MAY 2002

- 4 Free Class 3 - 4pm
- 10 Friday Night Video 6:45 - 8:15pm
- 17 Friday Night Gathering
BIG, BIG Practice
- 25 Teachers' Meeting

JUNE 2002

- 7-9 Saltspring Retreat
with Shirley Daventry French
- 14-17 Introductory Assessment in Saskatoon
- 22 Teacher's Meeting

JULY 2002

- 15-20 Teacher Training Intensive
Introductory Level I and II

AUGUST 2002

- 19-23 Teacher Training Intensive
Junior Intermediate Levels I, II & III

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION FORM:

Please complete this form and send it with your cheque or money order to the Victoria Yoga Centre Society,
c/o Constance Barker, 202-919 Fort Street, Victoria BC V8V 3K3

Membership/Subscription fee is \$30 and renewable each January

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____ Country: _____ Phone: _____

☐ Do not mail me my newsletter during sessions, I'll pick one up at my class.

☐ Receipt Required.

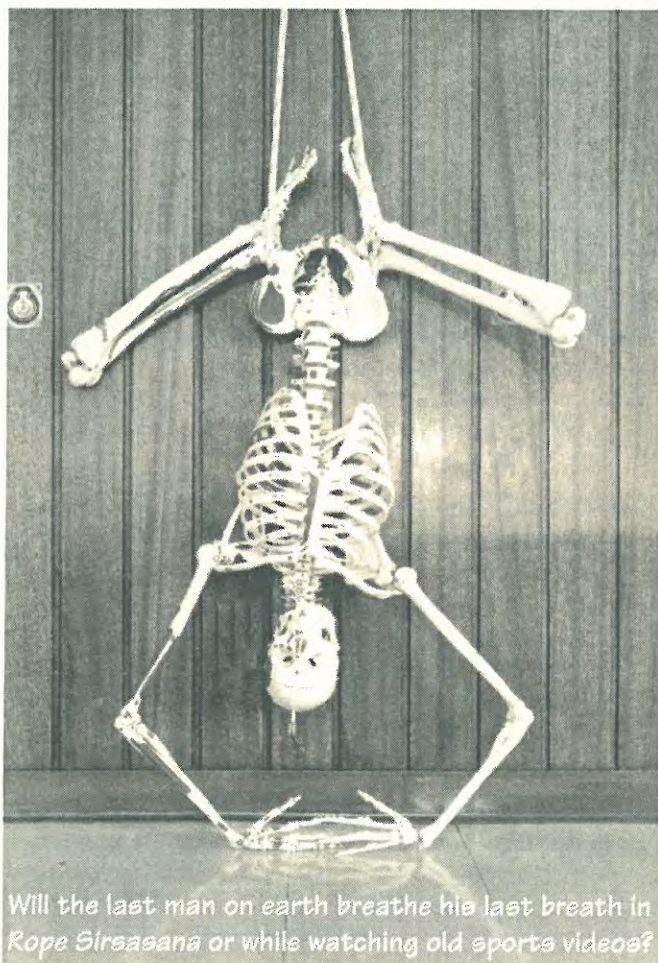
VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

NEWSLETTER



May/June 2002

Subscribe Now



Will the last man on earth breathe his last breath in
Rope Sirsasana or while watching old sports videos?



The VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
#202, 919 Fort St.

Program of Classes in the Iyengar Approach to Yoga

Term 5: April 29 – June 23, 2002

Cancellation Policy: Refunds less \$10.00 will be
given only in the case of a family emergency.

Level 1

Day	Time	Instructor
Mon.	12:30 - 1:30pm	Lauren Cox
Mon.	7:30 - 9:00pm	James Currie-Johnson
Tues.**	10:30 - 12:00pm	Leslie Hoga
Tues.	6:35 - 8:00pm	Melissa Worth
Tues.	7:30 - 9:00pm	Ty Chandler, Corrine Lowen
Wed.	6:15 - 7:45pm	Ty Chandler
Wed.	7:45 - 9:15pm	Gwynneth Powell
Thurs.	8:30 - 10:00am	Linda Benn
Thurs.	4:30 - 6:00pm	Jo Anna Hope
Fri.	9:30 - 11:00pm	Christine Dimofski
Fri.	5:00 - 6:30pm	Gwynneth Powell
Sat.	9:00 - 10:30am	Corrine Lowen
Sat.	11:30 - 1:00am	Greg Sly
Sun.	10:30 - 12:00pm	Ty Chandler

** Gentle Level 1

Level 1/2

Day	Time	Instructor
Wed.	9:00 - 10:30pm	Ty Chandler

Level 2

Day	Time	Instructor
Tues.	5:00 - 6:30pm	Wies Pukesh
Wed.	6:00 - 7:30pm	Gwynneth Powell
Fri.	9:00 - 10:30am	Linda Benn
Sat.	9:00 - 11:00am	Marlene Miller
Sun.	9:00 - 10:30am	Ty Chandler

Level 2/3

Day	Time	Instructor
Mon.	10:30 - 12:00pm	Lauren Cox
Tues.	5:30 - 7:15pm	Leslie Hoga

Level 3

Day	Time	Instructor
Thurs.	10:00 - noon	Shirley Daventry French
Thurs.	6:00 - 8:00pm	Ann Kilbertus, Leslie Hoga

Level 4

Day	Time	Instructor
Mon.	5:15 - 7:15pm	Shirley Daventry French

Drop-In

Day	Time	Instructor
Tues.	12:00 - 1:00pm	Chris Dimofski
Wed.	12:00 - 1:00pm	Leslie Hoga
Thurs.	12:00 - 1:00pm	Lauren Cox
Fri.	12:00 - 1:00pm	Ty Chandler

Pranayama

Mon.	4:00 - 5:00pm	Leslie Hoga, (4 weeks)
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Special Needs

Wed.	4:30 - 6:00pm	Ann Kilbertus, Leslie Hoga, Shirley Daventry French
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Back Care

Mon.	4:00 - 5:15pm	Linda Benn
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55 + Better

Wed.	10:30 - 12:00pm	Leslie Hoga
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Family Yoga

Wed.	3:30 - 4:30pm	Lauren Cox
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Pre-Natal

Thurs.	8:30 - 10:00am	Robin Cantor
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Restorative

Thurs.	5:30 - 7:00pm	Wendy Boyer
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Focus on Women

Fri.	10:30 - noon	Linda Benn
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The VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE #202, 919 Fort St. 386-YOGA (9642)

Editor: Gwynneth Powell

Newsletter Committee: Shirley Daventry French,
Greg Sly, Neil McKinlay, Caren Liedtke, Lauren Cox,
Melissa Worth, Jane Munro, Sandy Jacobson, Taimi
Mulder, Joy Steemers

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Page Perfect Design & Type

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The VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY is a non-profit society incorporated under the Societies' Act of the Province of British Columbia, whose purpose is "to encourage the physical, mental, and spiritual growth of its members and other interested persons of the society at large by the study and discipline of Yoga." The Society owes its inspiration to Swami Sivananda Radha and Mr. B.K.S. Iyengar.

The Society Newsletter is published regularly, providing current information on events concerning yoga in the Victoria area and the Yasodhara Ashram. Published by the VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY.

Anyone wishing to contribute articles, photographs, drawings, information or suggestions may contact the

Victoria Yoga Centre Newsletter:

202 – 919 Fort Street

Victoria BC V8V 3K3

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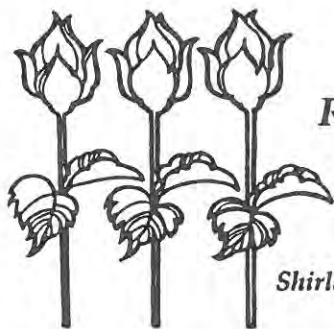
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Reflections

by

Shirley Daventry French

"Asana develops character where consciousness is made to understand it exists everywhere in the body, not just in the head" — B.K.S. Iyengar

Last fall, when I celebrated my seventieth birthday, along with the congratulations I received many comments along the lines of - "Oh no, you can't be! It isn't possible!" Even before this landmark, if ever I referred to myself as old, this was met with a quick disclaimer: "Oh you're not old!" Sometimes I would take the time to point out that if you took my age and doubled it you would reach a figure well beyond the current limit of human life, so I could hardly be called middle aged. Such logic would generally produce another quick response: "Well, you don't look old!"



Getting old is such a taboo topic in North America. Most people want to get away from it as quickly as possible. A few years ago I had what I thought was a good idea to offer a course about growing old, and had the temerity (or stupidity if I had wanted it to be a financial success) to call it just that: *Growing Old*. I did make a concession towards optimism by adding the sub-heading: *a time of growth*, and explaining that in the Eastern spiritual tradition, old age is viewed as a gift of time to focus on one's own spiritual development.

Women of sixty years of age or older who wanted to explore their spiritual goals within the framework of yogic teachings were invited to join in discussions led by myself and a fellow yoga teacher, Jessica Sluymmer. The course would provide an opportunity to talk about their aging without being dismissed or cut off with pleasant-ries, and provide an opportunity to discover how yoga can help bring meaning and value to this stage of life.

The idea for this course emerged from Jessica and my own explorations, and concretised in a conversation we had over lunch one day about our own aging process. "We are getting older," I announced sagaciously. "We are old!" Jessica (who is the same age as me) responded, and we both burst out laughing.

We did not have huge expectations that this would be a very popular course, and we were right. Several of the students from my seniors' class came up to me and said that when I offered a class called *Growing Younger* then they would be interested. This may have been said partly in jest, but in our culture it is common to deny and attempt to hide our aging, and consequently waste this gift which longevity has earned. In the end, there were five of us including the two teachers. One of the women was dying, which brought a sobriety and immediacy to these sessions.

Our inevitable demise has to be faced sooner or later, but most of us live our lives as if it will be later. Or as the American writer William Saroyan is reputed to have said when he was dying: *I knew everyone had to die but somehow I thought an exception would be made in my case*. My husband has told me about patients of his, in their eighties or nineties who were still denying their mortality. In fact, one patient of his, whom he had looked after for many years, discharged Derek as his doctor when he was close to a hundred years old, because he wanted a doctor who would make him feel better. He showed no gratitude at all for the help he had received through many medical crises where he had come close to death, or the frequent and regular house calls at all times of day. He was, of course, quite within his rights to change doctors but his new doctor was also unable to stem the tide of time and this man died shortly thereafter.

We will either grow old or die young or in mid-life. We do not have a lot of choice. If we are fortunate enough to live to be old, the quality of that life as it draws to its close is to a very large extent up to us.

Many of the compliments I received on my birthday were sincere, I know that – expressions of that person's affection or gratitude which I really appreciated. Sometimes, though, the reassurances given to me arise from that person's need to reassure themselves. The denial of my aging arises from a denial of their own. I know how I feel and how I look, and on the whole accept that. I know I do not fit into most stereotypes of what a mature Anglo-saxon female should be doing with her life as she embarks on her eighth decade; just as I did not fit into the stereotypes presented to me in my youth or middle age. I thank God and thank yoga daily for that. It has led to a difficult but interesting life just as full today as it has been all along. My time is not spent longing for my long lost youth or seeking out plastic surgeons. Certainly there are unguarded glances in the mirror or unposed photographs I do not like, but they have more to do with my state of mind of that moment than with my age.

When I became sixty I travelled to Pune to mark the occasion, and to mark my seventieth birthday I planned another visit. On the way I stopped to teach in Hong Kong where rather than an obstacle, my age was considered an asset and mentioned in the promotional literature – something to be avoided in North America, but a positive feature in a culture where old age is venerated and old people are respected.

From there I flew on to India and eventually arrived in Pune. One of the first things I do when I arrive there is go to the Institute and pay my respects to Guruji. He was at his desk in the small library which was full of students from India, Europe, Australia and North America. Many were old friends from previous visits who had read about my birthday in the newsletter. I was greeted warmly by Guruji and the rest of them and received more congratulations along with much good humoured ribbing. I felt as if I were with another branch of my family – as indeed I was. Guruji laughed along with everyone else as I lamented that the whole world now knew how old I was.

Contrast this with the scene in the yoga hall the following day during morning practice. I was lying on my back practising *Supta Padangusthasana* aware of the pain in my right knee which first arose from a fall on a slimy and slippery rock on the beach last summer. Several times, when my knee was just about healed, I hurt it again testing my patience which is not my strongest suit. In the Institute that morning as I raised my left leg, Guruji suddenly appeared and stood on my right thigh, firmly pressing it down and clearly demanding in his own inimitable way more effort from me to reduce, or better still eliminate, the space between the back of my leg and the floor. He then got me to stand up in *Tadasana* while he showed a visiting doctor how the back of my leg was drying out, and this was an invitation for disease to come in. The river of energy was flowing unevenly, blocked in places so it was overflowing on one bank while the other was parched.

Guruji does not teach entire classes at the Institute these days, but can be seen most days doing his own practice alongside everyone else. When classes are in progress taught by Geeta or Prashant, Guruji practises at the back of the room. From time to time, during a practice or class, he will emerge and intervene. When Guruji speaks, no-one wants to miss what it is he has to say, and soon a crowd of students had gathered around Guruji and myself to contemplate the sad situation at the back of my knees. Why are you blocking the flow of *prana* in this way? Why are you opening yourself up to disease? What are you going to do about it? This, as always, was the thrust of the teaching. Clearly age could not be used as an excuse here even if I had been searching for one, as I stood before my eighty three year old teacher involved in the effort to raise my consciousness.

Fortunately in Pune, help abounds in removing our obstacles, and if you can put your ego aside you will be able to hear and follow the instructions being given to you. These instructions will enable you to redirect the current within yourself to flow smoothly, to begin the process of removing the obstructions, diversions or dams which impede the flow of consciousness. This teaching is worth its weight in gold. This is why I keep going back. Such honesty and compassion is hard to come by. When you return to the Institute there is no time

wasted congratulating you on the work you have already done; the focus turns instantly to what needs to be tackled now, on what is left undone.

In his yoga sutras Patanjali describes five afflictions which disturb the equilibrium of consciousness. (Sutra II.4) These are ignorance (*avidya*), ego (*asmita*), attachment (*raga*), dislikes (*dvesa*), clinging to life (*abhinivesah*). In the following sutra he goes on to say that ignorance or *avidya* is the source of all the other obstacles.

On an earlier visit to Pune, Guruji made a statement which I noted and have thought about often. "Some people ask: 'Why do I have pain when I practise so hard?' This is vibrancy, not illumination." It has significance for me because I am disciplined, practise regularly and like to work hard. Sore knees frustrate me because they restrain me, but *tapas* or restraint is a powerful teaching tool. I do not look for or like to make excuses for myself, tending rather to be intolerant of my injuries or any incapacity. I know this. Guruji probably knows this too. But through my ignorance I get stuck and need help to unstick myself. The body does not lie. The physical signs which Guruji reads instantly reveal where and how this has happened, and acting on this he illuminates my ignorance by the force of his nature and the light of his seeing.

Had I left Pune and returned home the following day, my visit would have been worthwhile, but I had four more weeks of teaching and much more learning to come at many levels. How valuable is this opportunity to step back from routine, with time and space to reflect and consolidate a little before returning home. In the rest of that month I received much more guidance, direct and indirect, from Guruji, Geetaji and Prashantji in and out of class plus the lessons which India itself inevitably teaches me. Now, back home, what I do with all of this is up to me — *as always*.

When Guruji came to Victoria in 1984, during a speech in his honour, Swami Radha encouraged us to listen to him "not only with our ears but with our intuition because we might never hear this much wisdom with so much concern and so much compassion again."

I have been blessed to experience Guruji's compassion many times over the years, and am so grateful to have had yet another opportunity this year to listen and learn from him, giving a jump start to this new decade of my life! ☺

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From the Editor

The Newsletter Committee is pleased to present to you Geeta Iyengar's lecture on practice. In the first of a three part series, Geetaji's words on the art of practice will be presented in its entirety to inspire us all.

I would also like to extend a warm welcome home to Shirley Daventry French, from her recent travels to Hong Kong and India. We all look forward to the publication of her current *Reflections* on her practice, Pune and her return to Victoria.

The focus of this issue of *The Victoria Yoga Centre Newsletter* revolves around a question that Shirley has been asking for the last several years; "Where are all the men?" Even though historically the path of yoga was the original Boy's Club, with the teachings being passed onto men from other men, today there are very few male students in classes. The men have retreated. But where have they gone? What are they looking for? In this issue we will begin to explore this topic.

As a teacher I see a handful of men arrive as beginners each term. These men are of no particular age, occupation, race, class or ability. Still, it is not uncommon for many of them to quit before the eight-week term is up. Are their expectations not met? What did they imagine was going to happen in that class?

Then there is the remainder, the ones who defy the law of low male attendance. The ones who organize their week to accommodate their class, staying for the entirety of the session and then sign up for another round. These are the men who will join the ranks of "returning students". In my observation and experience, there is often a mental shift as one returns term after term. Intention deepens and the mind becomes more receptive and open to change.

It is these men who will then often graduate to Level Two, where again the commitment deepens. They will continue to tap into what is expected of them on this demanding path. As they glimpse the benefits of yoga from an experiential level, they become committed and sincere students. In the Level Two classes I teach, I rarely see men drop out. But curiously, they make up a very small percentage of the total class.

During our newsletter meeting the idea was brought up to find out why there was this lack of men and to look at their views. The idea was a long over-due project. Veronica Dimofski put her plan into action and began conducting surveys with male students. She asked Douglas, a practitioner who is embarking on Level Two classes, to write his own article.

As I went about assigning writers to cover certain events and topics, Roger and Harry, both new to yoga, turned out to be eager contributors. Also Doug, a dedicated student from Kelowna, submitted a poem. I then asked two more men to write their own stories. Tom who is relatively new to yoga, is a Level Two student that I see at the twice-weekly Practice Space. And Neil, now in Level Four, continues coming to class each week after more than a decade of committed involvement.

So, male yogis new and seasoned, from their twenties to their fifties; here are their accounts, opinions, observations and inspirations in this, *The Victoria Yoga Centre Newsletter* "Focus on Men" issue.

And on a different note this focus issue also contains one other piece of writing. Words from our society president, Leslie Hogya, that speak to these times of war, both in the world and within ourselves.

In the spirit of Karma Yoga –

Gwynneth Powell ☯



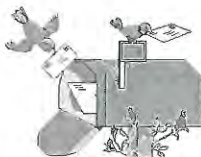
Victoria Yoga Centre

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IN OUR MAILBOX



To all the hard working folk who put out the Victoria Yoga Centre Society Newsletter, Thank you! It is, without doubt, the best piece of mail I receive. Keep up the good work- it is much appreciated.

Namaste, Sandra

With the opening of our new space, the Victoria Yoga Centre has received many offerings in the form of gifts, donations, services, time and blessings. With humble gratitude the Centre would like to thank all who have contributed to our successful start. The following are excerpts from some of the many, many letters and cards sent to the Centre from around the world upon learning of our auspicious opening:

Dear Shirley,

Congratulations! At last you'll have a place of your own. All of you must be very busy in getting the place ready. I wish the Victoria Yoga Centre a very bright and peaceful future!...All of us from Udupi send our greetings and best wishes to our Canadian brothers and sisters on the occasion of the opening of your very own Centre.

With regards, Shobha Shetty
Udupi, India

Dear Victoria Yoga Centre Society,

Congratulations on finding your new home! The accounts of the process described in your newsletter parallel our own in many ways. We share your joys and the blessings that result from having a Centre. Victoria Yoga Centre continues to be our model as a society and its teachers our major inspiration and conduit for the teachings of Guruji...

Namaste, David Piles, President
Kelowna Yoga House Society, Kelowna, BC

Dear Shirley,

...You are fortunate in having so many CIYTA teachers and I was delighted to hear that you have set up the Victoria Yoga Centre. Please accept our best wishes...

Rob Walker

The Yoga Studio, Calgary, Alberta

Congratulations Victoria Yoga Centre!

I look forward to the years to come and all of the work in between – *Tadasana, Sirsasana, Paschimottanasana*, breathe, buttocks down, tailbone in, strong thighs, shoulders back – living and breathing in the yogic moment.

Namaste, Karin Dayton

Victoria, British Columbia

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Kind permission has been granted from Lois Steinberg, PhD. to reprint the following lecture given by Geeta Iyengar. Due to its length we will publish it in three parts, with Parts II and III coming in our next two issues.

Geetaji on Practice

by Geeta Iyengar

Part I

Dr. Geeta Iyengar gave a lecture on practice at RIMYI's Monthly Meet in November 1997. The lecture was audiotaped, transcribed and edited by Lois Steinberg.

The subject of practice has many sheaths. Each sheath of the practice has to be opened by the practitioner. Why the practitioners, the *Sadhakas*, get puzzled regarding their own practice is difficult to understand.

Perhaps, in the first place, it is the doubt and confusion regarding yoga and yogic practice, the very subject and its application, which makes one to get disarrayed. If one is clear about it, the sheaths of practice get opened by themselves.

Many times Guruji has spoken elaborately on the practice of yoga. He has described how each *Sutra* of *Patanjali* can be applied to one aspect or another while practicing. As you begin to practice asana with depth, each *Sutra* unfolds its meaning - reveals itself to a depth which may not come from reading it theoretically.

Many people are hesitant to start a practice. Students may attend yoga class every day, but may lack the discipline to practice on their own. Although the same asanas have been taught several times, the students act as if they are doing them for the first time. If I haven't taught the asana for a few months they feel as though it was never taught before. So much is the covering on our memory. It fades and fails. That's why people think a new asana is being taught. The faculty of memory requires a reminder. On one hand, the memory fails and the people often fail to practice. On the other hand, if



they are practicing, they just give it a light touch, a short practice. They have only a short amount of time and just want to do a few things for 10 - 15 minutes and think they have practiced a great deal. They just

want to make an attempt. That attempt is so poor that they are not sure what they really practiced. A few say that they don't know what to practice at home; they don't have props and that's why they don't practice. To say that one has no time, no place, and no props is pure escapism. In fact, you can make use of every piece of furniture in your house as a prop. The walls, the blankets, the bed, the desk, the dining table, and the kitchen counter. Everything can be made use of for your practice. The requirement is the skill and innovation of the mind.

Basically what we need is the inner discipline. The mind has to be prepared constantly to begin the practice. A strong inclination is required. However, most of your consciousness resists practice. Only a small spark of light in your consciousness says you want to practice. You go to work because you are employed. From any other work that is a must you know that you are not exempt. However, as far as the practice is concerned, that feeling doesn't come. You don't think that it is your burden or duty. You keep practice as an option. When practice is an option, most of the time you are not likely to practice. However, if you have that inner tendency, the temptation to practice, then you are not going to fail. Somehow you will try to manage and do it. Failure to practice comes when you keep practice absolutely secondary, or even at the third or fourth level of your working list. Then it becomes the last priority as other things are given more importance. One needs to give yoga top priority. Then it does not slip off your mind.

Why does that part of your mind fail? The element of fire, *Agni*, has to light the mind to say, "Please open," and then the mind is ignited and the practice begins.



There should be an interest, a zeal to practice. What are these qualities such as interest or zeal? You may say you are interested, but you have no time. What is that in-between which fades? The fire of the mind has to be lit from within to take up a practice. This element of fire which exists in the mind has to keep you waking up every time. That's the first awakening required in your mind. If it fails, then you won't practice. The mind that keeps practice as just an option is heavy with the earth element. The earth element is so abundant in our bodies that it stops the mind and says, "Oh, let practice go today. It doesn't really matter. If not today, then tomorrow I will practice. Sure." The elements of the body play tricks on the mind. The fire of the mind begins to extinguish gradually if the earth element overpowers it. Then you don't practice. The laziness and lack of mental disposition for work result from an excess of the earth element.

Our intelligence, our actions, and every step that we take in our life have to be strong and spontaneous to keep this fire ignited inside all the time. To practice yoga regularly, you have to be alert, sharp, and quick at that moment. For instance, you may decide to practice at 7:00 A.M. Then you fail because of other duties. However, if there is a strong inclination, then you may practice a little later and you do not miss. Maybe you are able to come to the yoga class at 7:00 A.M. sharp, but to keep up this time at home is very difficult. Although you have to fix some time for yoga, it's not just the chronological time to attend to. You may miss the time, but the fire in your mind should not fade. The eagerness, or to some extent even the anxiety, a

strong desire to do the practice should be there. The word "anxiety" may not be agreeable to many people because you think that you should be very quiet to start a practice. However, to start the practice, you require a kind of anxiety inside so that you may at any moment jump into the practice and just start. Only then are you going to keep up your practice to some extent. Otherwise, it will be a failure. The fire of the mind has to continually ignite. Anxiety first, quietness later. Without a start you cannot expect the fruit.

Now, many people question when to practice and which asana has to be done first. Where to begin? These questions come from a confused mind, which is a part of the element of air. The confusion comes from inside. The want of knowledge and lack of interest leads one toward non-understanding. The element of air makes one fickle and the fire extinguishes. The doubt arises. You need to know from where to make a beginning. When you start your practice session at home you are not sure what to do, where to begin. This may result in a complete failure of your practice. This beginning is very important to all practitioners of yoga. It's not applicable only to asanas. Whether it's *pranayama* or *dhyana*, the beginning has to be definite. When you enter into your practice, if your mind is confused and you don't know what asana has to be done first, then it is your greatest failure. An uncertain beginning leads you toward confusion. Therefore, what kind of study is required?

When you come to a yoga class you find the sequence is different each time. We don't begin and end class with the same asanas each time. If we had decided from the first day of the month to the last day of the month to give a well-planned program of the same thing day in and day out, I don't think any of you would continue to attend classes. A program cannot be fixed. The mind wants variety. You don't wear the same clothes every day. You don't eat the same food every day; you know that you want variety. Doing the same thing again and again is boring to everyone. Similarly in yoga practice you need variety for the inner nourishment as well as entertainment. However, it's not for the sake of change. The teaching program is changed according to what we observe as teachers. We

see what you are learning, and what you are not learning, what you are supposed to do, and what you are not doing. All these things we watch, and accordingly plan the classes.

In a similar manner you also need to have a plan for your practice. Mentally you have to remain prepared to do a program. Once you know that program, you have not to think and choose what you are going to do next. Therefore, it may be better to practice what has been taught in class. You have to make a list of the asanas you did in the class. You have to remember the names of the asanas. You have to refer to *Light on Yoga* to find out what technique Guruji has given in his book. The teacher however, explains more than the book can because the teacher is looking at what you are doing and the instruction comes directly. If you keep a list of the asanas taught in the class in front of you, you can apply it when you are practicing. That's one way of understanding how to practice. The mental preparation is already there.

The physical body, as Guruji says, is treacherous friend. The body is *Tamasic* by nature. It never wants to do anything. Your body is like a car, the mind is the gasoline or petrol. If your body wants to do but has no petrol, the car will stand still. The body won't move unless there is a will. The will is a part of the mind. The mind is the petrol. If the mind creates the vibration in the body, the body says, "I can do now."



"The fear complex is reduced by keeping the chest open and the eyes open." -Geeta Iyengar

Otherwise, the body on its own doesn't want to do anything. With a list ready, the vehicle which is ready with the mind knows in which direction it has to go. Therefore, you should have a list in front of you if you want to follow a properly outlined program.

There are other ways of understanding the way to practice. If the mind is dull, you have to jump into the practice at once. At RIMYI, we often start classes with standing asanas, such as: *Adho Mukha Vrksasana*, *Pincha Mayurasana*, *Uttanasana*, and *Adho Mukha Svanasana*. Sometimes we start with *Surya Namaskar* (jumpings): *Uttanasana*, *Adho Mukha Svanasana*, *Urdhva Mukha Svanasana*, *Chaturanga Dandasana*, and so on. On the other hand, sometimes the classes begin with *Supta Virasana* and *Supta Baddha Konasana*, where you rest. Why are these differences in the beginning of the class? It depends upon the weather, the state of the mind, the immediate future plan of the class and several other things. Suppose you are coming to the evening class. The weather is hot. The body heat and fatigue are at a high level because of the heat outside and the day's work. Your mind has been engaged on so many things, such as office work, tensions, a long drive, family responsibilities, etc. The mind cannot be converted easily to the yogic mind. The mind is charged with so many thoughts, responsibilities, problems, traffic, tensions, the hurrying-up program of the whole day. You have to do several things one after another; and the mind is rushed and crushed with everything.

Though the fire in the mind exists to do yoga, it is covered with ashes. Therefore, it doesn't get ignited. The mind does not get tuned. In that case, when the mind is unrelaxed and the body is fatigued, you need rest. Then the classes begin with *Supta Virasana*, *Matsyasana*, and *Supta Baddha Konasana* or even *Supta Swastikasana* as per need. Your body first recovers from fatigue, the nerves are freed from tension, anxiety, and shakiness. For a while you keep all those mental involvements at rest. Then a fresh mind starts to come to the surface. When that fresh mind comes to the surface, you get yourself ready to do the next asana. Try to understand the psychology behind it.

Suppose it's a beginners' preparatory class. Their procedure is different. In that class we don't start them

in *Supta Virasana* or *Supta Baddha Konasana*. You may ask, "Why? Are they not tired?" They are also tired, having faced the heavy traffic and done the household work all day. The beginner's mind, however, is quite different from the mind which has done the practice for years. The beginners come with great enthusiasm. They want to learn. The "learning mind" is fresh in them. The fire of the mind remains burning due to enthusiasm. This fire should not be extinguished.

Therefore, they do not need the passive asanas. Again they have to be reminded what they did in their previous class in order to take the next step. On the other hand, some of the beginners may avoid the practice, or avoid going to class. The mind is not receptive to do yoga. The mind oscillates in a beginner. Therefore, the mind has to jump on the practice and pick up the dynamic action. They want something catchy. They become dull in resting poses. Therefore, for a beginner, it is a reverse process. They like to do dynamic actions first. Following those with the passive asanas makes them quiet.



Now, what are we supposed to learn? When you are on your own, practicing, you have to understand your state of mind. You are not beginner or advanced. You are just a practitioner, an aspirant. You have to study your own mind as a *Sadhaka*. As far as the classwork is concerned, we may classify your status as a preparatory or advanced student so that the learning process during the practice goes in a proper way.

Years back I gave the first practical program, entitled "Yoga in Action: How to Begin the Practice." I discussed how to practice with different problems, mental stages, physical stages, the constitution, the capacities. Most of the time, the people concentrate only on the achievement of asana and they catch the details and practice accordingly. Now I want you to feel mentally your state of mind when you begin your practice. You have to classify your capacity and what

kinds of asanas you need to charge yourself. Suppose you find that physically you are not tired but you can't start dynamically straightaway. You may do a little *Uttanasana* and *Adho Mukha Svanasana*, repeatedly, until you find the life coming back. In other words, the circulation of the blood that occurs inside makes the mind fresh. That's the fire that makes you to proceed, thoughtfully, to what you will do next. These two asanas break the physical laziness. Similarly, you may

do *Adho Mukha Vrksasana* or *Pincha Mayurasana* as another way of bringing blood supply to the brain so that your mind will then be quick to catch what to do next. The mind becomes fresh and the mental lethargy is broken. The fire of the mind is kept ignited in this manner. When you are tired, then do *Supta Virasana* and *Supta Baddha Konasana* so the body recovers and the mind, the fire, gets ignited and gets cleared. In your practice you have to have a balance between the passive and the active asanas. To have a dynamic feeling in the asanas you activate yourself in different ways. For example, beginners are dull in the

sense that they are not sure what they are supposed to do. The expanse of their awareness is up to their limits. When they are learning in a class, they are asked to concentrate on the limbs of the body - the arms and legs. They have to feel different stretches, the extensions of the limbs. The teacher says, "Put your left foot in this manner, let your arch of the foot be like this. Let the elbows be like that; let your arms be straight. Let your spine extend. Watch your chest. Watch your spine." They get the direct instructions from the teachers. However, nobody is there to tell them these things when they are practicing on their own.

Sometimes the students ask whether they can audiotape the class so that they can listen to it and practice. I say no, because the tape will be running forward and you won't be catching anything because you have to link your actions with the speed of the

tape. Instead of your mind getting involved in the very doing of asana, it will be listening, which is incorrect. In fact, you have to work yourself. You have to synchronize the dynamic movement of the mind with the action of the body. The tape-recorded instructions will not help in this sense. You have to record your feelings, the sensitivity in your mind. ☯

This entire lecture was recently published in the Iyengar Yoga Odyssey 2001 magazine entitled Sadhana. Sadhana was produced by Ms. Steinberg as the official conference magazine for Geetaji's visit to California last year.

Sadhana contains original photographs as well as a colour centrefold of Mr. Iyengar's practice. The magazine is still available for wholesale and retail distribution. Information on the latter is at the IYNAUS website, inya.us.org.

Please note that the photographs shown were taken at the Canadian Conference in May of 2001. The photos were taken by Nancy Bleck and Susan Stewart.

Father Joe Peiera

**October 25-27, 2002
Cumberland, BC**

Father Joe is coming to enrich our whole being-body, mind and spirit – through the practice of yoga. His work is deep and thorough, leaving us cleansed and refreshed.

His teaching reflects his deep understanding of yoga. His experience as a Jesuit priest and counsellor brings a special dimension to his work.

Cost \$150.00

Enquiries? Call Vicky at 250-338-7973
or email: vjpalmpole@hotmail.com

There is a wait list for this workshop.



The
VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE'S

BIG BIG PRACTICE



Date: Friday, May 17

at the Victoria Yoga Centre
202-919 Fort Street

Asana Practice 6 - 7:30pm

Potluck dinner to follow

Bring food to share and
your own plate/cutlery

*Everyone is welcome to join us.
Bring a friend, partner or family member.
By donation. Free to members.*

REVIEW WORKSHOP

Further Inspirations From India

by Harry Abrams

Before I share with you some impressions of the three day workshop in mid-March, I'd first like to regale you with a story about my first experience with a yogi.

In 1974, I lived in the B.C. interior town of Revelstoke. Following work stints as a section gang railroad labourer and in a sawmill, I had the great good fortune to be introduced to Elio Pradolini. Mr. Pradolini, scion of a family of building contractors, was then in the twilight of his years, and in need of a helper. I would become his final carpenter's apprentice.

Elio's father was brought to Canada from Northern Italy by the Canadian Pacific Railway at the beginning of



the 20th century, as a member of a specially selected group of skilled artisans imported to help build the great Western railway hotels. After years of masonry work on the Chateau Lake Louise, Elio's father relocated to Revelstoke, where he prospered as a leading builder and developer and raised a large family.

In his teens, the athletically-inclined Elio was a local sports legend. Excelling in boxing and baseball, he received a higher education away at Gonzaga University in Northern Washington, then returned home to join the family enterprise, adding a lumber and building supply store.

Elio Pradolini had studied yoga by correspondence course since the 1930's. The teachings of Parmahansa Yoganada. By the time I'd met him, he was, I reckon, very advanced in his studies; and had already taken the oath of a renunciate. Elio practised alone, sitting cross-legged on a sagging little bed in the back of his sparsely furnished house; rising before sunrise to do his *Pranayama* (breathing) practice, then meditating intensively again for hours at the end of each work day. Once a strikingly handsome man, now a cancerous suppurating tumour covered by a leaky bandage disfigured half of his face. That being his fate, he fought it bravely with every waking breath, and still put in a full day's service, never complaining, and never using painkilling drugs. He was unforgettable, even unfathomable.

He'd pause for a moment on the scaffold, after I'd handed up a replenishing bucket of mortar. He'd put down his trowel, dab at the edge of his bandage with a scrap of sodden tissue, then looking at me sort of sideways with his one good eye, might say:

"You know Harry, this life is but an illusion. You and I are merely playing roles in a kind of dream that may have been foreordained for us perhaps many lifetimes ago...you could only benefit from study at the foot of a spiritual master..."

Out of deference, I'd clumsily agree, then veer away to continue moving bags of cement or digging ditches. Only now, nearly thirty years later do I begin to realise how much more he could have taught me.

Further Inspirations From India was the first time I spent more than ninety minutes in a yoga class. I was there for three days. It was so beneficial to have extra time to get a more broad understanding of the wherefore and why of the Iyengar lineage, because with all due respect, our usual classes tend to be pretty down-to-business as time is of the essence in a one hour class.



This weekend afforded the time to laugh and hear many stories of the Ramamani Iyengar Yoga Memorial Institute (RIMYI) in Pune, from folks we knew, liberally seasoned with pithy quotes from

Gita or Guruji, and a narrated slide show added as a special treat.

Our three instructors, Leslie Hogya, Ann Kilbertus and Ty Chandler really put us through a challenging and interesting progression over the course of the weekend. One of my favourite moments happened during the introduction, when we were given an Iyengar conundrum. Students taking classes at the Institute are told explicitly that they are not to immediately start passing on these new teachings as soon as they get home. They are cautioned to first let their understanding sink in, to come to understand the depth of the teachings on an experiential level.

My favourite quote from the workshop was that of Prashant Iyengar, "Learn from the heart, and not the brain!" Though it sounds so obvious, I believe it holds the key to unlearning years of bad habits, and being able to finally let go and surrender to the teachings.

Leading the goal-oriented, highly competitive and time-managed life that I do, I found myself inadvertently growing impatient with the repetition of some of our first *asanas*. With a little concentration on my part, those irritating thoughts passed. I was inspired to re-approach something as essential as *Utthita Trikonasana*,

(triangle) in a new light.

Once one learns to relax the mind and concentrate on the shape of the pose, there are always refinements. One in particular that I retained was adroitly demonstrated by Leslie Hogya, as learned in Pune directly from Mr. Iyengar: Assume Triangle position. Then briefly bend the front leg to a 90 degree angle (as in Warrior II). Then slowly straighten the front leg back into position. Note the new extra stretch along the entire upper side of the torso. I was impressed! It's a very tangible difference. I'll always have a special affection for the ancient pose because of its early significance for my own development of understanding.

For nearly all of my adult life, I've suffered from back and joint pain that has been alleviated by periodic chiropractic adjustment. Two months ago, the morning after a hard day's physical labour, I awoke feeling very stiff in my low back. It was a familiar feeling, caused by misalignment. I cleared a bit of space on my floor, took position in *Tadasana*, sprang my feet wide and assumed *Trikonasana*. As I did so, there was a clicking sound in my sacral area and some pain relief, as my body sprang at least partially back into proper alignment. I still had to go for a final adjustment, but now that I have tasted the possibilities, I hunger every day to learn more.

Did my contact so long ago with Elio Pradolini directly influence my eventual arrival at Iyengar Yoga?

Certainly at the time of my life that I knew him, I was nowhere near so inclined. Perhaps the answer is more to be found in one of



Guruji's parables from *Light on Yoga*.

"...the man who combines within his mortal frame knowledge, love and selfless service is holy and becomes a place of pilgrimage..." ☯



Where are the Men?

by Veronica Dimofski

I would like to thank the following men for contributing their time and insights to this article: Doug Bourque, Vince Cummings, Doug Hart, James Currie-Johnson, Jim Knox, Jim Riddell, Tom Severson, Mark Sieben, Greg Sly and Byron Smith. -Veronica

My curiosity about the low attendance rates of men in yoga classes prompted the writing of this article. As a regular student at both the Victoria Yoga Centre and previously the Toronto Yoga Centre, I noticed over the years that women tend to outnumber men by a ratio of approximately 5:1. I set out to explore what it is about yoga that keeps men from flocking to classes. I decided to interview ten men at the Victoria Yoga Centre to gain understanding from their standpoint. The results of those interviews led to my conclusions that cultural myths about yoga, as well as gender stereotypes, contribute to some of the reasons for men's limited attendance in classes.

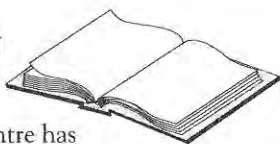
The men I interviewed have varying degrees of experience. Their levels range from Level 1 to Level 4. Their ages range from 21 to 53. Although this sample doesn't represent all men, common responses showed some patterns. While the men's reasons for beginning yoga varied from hearing or reading about the practice and its benefits, to wanting to try an alternative mode of fitness, a common response was to release physical pain in the body.

Their responses as to why they continued to practise, however, varied. For example, a few of the men said they continued to practise due to the combined effects of physical and mental relaxation. Keeping the body healthy and strong included healing any imbalances or pains in the body, including those incurred from old sports injuries, and paying attention to pain, rather than ignoring it. Another common response for continuing to practise was increased self-awareness and a greater level of energy throughout the day. Decreased mental fatigue and the dissipation of anxiety by working with the body in a non-aggressive manner allowed space for more self-honesty that extended to genuine interactions with others. One of the men commented that he felt

2002 Upcoming Assessment Dates:

June 14-17	Introductory Syllabus	Saskatoon
Oct. 18-21	Introductory Syllabus	Montreal
Nov. 15-18	Junior Intermediate I	Calgary

Yoga Library



The Victoria Yoga Centre has a library. It can be used at any time the Centre is open to sit quietly and look at books. Occasionally it will be closed for meetings. Books can be checked out using a simple self-serve system. Follow the directions in the booklet on top of the bookcase.

Borrowing is for Yoga Centre members only. Non-members may feel free to browse. Anyone can become a member by paying \$30 and filling out a membership form.

Please return borrowed materials promptly.



also false because it implies all women are flexible and that women don't have stiffness in their bodies. The human body, especially in Western societies, can be stiff simply because of accustomed lifestyles - sitting in chairs, or sitting at computers over extended

periods affecting one's posture. Gender therefore has nothing to do with who can benefit from practising yoga.

In a recent *Yoga International* article entitled: "First Light: Seeing yoga in context", author Pandit Rajmani Tigunait reinforces how myths about yoga reduce people's potential to see its transformative powers: "When we take yoga postures out of context and practice them in isolation from the other aspects of yoga, their efficacy is lost and they are reduced to being a means for increasing flexibility, toning muscles, and making us more energetic". In other words, to see yoga as merely a physical activity is a waste of time and the practitioner misses out on the other treasures that come with regular practice. Some of the numerous benefits include: emotional healing, including the ability to forgive oneself and others; increased concentration; intuition; peacefulness and a feeling of safety. As external seeing moves toward internal seeing, truth is replaced by illusion and internal power replaces external definitions of power.

more emotionally balanced. As a result, he became immune to minor irritations in his day which would have agitated him in the past. His co-workers even commented on the change in his attitude as being more positive. Generally, the men saw the practice of yoga as the opportunity for self-education because, as one man said, "The asanas reveal the personality". In addition, many enjoyed the philosophical teachings through readings of *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* by their teachers because the lessons could be applied to each person's life.

The interviews reveal the men's perceptions of yoga as being more than a physical activity. Since the mind is co-operating with the body, their responses illustrate they are experiencing a holistic approach to health, not simply doing a physical activity. Increased body awareness, especially where there is pain or stiffness, eventually penetrates the deeper layers of one's being toward emotional awareness and mental awareness. With increased practice, chatter becomes conscious dialogue between mind and body. This was evident through the responses since "simplifying my life" and "becoming less attached to material things" were some of the answers to the question: "How has your life changed since you've been practising yoga?" Making conscious decisions and redefining one's values were some of the effects of continued practice.

Yet myths about yoga prevail. One myth is that one has to have a flexible body before even stepping into a yoga class. Such myth does a disservice to men because it discourages those who are curious from trying. The assumption that women are better at yoga is



When the men were asked why they thought very few men attend yoga classes, common themes arose. Among them were that yoga is non-competitive. To be



in a yoga class means that you're working with your own body and not comparing your poses with your neighbours. This can be difficult to achieve initially because of how we define success. Many of us, regardless of gender, unconsciously bring this competitive nature to the classroom as beginner students. We either learn to let it go or drop out because we've become discouraged or too driven.

Another recurring theme was that a lot of men don't perceive yoga to be masculine. In fact, the interviewees agreed that yoga is perceived as a "feminine concept" in Western society. Where did such a myth originate? Is it the fact that most yoga magazines feature women on their covers? Who benefits from this misinformation? Certainly it translates into limited understanding at the expense of men who may feel excluded from experiencing the benefits of yoga.

One comment about men's perceptions about yoga was, "The benefits of yoga don't seem as tangible as lifting weights". This comment reminded me of one of the philosophies of yoga – that attachment to the material world and to sense gratification leads to pain. I was left wondering whether men who exercise as their only source of self-care and self-awareness experience more emotional pain than men who practise yoga. In Chapter 2 of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, Lord Krishna explains to his student, Arjuna, the perils of being

attached to the material world. Lord Krishna states:

2.62. While contemplating the objects of the senses, a person develops attachment for them, and from such attachment lust develops, and from lust anger arises.

Thus attachment to goals perpetuates an external focus which contradicts the path of yoga. The yogis guide us to be free from lust and anger by withdrawing our senses inward (*Pratyahara*). We are encouraged to go inward to know ourselves, to find truth. This is the goal of yoga.

The concept of power is socially constructed. Power is therefore viewed as a scarce resource that must be sought out. Power in this sense is external. It is attached to fear because it is perceived as limited and not something everyone can have. Many people's self-images are reflected by these external definitions of power – age, beauty, physique, money, possessions. All of this competition and comparing oneself to others can lead to judgments and low self-worth. Authentic power is internal and unlimited, but one must disengage from the external world and go inward to find it. The practice of yoga is one way to achieve this.

I applaud the men who transcend cultural definitions of masculinity and create their own definitions. A yoga class is not a space reserved for women; it is a sacred space that is inclusive of all people who are aiming to transcend the physical body by using it as a tool toward spiritual awareness and growth, where conscious decisions have the power to transform one's external world. ☯

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Tigunait, Pandit Rajmani. "First Light: Seeing yoga in context". *Yoga International*, January 2000, Issue No. 63, p. 67.

The VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY
is pleased to announce



A Workshop *with* Ramanand Patel

for Levels III and IV
students and teachers

September 27 – 29, 2002
Victoria Yoga Centre

Friday 6:00 - 8:30pm.
Saturday 12 noon - 3:00pm.
4:00 - 6:00pm.
Sunday 11:00am. - 2pm.

Ramanand Patel is a dedicated student of Yoga Master B.K.S. Iyengar and is one of the world's foremost teachers of Iyengar Yoga. The sensitivity, awareness and technical refinement of Ramanand's teaching come from a deep background of learning and practice. His workshops are challenging, enlightening and fun.

Registration:

For Victoria Yoga Centre members: May 13, 2002
For non-members: May 27, 20002

Fees:

Members: \$175 (plus gst = \$187.25)
Non-members \$205 (plus gst = \$219.35)

Cancellation Policy:

Refunds minus 10% if your space can be filled

Payment:

Please make cheques for the full amount payable to the Victoria Yoga Centre. and mail to:

The Victoria Yoga Centre
202 - 919 Fort Street
Victoria, B.C.
V8V 3K3

Enquiries to:

386-YOGA(9642) or Lauren Cox (250) 382-3287



Each year during the Victoria Teacher Training Intensive, projects are assigned to be completed over the course of the week. Last summer one assignment was to study The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. To deepen understanding, students were to take the first sutra in the second chapter and personalize it. The following poem came of that philosophy assignment.

by Doug Bauer, Kelowna, B.C.

II.I tapah svadhyaya Isvarapranidhanani kriyayogah

Burning zeal in practice, self-study and study of scriptures, and surrender to God are the acts of yoga.

The cracking of Tapas fire aflames the applause of the wind through the leaves of trees
Fire light dances within me and shines upon the tools of work toward the divine
Ash of charred sensual desires compost into most fertile of ground

Led by the still waters of Svadhyaya I peer deep into my reflection
My heartbeat is the most sacred of mantras
Each breath turns a page of the scriptures

My palms unfold as lotus petals in the morning light
From within its centre wafts the fragrance of Isvara Pranidhana
This mudra an expression of giving my entire self to the divine
Each movement I surrender as an offering to the light

Now Full

The 18th Annual Retreat at the Saltspring Centre

with Shirley Daventry French June 7 to 9, 2002 is
now full. Names are being taken for the waitlist

Please contact :

Corrine Lowen, 3731 Winston Cr., Victoria, BC,
V8X 1S2 Phone 250-389-0644

YOGA VIDEO NIGHT – At the Victoria Yoga Centre

Bring your own popcorn and a friend.
Be inspired!

Friday, May 10 6:45–8:15pm

Friday, June 14 6:45–8:15pm

Friday, Sept. 20..... 6:45–8:15pm

YOGA PROPS FOR SALE

Blankets (Grey Wool)	\$37.45
Bolsters	\$55.00
Eyebags (Barley)	\$ 8.03
Eyebags (Flax)	\$10.70
Foam Blocks (Pkg. Of 4)	\$26.75
Sandbags	\$21.40
Sticky Mats (Blue, Green, Purple)	\$42.80
Straps (Regular length)	\$10.70
Wooden Blocks	\$21.40

(All prices include GST)

For sale during office hours
9am - 12:30pm, Monday to Saturday
at the Victoria Yoga Centre
202 – 919 Fort Street

250 – 386 – YOGA (9642)

On Becoming a Yogi in the Middle Years

by Tom Severson

My yoga experience began many years ago. The class was offered by the daughter of a published yoga master from New York City. This was North Carolina in 1971. I was young, I had always been physically fit, and my memory of the experience was not traumatic, in fact, I think I was actually the best in my class. Yeah that's it. The best in the class. (Cue the harps for dream sequence).

Fast-forward thirty years. Iyengar Yoga. I'm no longer the best in the class, in fact I'm in a class shared with many of my contemporaries. I have the rigidity and stiffness of an old man, which I'm not. Really. But here I am vibrating and sweating. I position myself in view of the clock so that I can count down the minutes to *Savasana*, my salvation from this torturous humiliation. I'm punctual for every single class. I attempt home practice, albeit a most lame attempt as I recall. Following the completion of this class I even register for a second, which, unfortunately, I never attend.

A year later, with no real compulsion to return to yoga, a good friend suggested I might join a class that was starting the next day, and there was room in it if I called right away. I had been looking for something to help me with my aches and pains, and perhaps to seek out, if not a road block at least a detour from my descent into aging.

My friend was so compelling and encouraging that I should have another go at yoga, I registered and started the next day. In all honesty, there was no magical shift from the previous year in my physical ability, except now I felt more committed to the necessity of doing something proactive towards health and well being in my life.



In my first class I still vibrated and sweat and watched the clock's minute hand casually drop to the six and slowly makes its way to the twelve. And as promised, the timely salvation of *Savasana*. The difference this time was that I took another class, and another, and continue to take classes. I bought a book and began to

practice at home in earnest. My friend and yoga mentor was always encouraging of my progress, offering suggestions and correction when needed.

In asking more questions and pursuing readings I found myself becoming not just engaged in the practice of yoga, but the spirit as well. I was no longer compelled to register for yoga because I have to choose something to get my lazy bones in shape, or marching myself out the door

to attend class because I feel guilty for good money spent. I became a member of the yoga centre because I wanted to be part of something positive shared with others. I come twice a week to the Practise Space to do yoga with other members. I'm half way through my first term in Level Two. I am committed to yoga in a way that I have not experienced in any other activity.

So what does it all mean? I'm not really sure of anything these days, except that yoga is giving me a lot to think about. Will I continue much longer? I have no intention of quitting, especially when I have never felt such physical comfort in a long, long time. And, I'm giving thought to down hill skiing, rock climbing, base jumping, and, and... well... I'll start with skiing. And this time around, I'm feeling pretty sure I'll stick with yoga, for a while longer. ☯

“

*Less thinking
brings more clarity.*

-Geeta Iyengar

Presence of Community

by Roger Ogden

As I recall the events of my life and all the pleasures and pains, they fall into this beautiful, guided, meaningful pattern. Inevitably all these events combined have created the path that brings me to this moment. Registering for yoga classes is one such event. Finding myself at the Friday Night Gathering is another.

When I recently moved to Victoria I had envisioned finding yoga instruction, preferably in the Iyengar method. The first day I arrived in the city, I picked up a

teachers with a chance to meet them. All of this for FREE! Wow...what a deal!

Friday arrives. At 6:00pm I sheepishly enter the studio where the practice will be lead by Greg Sly. Lots of people have shown up, at least thirty or more. I find my space on the floor and lay out my mat. Magically, there is room for everybody. The class is a mix of all levels, children to adults, students to instructors; there seems to be something for everyone to work on. One of the gems of Mr. Iyengar's legacy is that even an advanced student can find something new in *Tadasana*.

Greg's voice, directness, humour, humility, and competence help me to forget my uncertainty and focus on the task at hand during the one hour practice. Everyone is drawn into the centre of the practice within. Thank you Greg. And *Savasana* is well taken.

The lights go on to invite the outer world. The room is re-organized and it is prepared for the teacher's demonstration. In *The Tree of Yoga*, Mr Iyengar refers to an aspect of Hatha Yoga as performance art. This is what we enjoy about the demonstration. Under the direction of Robin Cantor it is truly an exhibition designed to entertain.

The performance is challenging, beautiful and inspiring. Robin, like a master choreographer, guides the teachers through a beautifully synchronised sequence of asanas that shows many of the positions and variations from beginner to more advanced. Most interesting and



Monday Magazine and read the ad, "New Session in Iyengar Yoga Commencing Immediately". Coincidence? Perhaps. When I went to sign up at the centre I found out that its location was only a seven minute walk from where I reside. Coincidence? Perhaps not.

Registration Day was a bustle but I got myself on the roster. I read the brochures at the front desk and the notices on the bulletin board. I felt a little intimidated by all the students coming and going from the studios, they all looked so experienced. I am served by very patient, helpful people at the front desk and I decide to become a member of their Yoga Society. As a member I will be able to attend the scheduled free Practice Space and access those rare books by Mr. Iyengar (along with others) that are in the Library. I am invited and I make a plan to attend the Friday Night Gathering. This particular Gathering would include a group practice, a pot luck dinner and an asana demonstration by the





inspiring to me, perhaps because of its newness, is the work with the wall ropes called *Yoga Karunta*. *Tadasana* can be done upside down in the ropes and is an alternate way to do a headstand! But that is only the beginning. There were some very impressive backbends and some very intense forward bends. I can hardly wait to experience this for myself. The ropes allow many of the asanas to be practised with a completely different relationship to gravity, building yet another dimension of openness, strength, flexibility and most importantly, attitude.

The teachers and Board members are introduced at the conclusion of the demonstration and by this time I have almost forgotten that dinner will follow. Almost, but not quite. On one side of the room a long table of sweets: Cookies, cakes, decadent delights and wholesome, whole grain goodies. I was glad to hear that some yogis like chocolate. (Does this mean I've actually mastered something in yoga?) On the other side of the room, a long table of savories including soups, pastas, breads, interesting and delicious things like millet hummus, cheeses and stews. All vegetarian and

“Don't let the joints be loose, they are like loose nuts and bolts, they make noise - loose joints make noise in the mind.”

-B.K.S. Iyengar

something from and for everyone.

Leslie Hogya's blessing of the table invoked a spirit of gratitude and community, of giving and receiving, of friendship, love and respect. This connectedness to each other is effortlessly sustained throughout our mealtime.

I enjoyed my first gathering. I am glad I made time for it. Not only did I sign up for my first yoga class, but I have discovered a community. Is this a coincidence? Perhaps. Perhaps not.

The next Friday Night Gathering is The BIG, BIG Practice on May 17. Don't miss it! Come one, come all...and bring a friend or two. ☺

Practice Space

Scheduled practice space
for Victoria Yoga Centre
members only.

Wednesdays 1:45pm – 3:45pm
Sundays 1:30pm – 4:30pm

This IS NOT a led practice!

Be prepared to follow your own sequence. Resources are available for practice ideas.

Times subject to change.
Please check the Victoria Yoga
Centre Bulletin board.

Practice Space



THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

is pleased to announce two

IYENGAR YOGA TEACHER TRAINING INTENSIVES

July 15 to 20, 2002

with Leslie Hogya, Ann Kilbertus, Linda Benn, Marlene Miller

This six-day intensive will focus on preparing teachers for assessment in Iyengar Yoga at Introductory Level 1 or 2. If space is available and with the teachers' permission, students may also attend to enjoy a week of yoga. Leslie, Ann, Linda and Marlene are experienced teachers certified at the Intermediate Level through the Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers' Association. They are all involved in teacher training in Victoria and several rural British Columbia communities.

August 19 to 23, 2002

with Shirley Daventry French

This course is for certified Iyengar Yoga teachers who wish to prepare for assessment at Junior Intermediate Level 1, 2 or 3. Shirley is a long-time student of B.K.S. Iyengar who has awarded her a senior teaching credential. She has been teaching Yoga for thirty years and is one of North America's most experienced teachers in the Iyengar tradition. Shirley has been training teachers in Victoria and throughout Canada for many years.

- * In both Intensives there will be daily classes in asana and pranayama, yoga philosophy and the art and science of teaching.
- * As in previous years, Iyengar Yoga teachers and experienced students from other countries are also invited to attend.

Fees: \$475.00 + 7% GST

To receive the application and registration forms, please contact:
Victoria Yoga Centre, 202- 919 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C. V8V 3K3
Telephone: 250-386-9642

or Ann: 250-598-0976 Linda: 250-478-0757

Email: Linda: lbenn@islandnet.com or Ann: stpatrick@entirety.ca



The Victoria Yoga Centre

Is pleased to offer scholarships for the following two workshops:

Saltspring Retreat, June 7-9, 2002

Please apply by May 1

Intensive, July 15-20, 2002

Please apply by May 15

Intensive, August 19-23, 2002

Please apply by June 15

Apply in writing to The Scholarship Committee and give to your teacher or mail to:

Scholarship Committee
Victoria Yoga Centre Society
202-919 Fort St. Victoria BC V8V 3K3

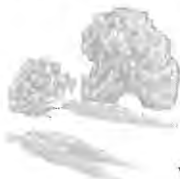
Applicants must be members of the Victoria Yoga Centre and supply a current phone number and address. For more information contact Amanda Mills or Wendy Boyer at 386-9642

A special thanks

to Jim Riddell for sanding all of our new slantboards and for tying all those beautiful knots in the ropes.

A Call For Recipes

Inspired by the wonderful dishes prepared at Friday Night Gatherings, this is a call for your favorite original vegetarian recipes which will be compiled into a cookbook as a fundraiser for VYC. Please send your recipes to: martha.chick@shaw.ca with "recipe" in the subject line.



Scholarship Applicant Criteria:

Scholarships are offered to Victoria Yoga Centre members who have demonstrated:

- A sustained interest in yoga by way of regular attendance in asana classes and workshops.
- Appreciation for the uniqueness of the Iyengar method.
- Willingness to study yoga philosophy and psychology.

Candidates may apply directly to the Scholarship Committee or be nominated by a Yoga Centre member or teacher.

To be considered for scholarships, the applicant must be a member in good standing of the Victoria Yoga Centre. Generally, an individual may be eligible to receive a scholarship only once in a program year.

Application Procedure:

Application and/or nominations must be submitted in writing and include:

- Applicant's name, address and phone number.
- Name of the applicant's yoga teacher.
- A brief description of the reason(s) for the request.

Applications are due at least 4 weeks prior to the applicable workshop or event.

IYENGAR YOGA STUDENT INTENSIVE

with certified teachers

Early Morning Sadhana,

6:30am - 8:00am:

I. June 24 to 28

II. July 2 to 6

Fee: \$90 per 5 days,

\$160 for 10 days.

Pertimes with teachers permission.

Victoria Yoga Centre 386-9642

How to Ground Myself in the Light

by Leslie Hogya

We are facing a world gone crazy with public acts of terror, a U.S. President on a rampage with weapons of mass destruction in ready supply. In British Columbia, we have a Premier who is slashing at the foundations of democracy.

How can I do anything to stop this? I must first root out all prejudice within me, and all negative feelings I might have against myself and others. I must be grounded in peace in every action, so I can reflect that peace outwardly.

I can protest in peaceful ways, by writing letters or participating in marches. I can work for change. First and foremost that change must be the work on myself. I can show tolerance first to myself when I make a mistake.

I recently had an encounter with someone, and I left feeling unhappy with my part in it. I thought again and again of what I should have done or not done. I see two problems with what happened, a lack of time to finish the interaction, and my own reluctance to go out on a limb because my ego does not like to do or say the unpopular. So the interaction ended with this person having triggered something in me and me reacting poorly.

Practising the Divine Light Invocation* is a very effective tool for me that helps me focus my energy from negative to positive, to leave it in Higher hands. This prayer was given to Swami Radha, founder of Yashodhara Ashram in Kootenay Bay, B.C. and she generously passed this on to her students during her life.

I am created by Divine Light
I am sustained by Divine Light
I am protected by Divine Light
I am surrounded by Divine Light
I am ever growing into Divine Light

Only when I fill myself with light can I extend the Light

to others. This practice helps me accept that I am not perfect, that I have failings, and helps me move on.

Writing and reflecting also help me learn from what I have done. Writing helps me think more clearly than if I just let things stew around in my mind.

When I practise Iyengar Yoga, the fire of the practice burns away impurities. I must bring my self into alignment, which helps me bring my higher self into alignment.

"God is the median line"

-B.K.S. Iyengar

When I am on that median line, I am not wavering, my mind is not jumping around, I am centred. When I practise *Sirsasana* (headstand), I must be in balance. Neither the front body nor the back can be more assertive. Neither my rajasic nature nor my tamasic nature can be dominant, I must balance the energies.

**"In *Sirsasana* the back body and front
body embrace the soul."**

-B.K.S. Iyengar

Embracing my soul implies that I am in a state of self acceptance. This acceptance stops feelings of negativity towards myself. I must do that before I can open my heart to others. When I open my heart to others, then I am functioning from my higher self and not from the ego. This is what I can do to stop the cycle of intolerance in the world. I start with myself, and I accept that inner Light. Only then can I spread the Light of the Divine outwards.

*The Divine Light Invocation is available in book or cassette. Contact Radha House at 595-0177. ☺

“*Be like a flower that is done
for the day, it closes quietly,
softly, it has done its duty
and gone within.*”

-Geeta Iyengar (in *Savasana*)



Greg Sly and Carolyn Taylor

would like to announce their engagement! Greg is in the Teacher Training Program and is an active teacher and volunteer in our community.

Carolyn too is a dedicated volunteer, both at the front desk and in the Special Needs class.

Carolyn and Greg plan to be married on July 27th, 2002, when Greg's 14-year-old daughter Sophia will be here from Belgium.

We wish them contentment on their paths.



VICTORIA
YOGA CENTRE'S



Friday Night Gathering



Date: Friday, Sept. 23

at the Victoria Yoga Centre
202-919 Fort Street

Asana Practice 6 pm

Potluck dinner 7pm

Bring food to share and
your own plate/cutlery

*Everyone is welcome to join us.
Bring a friend, partner or family member.*

By donation. Free to members.

Are Men Missing Out?

by Douglas Bourque

Why are so few men in yoga class? To some, this may not seem like a terribly interesting or even provocative question. As a man who has recently begun practising however, I find this to be a relevant question. When I was first asked if I wanted to write this article, I felt that my opinion might not be particularly representative of men in general. I come from a background in which I participated in a female dominated activity for sixteen years. I was a competitive figure skater, so to walk into a yoga class where I am one of three men in a class of twenty-five is not uncomfortable for me. I spent sixteen years surrounded by girls. This is nothing new.

I took my first yoga class about a year ago. It was with an Iyengar teacher in Saskatoon, and as I remember, I was only joined by another man every third class. Here at the Victoria Yoga Centre, there seem to be a few more men around. But still, there appears to be some barrier that prevents men from registering in these classes. I find it curious because yoga does not seem to carry the negative connotations that figure skating (or ballet) might. Before writing this article, I conducted an informal poll amongst male friends. The men came right out and said, "Figure skating is for girls because you have to wear tights." However, they would not directly say, "Yoga is for girls." I have never worn tights myself, but I thought I might have to if I did yoga. So this leads me to ask, "Is it because of the tights?" It would be quite rare to encounter an individual who has an active prejudice against yoga. However, men with a prejudice against wearing tights is another story...



It's unfortunate that media representations commonly depict women doing yoga, rather than men. If you're anything like me, you probably like to believe that you are not influenced by the media. But we are all exposed to these things and they do impact our thinking even in subtle ways. When I first started to consider why the number of men in class is so small, the media aspect is

the one that appeared most evident. But I do not think it is the sole, or primary contributor to this imbalance.

After asking the men why they didn't do yoga I asked them what activities they did do. I received a barrage of answers including every sport you could think of, save a few. All the activities they reported seemed to fall into the category of a competitive or high-impact nature. Perhaps the barrier between men and yoga lies here; yoga is non-competitive and has the option of being low-impact.

Yoga is the path of discovering who you are on all levels and this involves looking at our egos head on. And it is this very ego that keeps us competing with others and ourselves. I like yoga because it increases my flexibility not only physically but mentally. Gaining more flexibility provides a certain freedom within the

body. And on a deeper level, freedom in the body helps develop flexibility within the mind. I don't know of any other activity that provides the benefits that yoga does.

From my experience, the people who don't do yoga – men or women – typically don't have an understanding of what it is. Perhaps they do not see that learning the postures is only the first of many significant steps in the practice. Yoga provides an excellent opportunity for self

exploration. This aspect may not be evident for people who simply see yoga as stretching. This is the tremendous thing about yoga, but it also means that the more you explore, the more you may have to change.

I tell all my friends that yoga is one of the best things they can do for themselves, for their whole selves. I'm sure many other practitioners do the same. One thing is for sure, although the number of men in class is quite small, the numbers are growing. This must mean that more and more men are realizing what they are missing out on. ☯

“

*You have to give up
yourself to become
yourself.*

-Prashant Iyengar

SUPPORT

the Victoria Yoga Centre

Take out a Membership

Your membership supports the Victoria Yoga Centre as a nonprofit society and supports the Teacher Training program.

Benefits:

- The Victoria Yoga Centre Newsletter.
- Borrowing privilege at the Victoria Yoga Centre library.
- Free scheduled practice times.
- Ability to apply for scholarships for various workshops.
- Reduction on workshop fees.
- Priority registration for workshops.

Short Workshops at the Victoria Yoga Centre

What, When and Why to Practice

With Leslie Hogg

Sunday, May 26, 2002

12:00 noon - 2:00 pm.



Intention is the base of our practice. As Prashant Iyengar says, "Why do we do a posture? The 'how' depends on the 'why'." What came before? What will come next? Backbends, forward bends, preparation for pranayama, to learn, to recuperate? These aspects define the technique. This workshop will explore how our intention influences our asanas.

Surya Namaskara / Sun Salutations

With Ty Chandler

Friday, June 21, 2002

7:00 - 9:00pm

The Sun Salutation is a part of daily religious prayer, which comes from time immemorial. Everyone, along with offerings and prayers, saluted the sun, since Surya, the Sun God has tremendous solar energy, which is a vital need for wo/mankind.

Surya Namaskara gives mobility, flexibility, alertness, speed, sharpness and freedom while developing will power and physical strength.

Join Ty and explore the individual postures within the salutation, as well as the meditative aspect of repeated cycles reciting the names of the 12 Sun Gods.

Cost for workshops:

2 hours: \$30 +gst members, \$35 +gst non-members

3 hours: \$45 +gst members, \$50 +gst non-members

The Victoria Yoga Centre

202-919 Fort Street 250 386 YOGA

It Is Good

by Neil W McKinlay

Gwynneth came up asking for an article this evening. "Yoga and men," she said soon as I walked in the door. "We're doing a series on yoga and men - you should write something."

"What would I write?" I asked, surprised.

"Oh, I don't know," she answered. "Tell us why you've been doing this so long."

I fixed her eye at this. Held her gaze for a moment and leaned just a little bit closer.

"Gwynneth," I said in semi-serious tones. "Why *have* I been doing this so long?" Her face darkened for a second. Pinched between her brows. Then she started to brighten, relax. And soon we both let loose a loud flurry of laughter.

All joking aside, however, this is an interesting question. Why have I been doing this so long? It's been twelve, perhaps thirteen years near as I can figure - so what keeps me motivated? What keeps me going? What brings me back week after week, month after month, year after year?

There certainly have been a number of obstacles to overcome before getting here. A painful muscle-boundness for one. A conception of strength that seems of little use in this practice. More than a few restricting stereotypes. And though I have not once felt neglected because of my gender, though I have never felt biased against or overlooked or underappreciated, on occasion it has been difficult when I have been the only man in class. Sometimes it is hard being the last one alone when the teacher calls out, "Partner stretches." Sometimes I do struggle at being the only body in an

otherwise empty changeroom.

But my journey with these, I suddenly realize, doesn't really have all that much to do with Gwynneth's question. My efforts to overcome tightness of body and of mind, to find comfort in occasional loneliness, comfort with a recurring ill-ease don't really have that much bearing on the why of my continued involvement.

And the same can be said of some of the other responses I had expected to offer here. Though I could write of the profundity of Iyengar Yoga or of the

brilliance of B.K.S.

Iyengar, though I could reflect upon how much I've altered over the last decade - upon how much my mind has changed and how much my body has shifted and how much the here and now relations between these two has settled across thirteen years, though I could speak of the millennia-old lineage that makes all of this even possible, little of these words really

addresses the enquiry I'm facing tonight. Most of this actually misses the very simple truth that, right now anyway, seems to lay most closely behind my ongoing return.

I like it, is the best reply I can offer this evening. I like the wisdom of the tradition and the power of Shirley's instruction. I like the challenge, the difficulty, the familiarity of the practice. I like walking into a centre where Gwynneth can rush up to me with her lovely face and her serious eyes and such demanding words. "You should write something," she said. And I like being part of a community which can pull me out of my own concerns for a moment or two. A community that can get me to hurry home from class one night and sit down at the desk for a good half hour and fulfill a request that has unexpectedly been asked of me. I like this tonight. It is good. ☉



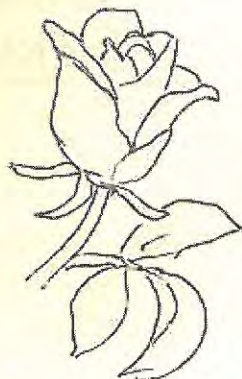


Radha Yoga Centre

Making a Spiritual Commitment

The best thing to do with a grudge is let go of it. Likewise a resentment. Easier said than done. But Swami Radha found a way for people to begin. In the Rose Ceremony, she offered a way for us to do this symbolically. At the same time, the ceremony provides an opportunity to make or renew a personal commitment to an ideal. Consider the rose as a symbol in Swami Radha's words.

Your own unfolding is like that of the rose. First there is a seed that has to germinate and put out roots. This takes place beneath the soil, long before you can see anything happening. The roots grow deeper into the ground to get a firm hold and to get nourishment. Where are your roots in this life? What are you rooted in? These are important questions to think about. Next a little green shoot, very tender, breaks through the soil and into the light. Then the first two leaves appear. They are coarse, but the leaves that come after are more and more refined, until finally the first bud appears. As the bud slowly expands, the flower begins to emerge, until one day it is fully open.



The symbol of the rose is a lovely metaphor for your own growth and eventual spiritual unfolding. The Rose Ceremony is a means of guiding your thinking, your interpretation and eventually your understanding into greater depth. The symbolism of this ceremony is an opening for you into your own thinking.



Swami Radha

With each petal you remove from the rose, you offer up the duality of daily living – light and dark, love and hate, sickness and health. And you ask that in return you may receive divine love, a love which is beyond duality. Later, when the rose petals are placed on the fire, you burn as well a list of your grudges and resentments. Let them go – they are smoke and ashes now.

For more information, please call 595-0177.

The Rose Ceremony

Saturday, June 8, 7:30 p.m. and
Sunday, June 9, 9:30 a.m.

With a rose, the symbol of divine love, make your personal commitment to the Divine and release your grudges and resentments.

The Rose Ceremony takes place in two parts. You may attend either or both. Bring two roses. For the second part, bring also your private list of grudges and resentments for burning.

Everyone is welcome. There is no charge.

Radha House Victoria • 1500 Shasta Place (off St. Charles, south of Fort) • 250-595-0177

YOGA CALENDAR

MAY 2002

- 10 Friday Night Video 6:45 - 8:15pm
- 17 Friday Night Gathering
BIG, BiG Practice 6 - 8pm
- 25 Teachers' Meeting
- 26 What, When and Why to Practice
With Leslie Hogya, Noon - 2pm

JUNE 2002

- 7-9 Saltspring Retreat
With Shirley Daventry French
- 14 Friday Night Video 6:45 - 8:15pm
- 14-17 Introductory Assessment in Saskatoon
- 21 Surya Namaskara / Sun Salutations
With Ty Chandler, 7 - 9pm
- 22 Teacher's Meeting

JULY 2002

- 15-20 Teacher Training Intensive
Introductory Level I and II

AUGUST 2002

~~The Victoria Yoga Centre is closed for clean-up~~

SEPT 2002

- 3-7 Registration Week
- 13 Friday Night Gathering 6 - 8pm
- 20 Friday Night Video 6:45 - 8:15pm
- 21 Teacher's Meeting
- 27-29 Ramanand Workshop

OCTOBER 2002

- 18-21 Introductory Assessment in Montreal
- 25-27 Father Joe Periera in Cumberland
- 26 Teacher's Meeting

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION FORM:

Please complete this form and send it with your cheque or money order to the Victoria Yoga Centre Society,
c/o Constance Barker, 202-919 Fort Street, Victoria BC V8V 3K3

Membership/Subscription fee is \$30 and renewable each January

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

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E-mail: _____

☐ Do not mail me my newsletter during sessions, I'll pick one up at my class.

☐ Receipt Required.

VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE NEWSLETTER



July/August 2002

Subscribe Now



Guruji acknowledges the felicitations of students and friends after receiving the Padma Bhushan award, one of India's highest honours.



The VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
#202, 919 Fort St.

Program of Classes in the Iyengar Approach to Yoga

Term 6: June 24 – July 21, 2002
Term 7: July 22 – August 18, 2002

Level 1

Day	Time	Instructor
Mon.*	12:00 - 1:30pm	Lauren Cox
Mon.	7:30 - 9:00pm	Melissa Worth
Tues.	10:00 - 11:30am	TBA
Tues.	5:30 - 7:00pm	Chris Dimofski
Wed.	9:00 - 10:30am	Ty Chandler
Wed.	7:45 - 9:15pm	Gwynneth Powell
Thurs.	8:30 - 10:00am	Linda Benn
Thurs.	6:00 - 7:30pm	Ty Chandler
Thurs.	7:00 - 8:30pm	Greg Sly
Fri.	10:30 - 12:00pm	Linda Benn
Fri.	5:00 - 6:30pm	Gwynneth Powell
Sat.	9:00 - 10:30am	Corrine Lowen
Sun.	10:30 - 12:00pm	Ty Chandler
* two weeks June 24 and July 8		

Level 2

Day	Time	Instructor
Mon	7:30 - 9:00pm	James Currie-Johnson (Term 6 only)
Tues.	5:00 - 6:30pm	Wies Pukesh
Wed.	6:00 - 7:30pm	Gwynneth Powell
Fri.	9:00 - 10:30pm	Linda Benn
Sat.	9:00 - 11:00am	Gwynneth Powell
Sun.	9:00 - 10:30am	Ty Chandler

Level 2/3

Day	Time	Instructor
Mon.*	10:00 - 12:00pm	Lauren Cox
* two weeks June 24 and July 8		

Level 3

Day	Time	Instructor
Thurs.	10:00 - 12:00pm	Linda Benn
Mon.	5:15 - 7:15pm	Marlene Miller

Cancellation Policy: Refunds less \$10.00 will be given only in the case of an emergency.

Class schedule subject to change. New classes may be added. Check at www.victoriaiyengaryoga.com or call 386-9642

No classes on Mon. July 1 and August 5

No daytime classes during the Teacher Training Intensives July 15 - 20, August 19 - 23

Student Intensive and Interm classes August 26 - 30

Fall Classes begin September 3 - 7

Drop-Ins

Day	Time	Instructor
Wed.	12:00 - 1:00pm	Chris Dimofski
Fri.	12:00 - 1:00pm	Ty Chandler

55 & Better

Wed.	10:30 - 12:00pm	Ty Chandler
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Gentle

Wed.	5:30 - 7:00pm	Wies Pukesh (B)
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Restorative

Thurs.	5:30 - 7:00pm	Wendy Boyer
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Youth

TBA

Family Yoga

Wed.	4:00 - 5:00pm	Lauren Cox
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Early Morning Sadana

July 2 - July 6

Editor: Caren Liedtke

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Province of British Columbia, whose purpose is "to
encourage the physical, mental, and spiritual growth of
its members and other interested persons of the society
at large by the study and discipline of Yoga." The
Society owes its inspiration to Swami Sivananda Radha
and Mr. B.K.S. Iyengar.

The Society Newsletter is published regularly, providing
current information on events concerning yoga in the
Victoria area and the Yasodhara Ashram. Published by
the VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY.

Anyone wishing to contribute articles, photographs,
drawings, information or suggestions may contact the

Victoria Yoga Centre Newsletter:

202 - 919 Fort Street

Victoria BC V8V 3K3

For more information on Victoria Yoga Centre activities
and events, please call 386-YOGA or visit our website:
www.victoriaiyengaryoga.com

Deadline for next issue: July 15, 2002

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Note: The editor/newsletter committee hold the right to
edit all articles at their discretion. It should also be noted
that not all articles submitted are printed in the
newsletter due to space and other considerations.



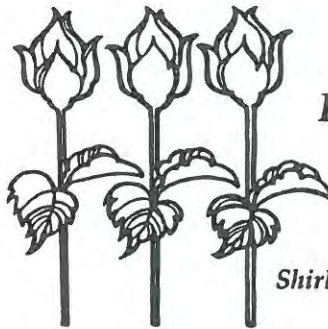
Guruji Honoured

Guruji received two notable honours early this year. First, one of India's highest civilian honours, the Padma Bhusan, which is awarded to men and women who have excelled in their field. This is the first time the Government of India has conferred this award in the field of yoga education.

The same month Guruji was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Literature by one of Maharashtra's major universities: Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune.

Congratulations Guruji! We are delighted to see you being felicitated in your native land as you have been so deservedly all over the world.

Your students in
Victoria, British Columbia



Reflections

by
Shirley Daventry French

One morning during practice at the Institute in Pune, Gururaj wished to show some of the subtleties of an advanced backbend to a doctor and others who were present that day. Someone pushed forward a flexible young Indian man who could easily get into this asana, but Gururaj said, "No, he is adept," and chose someone else. That evening I was scheduled to attend the advanced class taught by Prashant. Some of the students who attend this class are adept, but many others like me are not. Presumably all are considered sufficiently advanced to be there, because it is not our decision which classes we are given.



When he speaks of teaching yoga Gururaj often says that there are those who cannot do but can teach, those who can do but cannot teach and those who can do both which is certainly ideal. Perhaps it is the same with adept and advanced. There are those who are adept but not necessarily advanced, those who are advanced but not necessarily adept and (which must be gratifying) those who are adept and also advanced - like Gururaj himself. During one of our advanced classes Prashant, who loves language, added another element by telling us that what he was looking for from us was profundity.

Since my return from India I have reflected a lot on these three words, searching for their meaning in my practice, in my teaching and in my dictionaries. From the latter I learned that adept comes from the Latin *adeptus* meaning attained. Advance from the Latin *abante*, *ab* - away and *ante* - in front. Profound from the Latin *pro* - for, *fundus* - bottom, deep. Perhaps if an asana is easily attained it is more difficult to penetrate to its depths. It is significant to consider such distinctions these days when being adept is so readily taken as a signal that that person is advanced; a sentiment bolstered by the photographs in various yoga promotional material, and the quick advancement of some adept practitioners to starring roles in the firmament of North American yoga. So much of the yoga being offered in the West today is performance oriented rather than focused on the inner journey towards self-knowledge.

There is always a dilemma during the morning practice when Guruji is there - and if he is in Pune he is likely to be there. He never neglects his practice which is a joy and an inspiration to behold. Every now and then, Guruji will speak up or come over and correct someone else's practice. Sometimes he calls people over to look at what he is seeing, raising their awareness along with the person he is working on. At this moment, for all the other students in the hall, it is a time of decision. To watch or not to watch, that is the question. Speaking for myself, if Guruji is going to teach something I want to take advantage of this opportunity to learn whatever I can from him.

On one trip to Pune I had arranged to interview Guruji for this newsletter. I had come prepared with a tape recorder and plenty of tapes and batteries. To be on the safe side I arranged for another person to keep an eye on the tape recorder so I could concentrate on interviewing, plus an additional person to be there with a second tape recorder. I do not trust mechanical things. A time had been set for the interview on a certain afternoon. However, several days earlier in the library where many an impromptu discourse issues forth from Guruji, he had expounded at length, with great eloquence on a certain topic. I can't remember how I happened to be sitting across from him at his desk at that moment, but this was unexpected and there I was

with no tape recorder nor even a pencil or paper to make notes.

During the interview, I made an attempt to get Guruji to speak again on this subject which he had addressed with such passion the other day so it could be recorded for the newsletter. No, he said, I already did that! That was in the past, Guruji was in the present. Interesting viewpoints and fresh wisdom emerged as they always do with Guruji, but the earlier insights were lost to me and the readers of this newsletter because of my unpreparedness.

Now, I generally keep a tape recorder in my knapsack parked just outside the library door or on the table in front of me, although I would not switch it on without Guruji's permission. That would be an unwarranted intrusion into his privacy. I do, however, keep a notebook and pen at the ready. Guruji has a habit of catching someone's eye as he talks. What he is saying may apply to you in particular or be of a more general nature. No matter, because in either case the implications of his words will go far beyond individual concerns. When this happens everyone within range will pause in what they are doing and listen. Often they make notes which will be helpful to you if he is speaking about something of particular significance for you or the community you represent.

Rarely if ever do you find yourself alone with Guruji. When he speaks to you he speaks to everyone else in the library that day, or in the yoga hall, or the lobby or the passage way between the institute and his house, or anywhere else for that matter. While I found this disconcerting at first, I like it now because there is less risk of misunderstanding, misinterpreting or misrepresenting his instructions when they can be verified by others.

There is the same all inclusive aspect when Guruji embarks on an impromptu teaching spell during the practice time. When he begins showing some point of awareness on himself or others (generally a lack of awareness in this latter case), students start to gather around. On the other hand, when he is practising silently and quietly everyone gives him the privacy and space that is his right and gets on with their own practice. There is the public Guruji and the private

Guruji, the extrovert and the introvert, and he does not need to go to another room and close the door to make this distinction. Afternoons in the library or mornings in the yoga hall, when Guruji wants to be left alone it is as clear as if he had posted a Do Not Disturb sign.

This practice time provides an opportunity to go over the teaching from the classes you are attending, or to re-establish equilibrium if the demands of the teaching and of Pune itself have thrown you off balance. Or perhaps a priority is to restore energy if you have allowed it to drain away which is easy to do in India. Most of us are there for a relatively short time, and want to stay alert and well so we can learn as much as possible.

Ironically the purpose of yoga is to interfere and render ineffective those protective mechanisms or reflexes you have developed which take you again and again into the same old grooves. These are the *samskaras* created by mechanical behaviour which, unless we are prepared to change, become deeper and deeper making it harder and harder to get out of them. We fall into these well worn grooves because we are not aware that we have an alternative, or perhaps we have a glimmer of awareness but are fearful of the consequences. I might lose my job if I show my true light, or my husband or my friends, no-one will like me, and so on.

The practice of yoga renders us more flexible not only in our bodies but in all aspects of our life. It opens up choices and sheds light on our

endeavours, but not everyone wants or likes to be in such a revealing spotlight. Arjuna, in the *Bhagavad Gita* could not face the true form of Lord Krishna because he was blinded by the light. Rather than turning away completely, he made a choice to learn from Krishna who helped him develop the strength and skills to become a warrior. This new found power enabled him to slay the opposing forces which were preventing him from being able to see not only Krishna in his divine form but his own divinity. *The Gita*, like all spiritual texts is a metaphor for life.

In the West, not many people enter yoga with any thought of becoming divine. I certainly didn't. I was looking for peace, quiet and an escape from the demands of a household consisting of a busy doctor husband in single-handed practice, three young children and a dog, and life in a foreign land. Despite all the tourism promotion of Victoria as a little bit of Olde England, it was, and continues to be, to a large extent, foreign to me. Moving from one country to



Guruji in the library in Pune with four of his Canadian students:
L to R: Heidi Steinberg-Fenton (Toronto), Shirley Daventry-French
(Victoria), Marlene Mawhinney (Toronto), Donna Fornelli (Ottawa)

another, however, does get you out of your grooves.

If my first yoga class had advertised that it was going to turn my life upside down and inside out, would I have gone? Probably not. My life was already chaotic. What I was searching for was time and space to focus on myself. And these yoga classes provided that. It just took a little time before I understood that it was my higher self that had been neglected. Fortunately for me my first teacher invited Swami Radha to Victoria to give some talks on yoga philosophy. Instead of sympathy for my plight I was asked point-blank what I was prepared to do about it. When was I going to accept full responsibility for my life? No blaming or self-pity were tolerated, no consolation offered, merely pointed questions along with some suggestions about the choices open to me. I have been with Swami Radha at several difficult times in my life when I felt trapped, resentful and angry, only to leave with my head reeling from the many options available to me. She would not tell me what I should do but showed me that not only did I have a choice, I had many choices. As I continued with yoga it gradually became clear to me that there was one area where I did have only one choice. As the philosopher Cleanthes put it: *some follow the gods willingly, the rest are dragged.*

Such forthright common sense is sadly lacking in Canada today. It is rare to meet a Swami Radha or a B.K.S. Iyengar, and if we do it behooves us to pay attention. In every aspect of life it has become unwelcome to speak plainly, to voice critical or dissenting opinions, to argue or debate passionately, to hold strong views. Discomfort is avoided - for the time being at least - by placating, being agreeable, politically correct, pleasant and smiling and surrounding yourself with acquiescent people who will not disturb you. This presents difficulty in training yoga teachers. How do you train properly without giving criticism? I have heard it said so often when discussing our yoga certification and assessment program that we should make several positive statements before giving any negative feedback. Part of the problem is disagreement over what is negative. Is it negative to tell someone that they are on the wrong track? What I observe in our peer teaching process is that the things a person really needs to hear are

sometimes buried in all this positive feedback.

Personally I would rather hear what it is I need to learn in a forthright way delivered with what Patanjali calls uncoloured perception. Certainly I agree we should keep our emotions out of the way; but what use is it to me if all the energy goes into complimenting me for what I already know? It is my ignorance or lack of knowledge which causes problems.

Yoga in 21st century North America has become adulterated so much: presented either as a fitness regime which will make you strong, flexible, sweaty and raise your heart rate rather than your consciousness, or conversely as something which will make you feel relaxed, happy and at peace with the world without effort or significant change. The former allows you to forget yourself; the latter indulge yourself. Don't believe a word of this. Yoga, if you take it up seriously, is going to challenge every single aspect of your life. However, as it does this it will also bring you the strength, stamina, mobility, will and courage to live your life to its fullest.

One of the great blessings of a trip to India is that this destabilisation is more likely to happen because we have left behind some of the familiar grooves into which we fall to avoid responsibility, growth and the truth. It is not so easy while there to console or run away from ourselves. But out of this upheaval you get a chance to discover freedom and true security. ☯



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Dr. Geeta Iyengar gave the following lecture on practice at RIMYI's monthly meeting in November 1997. The lecture was audiotaped, transcribed and edited by Lois Steinberg, PhD. who kindly granted permission for us to reprint it here. Part III will appear in our next issue.

Geetaji on Practice: Part II

by Geeta Iyengar

Suppose a beginner wants to practice. They know all the standing asanas such as *Uthita Trikonasana*, *Uthita*



Parsvakonasana, *Virabhadrasana I*, *Virabhadrasana II*, *Ardha Chandrasana*, *Virabhadrasana III*, *Parivritta Trikonasana*, *Parivritta Parsvakonasana*, *Parsvottanasana*, and *Prasarita Padottanasana*. Now, these standing asanas, if they are done dynamically - everything on the right side and then everything on the left side, at a stretch -

the mind gets ignited. Instead of attention to the correct posture, you just attempt the asanas. It's like when we were taught spelling in school. We said, "B-o-o-k, book, r-o-o-m, room." We only did the spelling. In a similar manner here, we spell *Trikonasana* to *Parsvottanasana*. We have to do them like spelling work. You do one after the other. Similarly, you do on the left side one after the other and the mind is ignited. The intelligence gets charged. The mind catches it and says, "I did it!" Now, you begin to work. Your mind gets stimulated to find out where you went wrong, where you did correctly, what things were missing, and what you are supposed to add. The physical actions begin to get mentally linked. You begin to link the body to the mind, the mind to the intelligence, the intelligence to the consciousness, the consciousness to the soul.

In the class when we teach, for example, *Uthita Trikonasana*, we see whether your right leg is turned out properly. We invite your attention everywhere. We ask, "Did you turn your knee?"

Did you turn your ankle? Did you lift the arch of your foot? Did you turn the root of the thigh? While turning the right leg out did you stretch your left leg?" These are the ways of attempting the asanas that you learn in class. When you charge yourself you begin to understand these things. You begin to analyze your actions. Your mind begins to see whether you are doing it correctly. The application of the mind begins there. You become introverted. The outgoing awareness begins to spread inward and the inner journey begins. That's how the beginning of the practice has to be done whether you do the standing poses, *Adho Mukha Vrksasana*, *Pincha Mayurasana*, *Adho Mukha Svanasana*, *Uttanasana*, or any supine asanas.

Suppose you are in your first asana, *Supta Virasana*. You may be there for two minutes. Then after the third or fourth minute, a time comes when you begin to feel uneasy inside. You notice that your chest is not open or your spine is not extended. You have a dull feeling. Then you say, "I need my chest to lift a little more. I need a support for my back to ascend upward more." Sometimes, unknowingly you stretch your hands over the head. What are all these things? Is it not igniting the mind at that time? The mind sends the message. It wants the body to make space within. The mind wants to spread itself within.

The Yoga Sutra says that you have to be absolutely steady in the asana. Steadiness, *Sthirata*, doesn't mean that you have to be there like a stone. Then you will



absolutely be a stone in your body, your mind, your intelligence. The asana is not going to convert you at all. It cannot bring any transformation. But when the mind tells you to do something, please attend to it, listen to it. It says something. It speaks to you. You say, "I'm doing the asana but I've got some pain." That pain is telling you something - that you are wrong. Somewhere you are sinking. The pain is the outer or external speech. You have to find the hidden meaning.

In the medical class, we adjust the students, in the beginning, for example, in *Supta Virasana*. They are there for two minutes as we are going around to see the other students. During the third minute, when we come to them again, we find their body sinking or tilting somewhere. It takes three to four minutes for that body to go again to its dull state. That's why the body is a treacherous friend. The first minute it shows its sharpness.

Watch yourself, even if you're not a student in a medical class. In your *Sirsasana*, the first, second, or third minute you are fine. Later, at the fourth or fifth minute, you begin to sink. You need something to uplift yourself. Maybe you need to lift the shoulders. Maybe your legs are sinking inside, or your knees are bending, tilting, and you need to correct them. That means you're going through the learning process. The stability at the first stage is not really the stability.

When the students in the medical class are adjusted after the third or fourth minute, often they are confused. They say, "Geeta came and she added another bolster and a slanting plank. She opened the chest and she went away. The next moment Guruji comes and says that the slanting plank is useless and puts a brick over there. He adjusted the brick and now I am feeling nice." Are we being whimsical to just go on adding bolsters and bricks? No. Your body is

showing certain changes. It is in fact improving. The chest, which was not opening last week, started opening a little more this week. When it's opening it needs a strong support. Otherwise, after the third or fourth minute it will sink again and that is wrong. It means that the fire is extinguishing. If the chest is further lifted, the fire begins to burn. It means the area is aerated. The mind, the body, the intelligence become alert.



While practicing, you need to apply your mind. The teacher says to do *Dwipada Viparita Dandasana* for five minutes. You stay in that position. In those five minutes, watch: What are the variations that occurred? How many times the chest sinks, the straightened legs drop, the knees lose their grip and bend, the rolled-in thighs roll out? The spine shows its intelligence to bend more than earlier. After that, the spine becomes more alert and it gets a better curvature. You have to check

these things in your pose. You have to watch how your body and mind begin to show the inner change.

As you practice, within five minutes you will see changes and you have to adjust and change your position in that asana. That is called correction. Correction for what? You write, "B-o-o-k." Okay, "book," it's correct. Some teacher has to check it and say it is right. When it comes to asana we can't have a tick mark, saying it is correct. If I say do *Dwipada Viparita Dandasana* and you have done it, I will say you did the right asana. If you did *Vrksasana* instead of *Dwipada Viparita Dandasana*, then it is incorrect. But in the same asana the correct asana will be felt when the energy is properly distributed, when the asana is structurally correct, the muscles are evenly distributed and you, along with your mind, are well settled.

When your body shows the changes in the asana, you

have to see whether it shows improvement or merely the vigorousness. We have to get you to understand that. You find that as you perform the asana in the manner I said, you begin to get your inner feelings. You witness the chest opening. You feel the length of your body in *Sirsasana*. If it is not experienced again you are wrong somewhere. You have to apply your intelligence. In class your teacher may say, "Shoulders up." Did you lift your shoulders? Your teacher may say, "Extend the inner edges of the legs." Did you do that? Your teacher says, "Your thighs are rotating out." Did you turn them inside? In fact, these are the questions pertaining to outside the body. If you question from inside you will know that you really begin to feel your body from inside. The connections begin there, inside. Whether you do passive or active asanas, your mind has to get ignited in that manner.

As far as the sequence of asanas is concerned, I want to tell you about a yoga magazine that came to the RIMYI library. An article mentioned that people start the practice of yoga through books. They jump from one asana to the other asana and then they injure themselves. Many times it may happen that you open the book *Light on Yoga*, and you choose the asana according to your wish. "Oh, I want to do *Halasana*. Let me do *Halasana*." Or, "I want to do *Hanumanasana*. Let me do *Hanumanasana*." You can't choose like that. In *Light on Yoga*, the sequence of the asanas is given by Guruji for daily, weekly, and yearly practice. You can't just pick up any asana and begin to practice. In the classes at RIMYI, the student first learns to stand straight on their feet in *Tadasana*. If it's a medical class, certain sequences are given to the students by us. We don't jump by saying, "Do this asana and do that asana." The asanas are interlinked to a great extent physically, physiologically, psychologically, mentally, and intellectually. The practice of asanas is like the flow of a river. The water element is the same but the



particles are new; similarly, the asanas may change but the inner content, the internal flow, the current of flow should not change. You cannot ignite the fire and pour water or put a heavy stone to extinguish the fire. Or on the other hand you cannot go on warming yourself up and cool down at once.

Also, in that article they said that a person should start the practice with the prone position, on the stomach. The reason given in the article is that the spinal muscles are weak and are to be trained first, so that afterwards the practice of asanas becomes easier. It is true that our whole physical structure is dependent on the spine and the spinal muscles. The spine and spinal muscles have to be healthy and strong to do the asanas. But how did they conclude that it's only the prone position that will strengthen the spinal muscles? For that reason this article stated that you are supposed to do *Bhujangasana*, *Shalabasana*, and *Dhanurasana*. Many doctors advise this program of asanas to their patients who have slipped disks, spinal problems, or weak muscles.

Fortunately or unfortunately, Guruji is the only one who is against this. The whole world is flowing in this manner and perhaps he's the only one going in the opposite way. He never says start with *Shalabasana*, *Dhanurasana*, or *Bhujangasana*. The reason is that when you lie down prone, the spine descends and the muscles ascend. The beginner does not have toned

muscles. As a beginner, if you do *Shalabasana* or *Dhanurasana*, the spinal muscles nearer to the spine remain clenching the spine, and the rest of the spinal muscle moves away from the spine and gets puffed. It's like putting something in the hot oil to deep-fry and the oil bubbles up. Like that, your spinal muscles remain up and the spine somewhere remains sinking down. The spinal muscles do not go toward the spine to support it. When you do it the first time, you will be using the outer muscles of the body. You haven't penetrated your inner body at all. When you begin your work with the outer layer of the body, you do not go directly to touch your spine or spinal muscles at all. That's why it is more painful to touch the outer body. The muscles get cramped and tightened in a wrong manner. The muscles shrink.

We start with the standing asanas first to tone the spinal muscles. Gururji's known for this method. Stretching of the leg, stretching of the arm is a must for a beginner. A class is started with standing asanas such as *Padasana* with feet together, toes together, arms down, or arms up. You are made aware of your arms and legs. The muscles of your arms and legs are made to work. When you make your limbs work, then the limbs send message to the spine. This action of the legs and the arms is from the spine. Without the spine, you don't work; you don't lift your arms. Without the spinal strength, you don't stretch the legs. But you are not made conscious of your spine. Rather you are made conscious of your arms and legs. Through the arms and legs, you reach your spine.

The spine is the gross body, but for your intelligence, it is something subtle. It doesn't get any feeling unless it gets a pain. If the spine is paining, you know you have spine. If the spine is not paining you don't know you

have a spine. You only know from the anatomy book that you have a spine. When you sit and there is back pain you want to move your limbs. With the limb support you stretch your spine or you move your hands to allow the spinal muscles to be free. The limbs are grosser than the spine. The practice is started with the standing asanas so that through the limbs you reach the spine. To adjust and tone your spinal muscles, you have to know how to stand on your legs, how to move your arms. Then, only, you know how the spine should be. Until then, you won't know. The spine is not directly penetrable. It is neither tangible nor penetrable by you. You can't touch your spine. You can't see its defect. You can only feel the spine.

Other schools explain it in a different way. They say the baby after birth sleeps in the supine position. That's why they do asanas in the supine position, especially *Savasana*. The baby begins to roll on the stomach and does prone positions. The baby begins to sit, so you have to do sitting postures. The baby begins to stand; then do the standing postures. The baby begins to walk; do the dynamic actions. The baby begins to jump; show some jumping actions. The baby begins to turn this way and that way, so show the lateral twist. The baby begins to bend back; show the back-bending. Unfortunately, the inverted postures don't come anywhere, because the baby doesn't go to the inverted postures. They forgot that the baby is born in an inverted position. It might be a nice explanation, but that's not the

right way. By the time we come to yoga from that baby stage, we have come a long way. We have utilized the instrument. We have exerted our body. Perhaps we have injured our body. The body has already suffered with so many problems and diseases. Some might have



exercised themselves and built up and toned the body. We are no more in that prone, turning, or supine position of a developing baby. Therefore, know very well that the correction begins only with the standing positions. Whether it's a correction or understanding, the intelligence is needed. The sensitivity is needed. It comes only in the standing asanas.

Additionally, the mind will not get ignited in a prone position like *Dhanurasana* or *Shalabasana*. You can try. It doesn't. The physical asana comes but you don't learn anything. Your attention is only on your back. It doesn't ignite your mind. The spark of the fire that we need through the mind in order to practice will not come if you are doing the prone or supine asanas. The corrections will never be understood because, as far as your spine is concerned, you will be completely blank.



Unless we say in the classes, "Hey, your spine is tilting," people won't know. They do not realize their tilts. If you had so much intelligence of the spine why would you go crooked in your *Trikonasana*? Why would the head come forward and the buttocks go back? Or, why would the buttocks come forward and head go back? That means you have no understanding about your spinal muscles, how they are working. The kinetic movement pleases the body but does not intelligize or sensitize to penetrate further in. ☯

The entire lecture was recently published in the Iyengar Yoga Odyssey 2001 magazine entitled Sadhana. Sadhana was produced by Ms. Steinberg as the official conference magazine for Geetaji's visit to California last year.

Sadhana contains original photographs as well as a colour centrefold of Mr. Iyengar's practice. The magazine is still available for wholesale and retail distribution. Information on the latter is at the IYNAUS website, inyaus.org.

Please note that the photographs shown within the reprinted lecture are those taken at the Canadian Conference in May of 2001. The photos were taken by Nancy Bleck and Susan Stewart.



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Inter and Multi-Disciplinary Yoga, A Positive North American Trend? One Perspective

by Val Paape

Over the past two decades, yoga has taken North America by storm and has proliferated into an amazing variety of styles. These styles include well-established methods such as Sivananda and Iyengar as well as styles developed by individual North American teachers and styles that combine different methods. Yoga Alliance, an organization that registers teachers with a minimum of 200 hours in any teacher training program, lists an amazing thirty styles of methods of yoga. "Multi" yoga and "Interdisciplinary" are two of those thirty but they are not the only styles which combine methods.

Not listed by Yoga Alliance but a clear example of the "interdisciplinary" trend is Nancy Ruby's "YogaMotion". On her website, <http://www.yogamotion.com>, she states: "YogaMotion synthesizes a variety of disciplines with an emphasis on maintaining and enhancing the natural curvatures of the spine. The Iyengar method serves as a foundation for precise alignment with Vini-yoga softening the movements through the breath. As students become more adept with the postures, YogaMotion begins to link the postures together creating a flow series similar to the traditions of Astanga, offering a vigorous workout and moving meditation."

This kind of fusing of styles is not surprising. It is common for yoga teachers to attend workshops and training in different methods and then, consciously or unconsciously, draw on this diversity in their own style in the same way as Nancy Ruby has done. No matter how it is stated or marketed, there is no doubt that the multidisciplinary trend in yoga is a strong one.

As a teacher of the Iyengar method governed by a code of ethics that prohibits the mixing in of other styles or methods when teaching, I support a unitary approach to yoga. My experience and study support the

perspective that a unitary approach to yoga practice enables the practitioner to go much more deeply into the subject than does a multidisciplinary approach. A unitary approach eliminates confusion and provides an internally consistent framework that guides the various elements of the practice, such as how to sequence the postures and how long to hold them. I imagine that this is as true for other respected methods of yoga as it is for the Iyengar method. As an Iyengar teacher, however, I can only elaborate from an Iyengar perspective.

Over the years, as I have moved through different stages in my life and practice from a very athletic practice to a practice dedicated to helping me with various problems - knee, cancer and a hip problem resulting in a hip replacement - I have come to greatly appreciate the systematization of the Iyengar method. I have been aided by the fact that the guiding principles of a regular yoga practice are not different from the guiding principles of a recuperative practice. The same fundamentals of alignment, skin movements, sequencing and breath are essential to understanding how to alter the postures and support the body so that the unhealthy or injured body still conforms to the asana and receives the benefits. A major tenet of the Iyengar system is to get the body to conform to the asana, not to alter the asana to fit the body. By working in a recuperative mode, I have been forced to pay special attention to the subtle aspects of action, alignment and breath in order to conform to the asana rather than relying on athletic ability and natural flexibility to achieve the pose. The needs of my practice have helped me come to appreciate how very integrated the Iyengar method is with philosophy and spirituality as, despite my physical limitations, I have gone more deeply inward. I can't imagine how my yoga practice would have gained depth through the course of these life changes if I had taken a "multidisciplinary approach".

The respected Tibetan lama Kalu Rinpoche wrote: "It is said that someone who tries to meditate without a conceptual understanding of what he or she is doing is like a blind person trying to find his or her way in open country; such a person can only wander about, with no idea how to choose one direction over another." (*The*

Dharma by Kalu Rinpoche, S.U.N.Y.P.: Albany, 1986). Asana and pranayama are complex practices that require an underlying conceptual framework to be safe, to be effective and to enable the practitioner to choose their sequences and manner of progression appropriately. As different styles or systems have different understandings about how and why to do the postures and the role of asana and pranayama in the overall framework of spiritual practice, the student is bound to be confused by the mixing of methods. Such confusion, whether conscious or not, will inevitably prevent the students from being able to intelligently construct and move forward with their own home practice. They will wander about doing this and that without making the most of the possibilities or experiencing the deeper transformations that yoga has to offer.



Two Variations of Paschimottasana

We can understand this quite readily with respect to other disciplines and experience. If I go for a massage and the massage therapist does a little Swedish massage, a little acupressure, a little Rolfing, a little cranial sacral, I am unlikely to come out very satisfied. But if the therapist does an entire treatment in one modality, I will at least feel the benefits of that one modality. If, in my meditation, I practice TM one day, a Tibetan visualization the next, mindfulness of breathing the next and so on, constantly changing techniques and systems, I'll never deepen my meditation practice and I'll never progress in the training of my mind. There is an old Buddhist story about a monk who stuck to the same practice for twenty years. As an old man, he had plumbed the depths of only three or four different techniques but was revered as being far along the path to enlightenment. This may be an extreme example, but it does point to the truth that to develop understanding in body-mind disciplines such as yoga and meditation takes time, consistency and discipline.

In the Iyengar method, the understanding of how to do the asanas is consistent from asana to asana. Each asana has its own individual nature and benefits but its relationship to the other asanas is given equal importance. This enables a conceptual basis for sequencing a group of asanas for the purpose of intensifying the effects of the individual postures. The end result is synergistic or greater than the sum of the individual postures. We could take a simple example of the understanding of how the back leg works in the standing postures. No matter what standing posture is taught in the Iyengar method, the back leg provides stability and balance through restraint. That is, the dynamic actions of the back leg provide the anchor from which the posture can move to deeper levels physically and mentally. Suppose, in a standing pose series, a teacher decides to teach *Virabhadrasana I* (Warrior I) as it is done in some other methods, with the back knee bent and the heel lifted up. A confusing message is sent to the students. Is the back leg always active or is it not? Further, the actual feeling generated by the pose is completely different in these two versions. So the student will be confused not only by the discrepancy of action, but also by the feeling and

the effects of the pose. And the synergistic effects of doing a sequence of standing postures in a consistent manner will be compromised. The point I am making is not that one method is better than another, but that mixing undermines them both.

North Americans have a love affair with the eclectic. Multidisciplinary practice is seen as holistic and holism is next to godliness. There is no doubt that multidisciplinary approaches are necessary in many situations. We will never solve our social and environmental problems unless we draw together multidisciplinary teams. But these teams will have depth as well as breadth because they will be comprised of experts from different fields. We must understand that an effective multidisciplinary approach depends on experts from various fields. We must also understand that there are many types of problems and human endeavors that will not benefit by a multidisciplinary approach. For the reasons I have outlined in this article, I believe that yoga is one of them. In yoga, holism is the integration of mind-body-spirit, it is the connection of the individual with the universal, it is the training and restraint of the mind to foster awareness. Such holism cannot be achieved through the combining of disparate methods of practice. It requires depth of practice. Those of us who teach yoga have a responsibility to cultivate depth of practice and to teach from our own disciplines. ☯

This article has been reprinted with permission from the author. It first appeared in Yoga Bridge: Connecting Mind & Body, Newsletter of the Yoga Association Of Alberta, Spring 2002, Vol 2 Issue 2.

Congratulations!

The following teachers were successful in obtaining their Junior Intermediate II certification:

Vicky Catchpole	Cumberland, BC
Teddy Hyndman	Edmonton, AB
Jo-Ann Sutherland	Saskatoon, SK
Andy Orr	Toronto, ON

The Evolution of Assessment

by Marlene Mawhinney, Toronto

When Guruji first told Canadians that we must begin to assess teachers, I'm sure he was the only person who had any idea of the impact on our community.

First we had to 'grow into' the idea and then we had to cope with the growing pains of the whole process. This process involved preparing communities to host assessments, training assessors, clarifying teacher training programs, and on and on.

How are we doing now? What has changed?

I think we are doing well, however I know we can continue to improve both in the organization of the assessments and in the skill of the assessors.

As assessors, I think we all agree that the biggest difficulty is in assessing the practice. With each level we have to see, know, and understand more. The practice of each assessor has changed, I'm sure. How can one assess another's practice without first assessing one's own?

With the teaching, the guidelines are clearer. We have *Light on Yoga* and the wonder of Guruji and Geeta's teaching to guide us. What we need is *Light on Practice* which would be *Light on Yoga* but with insight for assessors.

The process has evolved with each assessment and each assessors' meeting. The standards are clearer and more consistent. The establishment of Teacher Training Guidelines with Geeta's help and support has helped immeasurably throughout the whole community.

As to what has changed? Our entire community has benefited. As we travel across the country we see greatly improved practice, much clearer teaching and greatly improved and enhanced teacher training programs. Our community is much more integrated and connected. More Canadian teachers than ever before are traveling regularly to Pune. In four years we have

one hundred and eight teachers certified.

We can now see and experience that which Guruji knew all along. This process has strengthened our community, brought clarity to our teaching and health and safety to our students.

The growing pains are not over, but they are more manageable and joyful. ☯

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Reflections on the Junior Intermediate Assessment

by Margot Kitchen, Calgary



The wonderful sense of an Iyengar community in Victoria's beautiful new yoga centre was a perfect spot for this assessment. Your community did such a great job of supporting this assessment - organizing everything from the transportation, to the talented student guinea pigs, to the wonderful meals (thank you Rosemary, Gwynneth and

Marlene), to the snacks at the centre. Thank you all so much for making us feel welcome. Of course, our gracious hostess, Shirley, opened her home to the four of us and I have good memories of hard work, balanced with lounging in the hot tub at the end of the weekend and great memories of a very supportive group of women.

My immediate reflections are feelings of gratitude, humility and admiration: gratitude for the process of certification and for being part of the Iyengar Family; humility in the presence of evidence of the brilliance of Guruji's work and his insistence on a certification process; and admiration for the senior teachers and the tremendous amount of work that has been done in the last few years and continues to be done, as well as admiration for the courage of the candidates going through this process.

I've been assessing for the past three years at the Introductory level and as a result I have sharpened my practice and my teaching at this level so that I can reasonably and accurately assess. Training to assess at the Junior Intermediate level was a whole new ballgame – *Padmasana* and the balancings are a terrific challenge and once again I've been honing my skills in these areas so I can authentically assess. One disadvantage that the "grandfathered" teachers have is the fact that we've never participated as a student in an assessment. Yes,

most of us have taught in front of Guruji and Geetaji, but not in the two-day assessment format that we have here in Canada. Deciding that I needed this experience, prior to Victoria, I asked Felicity Green to “assess” me in Mexico in February. Good grief! Felicity’s feedback was very exacting, and a huge learning for me. I was very nervous and certainly didn’t teach to my usual potential. This did give me an insight into what the participants are facing and hopefully has helped me to understand the process a little better from “the other side”.

For me, the hardest part of the assessment was marking the practice. I was very glad that there were only four participants and I marveled at their ability to hold postures like *Dwi Hasta Bhujasana*. The hard work they’ve done in preparation was evident.

Watching the candidates teach was a joy – seeing the maturity and the progression in both teaching and practice that has developed since the beginning of certification. I think this is probably the biggest difference between Introductory and Junior Intermediate – the maturity and confidence in all areas of demonstration, instruction, observation and

correction and the ability to answer questions from the assessors at the end of teaching.

In closing these reflections, and thinking back to Victoria in April, I feel very blessed indeed to be part of this Canadian endeavour. I reiterate my feelings of gratitude, humility and admiration, but to these I would add love – love for the Iyengars and for the many friends I’ve made in the Canadian and International Iyengar family and love for the work and how it has enriched my life. Thank you. ☯

Replies To The Suggestion Box

A new clock that is quiet

Answer: We hope the new digital clock will be the one! (This is the fourth clock we have tried, they either break, or are too noisy).

Label Studio A and B

Answer: Good idea, done!

Workshops on different topics

Answer: You must have missed the flurry of workshops we offered earlier in the year. Keep looking at the newsletter and calendar listings.

Mat washing

Answer: We wash the mats every few months. This takes a week of effort. Volunteers have to drive them to Scrubbies Laundry. This laundry can only do so many at time, then they must be line dried. You are welcome to bring your own mat, just make sure it is well labeled.

Water

Answer: You are welcome to get filtered water from the kitchen (please wash your cup!).



"Not Bad For An Old..."

by Andy Orr, Toronto

So, I am on the plane flying to Victoria for the Junior Intermediate II assessment when I realize that I don't know where the Yoga Centre is nor the time of the



Friday practice. But, there is time to sort this out - it's Wednesday evening and my cousin Linda is picking me up at the airport and Aunt Mimi is letting me stay with her. Still, a few more *Urdhwa Dhanurasanas* in my practice would have been nice.

The plane lands uneventfully. Linda, her partner Rob and Aunt Mimi pick me up and

drive through the dark into Victoria. Next morning after a short, focused practice we walk to Linda and Rob's restaurant (Avalon) and on the way I see the Victoria Yoga Centre a block from the restaurant on Fort Street. After a short visit I find out where the equipment is, what the room is like (bright, spacious and yoga conducive) but the practice time remains a mystery. It's either 5 or 6 pm so I console myself by planning to get there at 4 and we go and check out Linda's poached eggs with homemade hollandaise sauce.

Friday arrives and I'm nervous. Another light practice and a long walk dissipate some nervousness and before I know it here we are (four of us) ready for the practice. After a few preliminaries away we go - "*Adho Mukha Vrksasana*". I walk to the wall, take the pose, lock Sutra II.33 into my mind, kick my feet up to the wall, plug in the tailbone, spin the upper leg bones in, straighten the arms, adjust, adjust. "Come down". The routine settles in - hear the name, take the pose, adjust, adjust, come up/down/out. *Sirsasana* is shaky so I focus on adjustments and I know that the standing poses are finished. The practice goes on and it becomes an experience. My body goes places it usually resists, "Yesterday's maximum becomes today's minimum." The

other candidates are still there I suppose, feet walk past, I know whose feet they are, but my feet are my focus. We do standing poses, inversions, sitting poses, backbends, balancings (I fall on my bum), and finally my friend *Sarvangasana*. Then forward extensions so the end must be near. My mind comes out of the poses and I realize we are nearly finished, that my body and my head are quite warm and I hear, "*Savasana*".

This body is thoroughly drained, the floor is inviting and cool, so I take a blanket for a pillow and sink into the concrete. Every part of my back body comes in contact with the concrete and it feels great. Then it's up, we chat for a few minutes, Joanne and I have a tea on the way home and it's to bed.

Next morning bright and early we draw lots for teaching order. My poses are given to me 20 minutes before teaching time. Now I think, "Use the time wisely (not like last time), demonstrate, take the students into the poses, look at the students, tell them what to do." The assessors ask me questions when I'm finished. The questions are answered. I feel confident.

We arrange with the assessors for a quick e-mail response with written feedback afterward. The internet cafe staff get to know me, and I receive word that I've been granted a Junior Intermediate II certificate. I'm humbled.

My Aunt and cousin treat me royally for the remainder of the stay. I check out the Junior Intermediate III poses on the flight back, and upon arriving at Yoga Centre Toronto I'm showered with congratulations. My fellow teachers understand what I've done, but my friends don't. "If you are that good why are you still junior? How can you be junior and intermediate at the same time?" My feedback letter is very helpful (for me, not my friends).

And so it's on to JI3. I enjoyed the trip and visit with my family. Seeing Leslie, Yvonne, Chris and others in B.C. was great. Having three senior teachers give me comments was fantastic. My friend Michelle Duff summed it up the best after I explained what I had done: "Not bad for a retired, old f---t." ☺

GOING DEEPER

An Iyengar Yoga Workshop
with *Shirley Daventry French*

November 2 & 3, 2002



An opportunity for Level I, II, and III students to work with senior teacher Shirley Daventry French to explore yoga in a deeper way. Also an opportunity for teachers to observe Shirley.

Shirley is a long time student of B.K.S. Iyengar and has been to Pune many times to study with him, most recently in January of 2000 to attend the Institute's Silver Jubilee Celebrations.

Founder of the Victoria Yoga Centre, Shirley has been the driving force in making the Victoria yoga community one of the strongest and most viable in Canada. Students from across Canada and around the world have studied with her. Now local students have the opportunity to learn from her in a workshop setting.

Saturday November 2

10:30-12:30pm

3:00-5:00pm

Sunday November 3

10:00-12:30pm

12:30- 1:00pm refreshments

1:00 -2:00pm debriefing for observers

*Registration begins Sept. 1 for Victoria Yoga Centre
members and Sept. 8 for non-members.*

Fees \$90.00 Yoga Centre members

\$100.00 non members

\$75.00 observers (limited space)

prices subject to GST

Credit card or cheque payable in Canadian funds to:

The Victoria Yoga Centre

Call or mail The Victoria Yoga Centre

202 - 919 Fort Street

Victoria, B. C. V8V 3K3

250 - 386- YOGA (9642)

The Gifts Of Providence

by Corrine Lowen

Mr. Iyengar presented the first teaching certificates in Iyengar Yoga in Swaziland in 1975. He reminded the successful candidates that, "You have to work, not as a teacher, but as a learner in the art of teaching. . . . A teacher is gifted by Providence to learn, so that you can impart your knowledge." (*Iyengar: His Life and Work*, 1987). Certification ensures that Iyengar teachers will always be learners, and will continue to uphold high standards in the development of their knowledge and teaching of his work.

This April, four dedicated teachers traveled to Victoria to be assessed for the Junior Intermediate II certificate. The team of assessors included Canada's most accomplished Iyengar Yoga teachers.

For candidates to be assessed, there must be students for them to teach. In Victoria we are fortunate to have dedicated and well trained teachers who nurture the development of an accomplished student body. Among

this group were many who were willing and able to take on the challenges of poses from the Junior Intermediate II syllabus, in the doubly challenging assessment environment.

We are also blessed with a dedicated and supportive community eager to take on the tasks of organizing the event in all capacities. Our volunteers shone in the work they did individually and together. Robin Cantor and I had the pleasure of coordinating the very capable team who made the weekend a success. Shirley Daventry French, Marlene Miller, Leslie Hogya and Robin guided the process, always ready with their wisdom and experience of prior assessments here and in other cities across Canada.

Shirley opened her home to the assessors for the entire weekend. Rosemary Barritt and her team of helpers laid in a good supply of delicious goodies both at the Centre and at Shirley's home throughout the weekend. From transportation to preparing the centre, every detail was attended to.

The assessors and candidates appreciated the spirit and

the efforts of the Victoria Yoga Centre community. Shirley wrote, "The facility and the support of the community was greatly appreciated by me, by the other assessors and the candidates. It makes our work so much easier to have positive and efficient service, and to do our demanding work in relative comfort. Thank you for the considerable gift of time which you



Rear L-R: Jo-Ann Sutherland, Andy Orr, Vicki Catchpole, Margot Kitchen
Front L R: Teddy Hyndman, Marlene Mawhinney, Shirley Daventry French,
Mahyar Raz-Korzas, Ingelise Nherlan

[all] volunteered.” Marlene Mawhinney noted that “without this support, Guruji’s work could not go on.”

Thanks to everyone who helped to support our first national event in the new centre. Many volunteers gave their time and creativity. Students donated their bodies, minds and spirits. Assessors dedicated many years of selfless service, to be anointed with the burden of precious responsibility inherent in their important role. Candidates spent years of preparation, study and practice to prepare themselves for the intense scrutiny of the assessment process. As these teachers, gifted by providence, continue their journey as learners in the art of teaching, the work of B.K.S. Iyengar is very much alive in the Victoria Yoga Centre. As we support Guruji’s work - we are in turn supported. ☯

Cast and Crew

Candidates: Andy Orr, Vicky Catchpole, Teddy Hyndman, Jo-Ann Sutherland

Assessors: Shirley Daventry French, Marlene Mawhinney, Ingelise Nherlan, Mahyar Raz-Khorzad. Assessor in Training: Margot Kitchen

Food: Rosemary Barrit (Coordinator), Gwynneth Powell, Marlene Miller and Nina Zak.

Studio: Doug Hart, Leslie Hogya, Martha Chick and Glenda Hingley

Timekeeping: Robin Cantor

Front Desk: Chris Dimofski

Help at Shirley’s: Ty Chandler

Transportation: Wies Pukesh (Coordinator), Marlene Miller, Leslie Hogya, Jeanette Merryfield, Rosemary Barritt, Wies and her partner Kevin all provided transportation.

Students: Yvonne Kipp, Nancy Searing, Melissa Worth, Britta Poisson, Jeannette Merryfield, Greg Sly, Corrine Lowen, Ty Chandler, Leslie Hogya, James Currie-Johnson, Shannon McMurchie and Karin Holtcamp.



YOGA PROPS FOR SALE

Blankets (Grey Wool)	\$37.45
Bolsters	\$55.00
Eyebags (Barley)	\$ 8.03
Eyebags (Flax)	\$10.70
Foam Blocks (Pkg. Of 4)	\$26.75
Sandbags	\$21.40
Sticky Mats (Blue, Green, Purple)	\$42.80
Straps (Regular length)	\$10.70
Wooden Blocks	\$21.40

(All prices include GST)

For sale during office hours
9am - 12:30pm, Monday to Saturday
at the Victoria Yoga Centre
202 - 919 Fort Street
250 - 386 - YOGA (9642)

NEW! STUDENT SUMMER INTENSIVE

with Ty Chandler and Robin Cantor

August 26 - 30

**Monday to Friday
9am to noon**



Ty and Robin are certified Iyengar Yoga teachers who bring enthusiasm, dedication, tapas and humor to this five day intensive. The intensive will involve asana, pranayama and yoga philosophy. Learn how to establish and deepen your daily practice.

Level II experience is required for this workshop

Fees:

\$200.00 for Victoria Yoga Centre members
\$215.00 for non-members

Credit card or cheque payable in Canadian
funds to: The Victoria Yoga Centre

Call or mail:

202 - 919 Fort Street
Victoria, BC V8V 3K3
250-386-YOGA (9642)

The CIYTA “Screech-In”

by Ann Kilbertus

*The Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teacher's Association
Annual General Conference & Meeting
St. John's Newfoundland, May 10-12, 2002*

Yoga has taken me places I never thought I'd go, both internally and externally. Sitting on the plane, I am now traveling across this vast country of ours from St. John's to Victoria, returning home.

The most recent events are freshest in my mind, so I'll begin at the end of the meeting when each non-native member of the province became an honorary Newfoundlander. There is an ancient ritual in

Newfoundland where people from “away” are initiated through a process known as “being screeched in.”

Apparently, aside from taking in the screech, (a medicinal brew), you have to kiss a cod and god knows what else!

At the end of this year's AGM, the non-natives were screeched in, (one at a time), yoga style. Aply led by Barbara Dick we were advised to “take a swally,” stand on our head, and chant, “long may your big jib draw.” All this while the rest of the group roared out the great sea shanty, “...oh we'll rant and we'll roar like true Newfoundlanders...” This tune is now forever embedded in my brain! The ritual capped off a truly enjoyable weekend hosted by the Newfoundland Yoga Community, including Jane Robinson, Genia Sussex, Barbara Dick, and Bev Winsor.

St. John's is a meandering port city and the terrain

calls upon one to “walk about.” We were blessed with fine weather and in-between meetings there was a bit of time for many of us to enjoy the “Rock” with its bright blue sky and shades of burnt sienna on the ground.

Our hosts made sure we witnessed the spectacle of an iceberg floating offshore. Not only was there a huge mass of ice fifteen feet above the sea, but apparently nine times that height was invisible under the water . . . the seen and the unseen. And the locals, so kind they actually stop their vehicles anywhere and everywhere to let pedestrians cross the street! This is shocking for a person born and raised in Montreal.

Although only seventeen people were in attendance there was a pervasive feeling of co-operation and willingness to unify Gururji's work across this vast land.

There continues to be much work that needs to be done and to reflect this a new group was struck to work in tandem with the Professional Development Committee (PDC). This will be known as the Certification & Assessment Committee and will deal the unending logistics of setting up assessments across the country, training and scheduling assessors, and much more. We now have over 80 certified teachers in Canada at a variety of levels.

The PDC will continue to administer teacher training issues and re-certification and will co-ordinate the response to

a new request coming from India for extensive documentation of all Canadian events with the Iyengars including national conferences and intensives.

In the future there will be much news and many requests to assist with certain projects from your



Leslie Hogya getting screeched

regional representatives, and in particular the "Documentation Project."

Another big item of news is the CIYTA website which will be launched very soon. The Board is at the final stage of working out guidelines. A draft website policy was circulated for feedback. The website will act as a communication and promotional tool for Iyengar Yoga in Canada.

Underneath all of this are the financial realities of enabling the work to continue and grow. Decisions were made to parcel out specific amounts of money to allow committees, particularly the new Certification Assessment Committee, to do its job and to track the costs more effectively.

Inspiring practices were led by Shirley Daventry French, Marlene Mawhinney, and Donna Fornelli, all of whom had spent the month of February 2002, in Pune. Plans were made to invite the Iyengars to Canada.

And so we continued in mobilizing, stabilizing, strengthening, and aligning our work across the country – the very principles used in teaching yoga. As with the practice, the focus in CIYTA continues to be to move towards the work that needs to be done as we maintain our links with India and to evolve as an organization.



"Take a Swally"

It has been difficult over the years to be a part of this growth, but now with some perspective it seems to me our organization is moving out of its infancy and learning to stand in *Tadasana*. ☺

Donors and Gifts Thank you!

Since our thanks expressed in the January/February and March/April 2002 newsletters the following people have generously contributed to the Victoria Yoga Centre.

Donations:

Tadasana (Up to \$200.)

Jim and Sue Riddell

Weis Pukesh

Lisa Langford

Yvonne Kipp

Kingfish Swim Club

Kelowna Yoga House

Teddi Schmit

Mumaza Chaudhry

Gifts

Vancouver Iyengar Associatiion (Bouquet)

Ingelise Nherlan (Amarylis Plant)

Last Call for Recipes

Let's make the Victoria Yoga Centre recipe book fundraiser a big success!

I need your favorite original
(or name the source) vegetarian recipes!

Please send them to: martha.chick@shaw.ca
or leave them at the at the front desk at the
Victoria Yoga Centre for me.



The Victoria Yoga Centre is pleased to present

An Intermediate Workshop

with *Chris Saudek*

for teachers and students in the tradition of Iyengar Yoga

November 22 - 24, 2002

Victoria Yoga Centre
202 - 919 Fort Street



Chris Saudek has been a devoted student of the Iyengars for more than 20 years. She has studied extensively at the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute in Pune, including two times when she stayed for more than five months each. The training Chris received as a physical therapist gave her valuable background for her study of yoga. Chris is a precise and disciplined, caring and innovative teacher. She is the director of the Yoga Place in La Crosse, Wisconsin and certified as a senior intermediate teacher of the Iyengar method.

Fri. Nov. 22 6:30-9pm

Sat. Nov. 23 10am-1pm and 3-5pm

Sun. Nov. 24 9am-12pm and 1:30-3pm

Fees:

\$200 for Victoria Yoga Centre Members

\$230 for non-members (includes membership)

all prices subject to GST

Registration opens September 3. Cancellations will be refunded only if your place can be filled. Credit card or cheque payable in Canadian funds to the Victoria Yoga Centre.

Call or mail the Victoria Yoga Centre:

202-919 Fort Street

Victoria BC V8V 3K3

(250)-386-YOGA (9642)

For more information contact: Ann 1-250-598-0976
or email stpatrick@entirety.ca

The Floor!

by Leslie Hogya

"Oh!" and "Wow!" have been heard frequently in the past few weeks as students walk into the yoga center and see our new floor! It is rich looking and has a bit of a bounce. It has transformed our space!

The old floor wasn't level, warm or visually appealing, but it got us through our opening months of business. The building we lease is old and has had various additions, then it settled over the years which resulted in a very uneven floor surface. The old carpet was hiding a scarred landscape beneath its surface. Several floor installers came and shook their heads in dismay. There was nothing to be done except put more carpet on it. Then Rada Resurfacing came and brought in their giant sanders and leveled the space as much as possible without reconstruction! Then a temporary coat of concrete was spread on top which proved to be serviceable enough to begin our classes in October. At the time, if we had had more ready cash the skim coat could have been covered with a surface resembling polished marble or terrazzo. However, we soon discovered that would have been a mistake. When the

winter weather arrived, the floor proved to be very cold, it felt like one was standing on a black hole of cold. In *Savasana*, we advised students to always put a blanket over their mats to keep from chilling their bones.

Now the new floor, a laminate, floats over a layer of foam and the surface warms when in contact with the sole of the foot or the length of the back body.

Thank you to all who have generously donated both cash and services. Everyone of you who are registered in classes and workshops helped make this floor possible! We deeply appreciate all the volunteers who help us in so many many ways.

Some of our volunteers:

Tom and Rosemary Barritt, who put in all the acres of baseboards on a beautiful spring weekend.

Greg Sly for building another prop shelf for the smaller studio. Tom Severson for cutting down the old shelf. Front desk: Orleen, Erin, Karin, Britta, Marha, Caroline, Christine, Rosemary, Doug, Jim, Drew and more. All the new newsletter crew and writers. Thank you Gwynneth for editing two issues in a row! And always to the board for coming to meetings and being responsible for so many things around the centre. ☺



NOW FULL!

IYENGAR YOGA TEACHER TRAINING INTENSIVES

July 15 – 20, 2002

With Leslie Hogya, Ann
Kilbertus, Linda Benn, Marlene
Miller

August 19 – 23, 2002

With Shirley Daventry French

Call the Victoria Yoga Centre
for enquiries.

250-386-YOGA (9642)



The Broadcast

by Neil W McKinlay

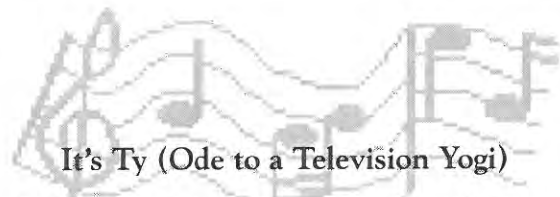
Caren and I went over to my father's house to watch a recent program of Chek TV's Go! that had been filmed at the Victoria Yoga Centre. It was the day after the



broadcast, so we were watching a videotape – which allowed us to rewind to all the best bits. Ty Chandler had been selected to lead the class that day. Having known her for years, we took delight in rewinding to see her smile, to see the way she moved, to wonder at how she got into that pose.

Walking home, we commented on what a great job she did, on how natural she seemed in front of the camera. Halfway through this journey, a small clip of a chorus rose in my mind. By the time our next yoga

class began a few nights later, this snippet had evolved into a full fledged song. A song that I happily performed for everyone in our Monday Night Class - everyone including our belly-laughing, teary-eyed TV celebrity!



It's Ty (Ode to a Television Yogi)

I was sitting on the couch just a-watchin' the tube,
Just a-flippin' through channels like I always do,
When I saw something that I never seen before,
This woman appeared and walked across the floor,
She said, "Get up! Shake off your weary woes!"
She said, "Lift your arms and touch your toes!"

It's Ty - she's on TV.

Oh Ty - the city's favorite yogi.

Yeah Ty - I'm wonderin' how you did that?

Yeah Ty - how come your back's so flat?

Pincha Mayurasan or a wicked *Uttanasan* - it's Ty.

So I got to my feet and I reached for the sky
And my head started swimming and I
thought I might die

And I twisted my spine and contorted my back
Until my heart started openin' and
my chest went "Crack!"

And when the sweat was pourin' and
my breath was thin,

She just glided on over, said, "Now let's begin..."

2002 Upcoming Assessment Dates:

Oct. 18-21	Introductory Syllabus	Montreal
Nov. 15-18	Junior Intermediate I	Calgary

Yeah Ty - she's on TV.
 Oh Ty - she's so much better than me!
 Well Ty - still I think she's fab!
 Yeah Ty - I mean just look at those abs!
Pincha Mayurasan or a wicked *Uttanasan* - it's Ty.

'Bout an hour later, I'm feelin' divine
 My head's stopped swimmin' and my body's aligned
 And my sight is clearing and my hearing's keen
 And my whole life's better than it's ever been
 And cause there's something that I really know now
 I get down on my knees and I start to bow

Before Ty - she's on TV.
 Oh Ty - she's so groovy.
 Yeah Ty - watch her stand on her hands!
 Yeah Ty - I'm her number one fan!
Pincha Mayurasan or a wicked *Uttanasan*,
Twisted Sarvangasan or an upside down *Dandasan*,
Sideways Ekapasan or a really nice *Savasana* - it's Ty. ☺



Newsletter Advertising Costs



Victoria Yoga Centre
 Effective September 1, 2002

Full page	\$150.00
Half page	\$75.00
Quarter page	\$37.50

Consideration will be given to reducing rates for non-profit societies.



Linda Shevloff, a Canadian teacher who taught in Victoria for many years is now living in Hong Kong where

she has opened her own yoga studio. Linda is a Canadian certified teacher at the Junior Intermediate level and has started a Teacher Training program overseas. B.K.S. Iyengar has given his permission for the Hong Kong trainees to be assessed by the Canadian assessors, though it has not yet been decided whether the assessors will travel to Hong Kong or the candidates will come to Canada. This summer two of the Hong Kong trainees will attend our Victoria Teacher Training Intensive. Another one of the trainees, Leslie Corcos, who wrote the following article, will travel to Pune with Linda for the month of September. We are pleased to be able to share with our readers one of the teacher training papers that Linda assigned to her students.

Make the Choice for Stillness

by Leslie Corcos

Assignment: Choose any Sutra from Vibhuti Pada and reflect upon it.

Sutra III. 9 Study of the silent moments between rising and restraining subliminal impressions is the transformation of consciousness towards restraint.

In the explanation of this sutra I understand that we can practice the *yamas* and *niyamas* and do our *asana* and *pranayama* to learn self control. These are all seen as external ways of controlling our consciousness, an outer quest.

This sutra urges us to attempt an inner quest for the same freedom from nature that we are struggling to achieve with our outer quest. The outer quest entails practicing various behaviors in the *yamas* and *niyamas*, taking time to separate ourselves from daily activities to do an *asana* practice and also a *pranayama* practice. The inner quest, however, would mean separating ourselves not so much from our outer world as we do in

the activities above. Rather, it means pulling back from our inner world, that is, cutting our ties to sense objects within our consciousness, which is more difficult than severing our ties with outside objects. Mr. Iyengar says that if this were not true then a prisoner in solitary confinement would be half way to being a yogi.

So how does one go about this inner quest of cutting our ties with sense objects within our consciousness? Mr. Iyengar says that the key can be found in the breath. Between each inhalation and exhalation there is a pause in which the heart and lungs rest. He calls this '*savasana*' of the heart and lungs. In *pranayama* we have been urged to prolong the duration of this pause so we inhale, pause, exhale, pause. Apparently there are also four movements concerning consciousness. They are, first, rising consciousness, which is an inhalation and generates thought-waves; second, a quiet state of consciousness; third, exhalation, which actually restrains thought-waves; and lastly, again a quiet state of consciousness.

We now look closely at movements two and four, which are the pauses between breaths and which take place after inhalation and exhalation and are the intervals between a rising thought (inhalation) and restraining thought (exhalation). The pause between breath and consciousness is the same because they are both what Mr. Iyengar calls, "precious psychological moments of intermission where there is stillness and silence." They are silent periods for both the physiological body (through breath) and the intellectual body (through consciousness.)

Patanjali urges us to prolong these intermissions. Mr. Iyengar explains that they (these intermissions) are moments in which emptiness is felt and they need to be transformed into a "dynamic whole as single-pointed attention to no-pointed attentiveness." For me at this time, it is challenge enough to even be aware of the pauses and try to focus on the fact that they are taking place, let alone be aware of whether within them my attention is single-pointed or no-pointed. I am trying to be more aware of the first step, which is to create the intermissions.

It was five years ago that I was first introduced to the existence of the silent space between inhalation and exhalation. At that time, I only focused my awareness on it during sitting meditation. After reading this sutra

and especially the part about how difficult it is to separate ourselves from outside objects when we are in the midst of them, I decided to become purposeful in finding these pauses as I go about my daily life.

Reading this sutra was quite timely because I had been becoming gradually aware of a choice I can frequently make, to still my mind, or to dive into 'busy-ness.' Even

when alone, I can choose to be figuring something out or stilling my mind and just being in the moment. In years past I never realized I had the choice, but in recent months the choice is arising quite consciously and I either make the choice for stillness or find the familiar rut, which leads to my busy, thought-filled consciousness.



Shirely travelled to Hong Kong to give a workshop this winter. Linda Shevloff is seated left of her.

To indulge in a little *svadhyaya* (self-study), there is always a twinge of fear in choosing to pause and just be in stillness. I am sure this has to do with my feeling of being in control as long as I am directing my thoughts. It is a relatively unfamiliar experience to choose not to hang on so tightly, but to risk just letting go. It is important to remind myself that in letting go I am acknowledging the divinity within myself, which manifests itself in my stillness. Chapter III, verse 27 of *The Bhagavad Gita* comes to my mind, when Krishna tells Arjuna that when our minds are deluded by egoism we think we are "the doer." This spiritual ignorance manifests itself as thoughts, which become colored by our mental tendencies, or *gunas*. Realizing that I am not "the doer" directly impacts the notion that I must hang onto a busy mind in order to keep control. If I am not "the doer" then I am not in control anyway!

This leads to another passage from the *The Gita*, which

Mr. Iyengar quotes in explaining this sutra. Lord Krishna says, "What is night for other beings, is day for an awakened yogi and what is night for a yogi is day for others" (II.69). When I am generating thoughts, I think I am in control and it is day, but actually it is night because it is all ignorance. When I am in the silent spaces between my thoughts, allowing those prolonged intermissions, then that is truly day. I like this quote by Dom Bede Griffiths, "I dissolved into the Emptiness, and discovered it was filled with Love." It is inspiring to read that dwelling in these prolonged pauses, brings refreshment to the consciousness, like after a sound sleep. So I wonder, is it really necessary to use so many thoughts to micro-manage my life? I think not.

I conclude with these lines from Rumi, which my eye fell upon when writing this paper:

"Stop the words now,
open the window in the center of your chest,
and let the spirits fly in and out." ☯



The Victoria Yoga Centre

Is pleased to offer scholarships for the following workshops:

Junior Intermediate

Teacher Training Intensive

Aug. 19, 2002 \$200 (x3)

Please apply by July 19, 2002

Student Intensive

Aug. 26-30, 2002 \$100

Please apply by July 26, 2002

Ramanand

Sept. 27-29, 2002 \$100

Please apply by Aug. 27, 2002

Apply in writing to The Scholarship Committee and give to your teacher or mail to:

Scholarship Committee

Victoria Yoga Centre Society

202-919 Fort St. Victoria BC V8V 3K3

For more information contact

Amanda Mills or Wendy Boyer at 386-9642

Scholarship Applicant Criteria:

Scholarships are offered to Victoria Yoga Centre members who have demonstrated:

- A sustained interest in yoga by way of regular attendance in asana classes and workshops.
- Appreciation for the uniqueness of the Iyengar method.
- Willingness to study yoga philosophy and psychology.

Generally, an individual may be eligible to receive a scholarship only once in a program year.

Application Procedure:

Candidates may apply directly to the Scholarship Committee or be nominated by a Yoga Centre member or teacher.

Application and/or nominations must be submitted in writing and include:

- Applicant's name, address and phone number.
- Name of the applicant's yoga teacher.
- A brief description of the reason(s) for the request.

Applications are due at least four weeks prior to the applicable workshop or event.

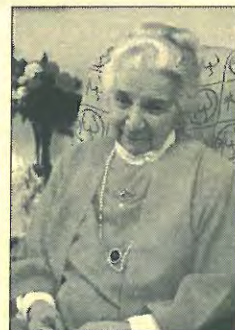


Radha Yoga Centre

*Radha Yoga Centre Victoria wishes everyone
an enjoyable and Light-filled summer.*

Our classes will resume again in September. Please call to be placed on our mailing list to receive the fall brochure.

Sunday morning chanting and Satsang will be offered for the months of June and July at 9:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. respectively.



Swami Radha

Finding the Purpose of Your Life

Why was I born? Why am I here?
What is the purpose of my life?
Am I pursuing that purpose? How am I pursuing it?
Is this the best way?
What makes my life worth living?
What kind of person do I want to be physically,
mentally, emotionally, spiritually?
If you set out to accomplish something, did you do it?
Has something been left undone?

These questions appear over and over in Swami Radha's writings and talks. She posed them as a way to help people take control of their own lives. Thoughtful reflection on these questions helps us free ourselves

from unquestioning obedience, wishful thinking, and the multitude of mental habits that grow like fungus in the unexamined mind. It isn't always easy to confront these questions, but the reward is the true freedom that only self-knowledge gives.

Swami Radha's book, *Kundalini Yoga for the West*, takes us through the whole range of human consciousness, asking that we consider what we are doing, saying, thinking at every level. In the process, self-knowledge grows. Gradually, we begin to free ourselves from being driven by emotions, by negative aspects of ourselves, by the need for others, approval. We develop self-awareness, and with that comes self-acceptance.

Radha Yoga Centre Victoria

offers classes in Kundalini yoga which follow the chakra system as interpreted for the Western mind by Swami Radha.

New classes will begin in September. Call for more information. 595-0177

Radha House Victoria • 1500 Shasta Place (off St. Charles, south of Fort) • 250-595-0177

YOGA CALENDAR

JULY 2002

2-6 Early Morning Sadana
15-20 Teacher Training Intensive
Introductory Level I and II

AUGUST 2002

19-23 Teacher Training Intensive
Junior Intermediate Levels I, II and III
26-30 Student Intensive
Level II experience required

August 30- September 2, 2002
The Victoria Yoga Centre is closed for clean-up

SEPT 2002

3-7 Registration Week
13 Friday Night Gathering
20 Friday Night Video
21 Teacher's Meeting
27-29 Ramanand Workshop

OCTOBER 2002

18-21 Introductory Assessment in Montreal
25-27 Father Joe Periera in Cumberland
26 Teacher's Meeting

NOVEMBER 2002

2-3 Going Deeper with Shirley
Daventry French
15-18 Junior Intermediate Level I
Assessment in Calgary
22-24 Workshop with Chris Saudek
30 Teacher's Meeting

DECEMBER 2002

15 In the Light of Yoga: Workshop
Celebrating Mr. Iyengar's birthday

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION FORM:

Please complete this form and send it with your cheque or money order to the Victoria Yoga Centre Society,
c/o Constance Barker, 202-919 Fort Street, Victoria BC V8V 3K3

Membership/Subscription fee is \$30 and renewable each January

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

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VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE NEWSLETTER



Sept/Oct 2002

Subscribe Now



Leslie Hogya, Victoria Yoga Centre President and Shirley Daventry-French, Victoria Yoga Centre Founder. It is by the initiative of these two senior teachers that the Victoria Yoga Centre is a community and now shares an ever-improving space in which to study and practice yoga in the Iyengar tradition.

GOING DEEPER

An Iyengar Yoga Workshop
with *Shirley Daventry French*

November 2 & 3, 2002



An opportunity for Level I, II, and III students to work with senior teacher Shirley Daventry French and explore yoga in a deeper way. Also an opportunity for teachers to observe Shirley.

Shirley is a long time student of B.K.S. Iyengar and has been to Pune many times to study with him, most recently in February of 2002 to attend the Institute's Silver Jubilee Celebrations.

Founder of the Victoria Yoga Centre, Shirley has been the driving force in making the Victoria yoga community one of the strongest and most viable in Canada. Students from across Canada and around the world have studied with her. Now local students have the opportunity to learn from her in a workshop setting.

Saturday November 2

10:30-12:30pm

3:00-5:00pm

Sunday November 3

10:00-12:30pm

12:30-1:00pm refreshments

1:00-2:00pm debriefing for observers

Fees \$90.00 Yoga Centre members

\$100.00 non members

\$75.00 observers (limited space)

prices subject to GST

Credit card or cheque payable in Canadian funds to:

The Victoria Yoga Centre

Call or mail The Victoria Yoga Centre

202 - 919 Fort Street

Victoria, B. C. V8V 3K3

250 - 386- YOGA (9642)

Registration begins Sept. 1 for Victoria Yoga Centre
members and Sept. 8 for non-members.

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The VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY is a non-profit society incorporated under the Societies' Act of the Province of British Columbia, whose purpose is "to encourage the physical, mental, and spiritual growth of its members and other interested persons of the society at large by the study and discipline of Yoga." The Society owes its inspiration to Swami Sivananda Radha and Mr. B.K.S. Iyengar.

The Society Newsletter is published regularly, providing current information on events concerning yoga in the Victoria area and the Yasodhara Ashram. Published by the VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY.

Anyone wishing to contribute articles, photographs, drawings, information or suggestions may contact the

Victoria Yoga Centre Newsletter:

202 – 919 Fort Street

Victoria BC V8V 3K3

For more information on Victoria Yoga Centre activities and events, please call 386-YOGA or visit our website: www.victoriaiyengaryoga.ca

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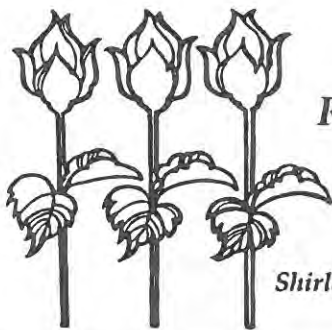
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Note: The editor/newsletter committee hold the right to edit all articles at their discretion. It should also be noted that not all articles submitted are printed in the newsletter due to space and other considerations.



Reflections

by
Shirley Daventry French



This fall we celebrate a year of life in our new downtown yoga space. After thirty years of organising and teaching classes at the Victoria Y, this was a big move. What took us so long, you may ask? After all the Victoria Yoga Centre was established in 1977.

What's the big deal about opening a centre? In the current wave of popularity for yoga, centres are popping up on almost every corner of every city in North America.

Several things held us back. We had a good working relationship with the Y, a pleasant well-equipped yoga studio, where they allowed us almost complete autonomy over scheduling, teaching and all other decisions on how to conduct the yoga programme. However, our autonomy was not complete as became evident when, without consultation with us, they brought in a Power Yoga teacher. Earlier we had sought to expand our programme as our classes were filled to the brim. The Y, which was also bursting at the seams, could not find space for extra Iyengar classes. Therefore, it was a shock to us when space suddenly materialised for Power Yoga.

Yes, I know that if you practise karma yoga it is supposed to be done with no attachment, but in yoga you also learn to substitute reality for illusion and it was an illusion that the space which we had used for thirty years was our space. Another illusion was that because we had maintained a high quality of teaching in all of our classes as well as doing much volunteer work to keep the program solvent and healthy, we had some seniority or rights. The Y owed us something!

This relationship had worked well for so long partly because, like us, the Y is a non-profit organisation with karma yoga as part of their mandate although they would not use these words to describe their concept of service. They are a charitable, community-based association of volunteers and staff – just like us. Their mission involves enhancing the quality of life in the local and global community – just like us. They encourage and support a balanced approach to the development of body, mind and spirit – just like us. Where we differ is that, while they have respect for B.K.S. Iyengar who taught some inspiring classes at the Victoria Y in 1984, they are no longer prepared in the current yoga climate to let their yoga programme be exclusive to Iyengar Yoga.

In making this clear, the Y actually did us a favour. Thus began a series of meetings and months of planning which led us out of the Y and into suite 202–919 Fort Street: a space devoted exclusively to Iyengar Yoga.

In the politically correct climate of Canada these days to be exclusive is discouraged; but in yoga this is just what you have to be if you want to go far along this path. In the beginning, you may have to experiment and try different styles; but if you continue to pick and choose, or mix and match, you will end up with nothing but a pleasant way of passing your time. Yoga is not a past-time. It is a pilgrimage — a spiritual journey in search of the soul. It is a voyage of self-discovery which will take you into turbulent and uncharted waters. Serious stuff requiring good

preparation and training.

Consider that you are a mountain climber and want to scale great heights. If you are serious about this you set your sights on a particular peak, train hard, equip yourself well, lay in your supplies, and once the journey is begun, continue if humanly possible until you reach the summit. On the other hand, possibly you get part way up only to give up as soon as it becomes difficult and uncomfortable. You may go back, rest a while and then tackle this climb again. If you do so without extra training and failing to examine what it was which prevented you from making more progress last time, you are unlikely to accomplish your objective again. Or you may go partially up another mountain and then another and then another. There are a lot of mountains in the world. However, unless you complete one of these ascents your perspective is limited. Yoga can take us to the highest peaks that humans can aspire to, but only if, once having embarked on a particular path, you continue on that path exclusively.

Since it takes a minimum of five years (two as a student and three years' of training) to become a certified Iyengar Yoga teacher and most often longer than that, by the time you have achieved this particular goal you will have a good sense of where you are going and the means of getting there. You have committed to the path of yoga in the Iyengar tradition and will not practise or teach a little Iyengar one day, some Kripalu the next, Power Yoga the next – or mix them all up into a yoga potluck. If your students want no more than to relax or to become fit and strong, they may like this and you may even be a popular teacher, but not really a teacher of yoga.

Iyengar Yoga teachers are committed to understanding and following to the best of their ability the teaching of B.K.S. Iyengar for themselves and for their students. Sivananda teachers are committed to the teachings of Swami Sivananda, and so on. They have become exclusive in their practice and teaching knowing that the path they have chosen provides them with more

than enough to accomplish in this lifetime.

At the Victoria Yoga Centre, while we are inclusive of all who come through the door wanting to take a class, our classes are exclusively Iyengar Yoga. If you want to pursue Sivananda or Kripalu you have come to the wrong place. If you get a glimpse of the systematic nature and power of Mr. Iyengar's method, if this appeals to you and you are prepared to come to class consistently, to establish a home practice and to work your way through our four levels of general classes, then you may apply to enter our teacher training programme. Unlike so many other teacher training courses on the market these days, we do not take students until they have proved their commitment. We do not advertise for people to take our teacher training. It is not set up as a money making venture. We do not give certificates at the end of a few weeks - or even, as I saw recently (and I swear this is true), after two days. In fact, we do not give them certificates at all. We prepare our trainees for national certification under the auspices of the Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers' Association; a rigorous and demanding process but one which provides a true sense of having surmounted one peak. The certificate earned is an international one recognised throughout the world.

This is only the start. They can continue, as many of the teachers of the Victoria Yoga Centre are doing, to upgrade and gain higher levels of certification which again involve much study and practice plus a national assessment. As I sit here writing this column, two Victoria teachers are in Saskatoon acting as assessors, two others are there training to be assessors and candidates from across Canada are taking the assessment. For the candidates it is two days and for the assessors three grueling days of difficult and demanding work! The assessors' air fare and expenses are paid by CIYTA, but the assessors in training pay their own air fares, a not insignificant amount these days. Why would they do this? Because of their commitment to the work of B.K.S. Iyengar. They have learned the

importance of gratitude and that one way of showing your gratitude for what you have been given is to pass this work on to others. This is the spirit of karma yoga and selfless service which our teacher, B.K.S. Iyengar, has inspired in us from his own example. In speaking of the essential qualities of a yoga teacher, Guruji states that, *"Teaching is a difficult art, but it is the best service you can do to humanity."*

It is this spirit that we are committed to keeping alive at the Victoria Yoga Centre, and which makes it such a pleasure to teach there. We were lucky to find the Y and have their support for thirty years. For this we must be grateful to them. Last year we parted company but we did not leave them high and dry; some Iyengar teachers teach there as well as at the centre.

For myself, I could not imagine that it would make such a difference having our own space. It is a delight to teach there. From-time-to-time I had considered opening an Iyengar Yoga centre on my own, but I have always been drawn to a collegial approach, and while I certainly like to be paid well for my teaching, I have always believed that making money should not be the foremost aim of a yoga teacher. That said, I have always fought for yoga teachers to be well paid commensurate with the amount of training and expertise which they bring to the task. As Guruji says, we have got to live so we should charge but make sure that we do not charge more than we give.

At the Victoria Yoga Centre we follow this philosophy. All our teachers are well trained, and the centre is attempting to recognise this in the remuneration they receive. To avoid a competitive atmosphere they are not paid according to the number of students they attract but according to their experience, although there is only a small differential between the newly certified teacher and the most experienced teachers.

No-one is going to become rich teaching at the Victoria Yoga Centre, but all are being well compensated. In return they all donate much of themselves in and out of class including many hours of unpaid work each month in the spirit of karma yoga. This is complemented by the hours of volunteer work by the board of directors, members of various committees, the newsletter team, the volunteers in special needs classes (without whom the teachers could not do such a thorough job) and numerous other volunteers in all aspects of the work. Our teacher B.K.S. Iyengar, his daughter Geeta and his son Prashant ask nothing of us which they are not prepared to do themselves day in day out. Similarly the senior teachers in the yoga centre ask nothing of the junior teachers which they are not prepared to do themselves day in day out. It is a life sentence once you become committed to yoga but one which brings the greatest fulfillment and much joy - enabling us to continue our work and, in Guruji's words: *love, labour and laugh.* ☯



Dr. Geeta Iyengar gave the following lecture on practice at RIMYI's monthly meeting in November 1997. The lecture was audiotaped, transcribed and edited by Lois Steinberg, PhD. who kindly granted permission for us to reprint it here.

Geetaji on Practice: Part III

by Geeta Iyengar

We categorize all the asanas. For example: standing, sitting, forward extension, supine, backward extension,



lateral twisting, and prone asanas. We have hand-balancing, inverted postures like *Sirsasana* and *Sarvangasana*. We have body-knotting poses like *Yoganidrasana*, *Ekapada Sirsasana*, and *Dwi Pada Sirsasana*, which very few people may be able to do. The advanced asanas cannot

be taken in general classes for the average person. Then also abdominal contraction such as *Jathara Parivartanasana*, etc. Several varieties you have to touch in your practice. Guruji has given a guideline, an outline for the practice. You tone muscles first with the standing asanas. Then you recover after standing poses with sitting postures. From sitting postures, you may go to the forward-bend extension, where the heart's position gives a restful feeling. Supine postures like *Supta Virasana* and *Supta Baddha Konasana* also allow you to recover. The supine asanas are almost like a backward bend, and then you are introduced into backward bending. From the backward bend you are introduced to the lateral twisting actions of the spine when you turn. A sequential procedure teaches you how to work with your muscles, your spine, and your body. You learn how they express themselves in different asanas.

When you have to do the limbering action in the asanas, you find more variety of movement in your standing poses. For example, in *Parsvottanasana* your hands are on your back doing *Namaskar*. Your right leg turns out; your left leg turns inside. Your waist turns, your head rolls back, turning with the neck and back, and your chest opens. Then your head comes down. Your spine extends forward and downward to the right side. Then again, the waist and head coming to the center. Moving yourself to the left side, you bring the rotational action on the pelvic region. With the raising of your spine, you look backward with the neck action, the head downward. See how many varieties with the hands, shoulders, legs, and knees exist in one asana. These movements are important for you to get some work on the joints, muscles, the circulation of the blood, and getting yourself mentally elevated. The mind gets elevated. Your very posture gets elevated. You feel the body getting open, getting freedom. The standing asanas improve the structure of your body. The procedure of going from the easy asana to the difficult or complicated asana, or converting the fatigued body to the fresh body, is given by Guruji. Or, if you are already fresh in the mind, how to start from there has also been given to us by Guruji.

There is another way of sequencing. When certain portions of the body need attention you have to follow up with that particular area. For example, a heart patient needs attention to the chest, the heart muscles, back, etc. Again, the brain and mind need to be quieted. A student having knee pain needs attention on the knee. The group of asanas have to be practiced in such a manner that they work on the heart or the knee. The knee is the central point, the central idea. Like the poem has a central idea, your knee becomes a central idea. Or your heart becomes a central idea. And around that central idea your whole practice has to rotate. The focus of attention is on the affected area. The practice of asanas has to be connected with this center.

That means your knee could be stretched; it could be



bent. In your sequence of asanas you have to study which asanas work on the knee, on which exact part of the knee, etc. It could be the antigravity process where you put your legs up and knees straight in *Urdhva Prasārīta Pādāsana*. If you can't stretch the knee, we put you against the wall and ask you to stretch the knee, or put you flat on the floor in the supine position and extend the knees passively. You do *Supta Padāṅgusthāsana* with bent knee and straight knee, front and side, or *Uthīta Hasta Padāṅgusthāsana* with bent knee and straight knee, front and side, or twisting. *Virāsana* and *Baddha Kōṇāsana* work on the knee. *Padmāsana* is painful to some people, but, even in that pain, you have to find out the way to open the joint and extend the ligaments. You have to see whether, with the knee supported, it's working on that area. The central theme is the knee, and the practice has to be around that area in each asana. All the forward bends, where the knees are bent in a different manner, have to be understood with an eye on the

knee. The knee bends differently in *Janu Sirsāsana* than in *Triāṅga Mukhaikapāda Pāścimottānāsana*. So also in *Marichyāsana*, *Ardha Baddha Pādnīa Pāścimottānāsana*, *Bhēkāsana*, and *Uthīta Bhēkāsana*. All these asanas work on the knee. One has to do and find out how it is working on the knee.

As far as the heart is concerned, you know that the chest should open. When you do *Supta Virāsana*, *Supta Baddha Kōṇāsana*, *Supta Swastikāsana*, or *Matsyāsana*, these asanas open the chest. *Salamba Purvottānāsana* on the platform, *Dvipāda Viparīta Dandāsana*, and *Ustrāsana* open the chest. The space is created. The area is aerated. The life force is brought in that particular area. All can be done with or without props. If you haven't got any problem, yet you want to concentrate on your chest and heart, then these are the things you have to practice. The whole sequence is adjusted accordingly. This is another way of practice. You sequence the asanas affected organ-wise.

The sequence depends upon the individual. The affected area might be the heart or the knee, but every individual will have their own limitations, fear, and capacities. You have to watch your position in that particular asana. You can't jump straightaway on to the final position. Rather, you have to watch several intermediate states which change degree-wise in each one. Suppose your knee has limitations in its bending action. You have to watch where and how the limitation comes. Sometimes it is the pain which brings the limitation. Therefore, at every degree of bending movement of the knee you have to watch. Again, you have to see that while working on the knee, the other areas like the groin, the sacrum, the back, etc. do not get distorted. If it is the heart problem, one has to see whether it has a healthy, nourishing look in the asana. You may broaden, open, and uplift the chest, but the tension will be seen on the shoulder, the throat, the neck, the face, and so on. Then the sequence and position or posture of the asana changes in order to remove the wrong, undue, and unwanted tensions.

Sometimes you need to see the movement of the breathing. You need to watch the diaphragm and the intercostal muscles. For instance, *Dvipada Viparita Dandasana* is a nourishing, nurturing asana for the heart. But if the distribution of the spinal curvature is uneven and if you overdo at one place and underdo at another place, the energy is shattered. It is unevenly distributed. And sometimes you run out of the energy. At such a juncture, you need the sequential order of action, motion, correction, penetration, and relaxation in the same asana. In other words, the asana also progresses and proliferates gradually.

You all practice the twisting asanas, like *Bharadvajasana*, *Marichyasana*, and *Ardha Matsyendrasana*, etc. They are all lateral twisting actions. The foundation for this action is laid in standing asanas. In *Parivrtta Trikonasana*, *Parivrtta Parsvakonasana*, *Virabhadrasana I*, and *Parsvottanasana*, you turn your abdomen. In *Parsva Sirsasana* and *Parivrtta Parsvaikapada Sirsasana*, it's a rotation. You have to find out in these sequences where and how you turn the spine. In *Janu Sirsasana* and *Trianga Mukhaikapada Paschimottanasana*, you may sit upright, without bending forward, and turn. You concentrate on that central theme of turning and you work.

Different sequences have a lot of area to work. In business you find a variety of areas to earn money. In yoga, why can't you open up that field to gain health? Don't you have a lot of scope to penetrate your mind to find out in these asanas what happens to your physical and mental state? Have you noticed the right and left sides of the brain? Have you seen how much you are able to face pain, how much you are able to tolerate? "*Tato Dvandvanabhighatah*." (11. 48) When you attempt to do the asana and you can't do the asana, do not the dualities affect you? Are you practically trying to experience that in the asanas? Why should this

Dvandva [duality] affect you? If your knee is paining in *Janu Sirsasana* or *Ardha Baddha Padma Paschimottanasana*, you have two ways of looking at it. Either you will neglect that knee, or you will concentrate on that extended leg. The bent knee is in pain. You will support it. Fine. No injury. Now concentrate on that extended leg and find out how your body works there. That means you are trying to put the painful part away out of your attention and concentrate somewhere else. That's again the role of the mind. The other way is to look at your painful knee and find out why, where, and when it is paining and compare it with the other knee which is not paining. Question yourself, whether you can work on the bent knee in the same way as you work on the straight knee, which is not that painful. What happens to it when it is not paining? Is it not the study of the mind that also



is involved and concerned with the pain? Two ways of doing are there: to take out the mind and to have the mind there. That's how practice has to be done and built.

How to practice *Savasana* may also be confusing to students of yoga. A person wrote to ask if it is right to do *Savasana* in a prone position instead of lying down on the back. Somebody else answered this question in

the newspaper. They said that you can do *Savasana* even in a sitting posture. In *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, it's said, "*Uttanam Shavavat Bhumau Shayanam Tar Shavasanam.*" *Uttanam* is a

completely extended state. *Shavavat* is like a dead body. *Bhumau* means on the floor. *Shayanam Tat Savasanam*, as you lie down it's called *Savasana*. In the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* Swatmarama states, "*Savasanam Shrantiharam Chitta Vishrantikarakam.*" How should this *Savasana* be? If you do that, it should be *Shranti Haram*. It should take out your fatigue and anxiety and make your mind, your *Chitta*, to go to a restful state. By explaining the effects, he says what the technique should be. The technique is hidden in the effect of the asana.

As I stated earlier, you have to watch what effect you want to derive from the asana, and, accordingly, the technique should be adjusted - or, rather, corrected. If the knee is to derive the effect, to get rid of the pain or increase the mobility, I have to work during the asana practice to see that the effect comes on the knee. I have to do the asanas with my mind on the knee so that it gets extended, gets space, and gets the lubrication. Similarly, in *Savasana*, these things have to be noted. In *Savasana*, you have to lie down in a supine posture like a dead body, "*Shavavat Bhunrau.*" Many find the body pain increases the moment they lie down. The body and mind become restless. In that case, the position is not good. It is incorrect. The body tilts this way or that way. After days of practice you

realize this and say, "When I am in *Savasana* this shoulder pains, or that shoulder doesn't pain. This leg becomes heavy. That leg doesn't become heavy." Your

muscles shrink, your structure gets tilted, the chest gets dropped, and the circulation is hampered, somewhere the body gets jammed. Sometimes you are not able to breathe smoothly in that very posture. The alteration in *Savasana* is required. The body and mind demand the alterations.

Guruji has given many methods. You can do bent-leg *Savasana* with your legs bent up on a stool or chair, or *Swastikasana Savasana*, simple loose cross-legs *Savasana*. When a person cannot stretch their legs in *Savasana*, you can place a bolster underneath their knees. When a woman is pregnant and cannot lie down straight because of the heaviness of the abdomen, she keeps the legs bent on one or two bolsters and the legs slanting away a bit from the abdomen so



that the baby also finds space. The pose is almost like *Navasana* where your legs are up. It is a supported bent-leg *Navasana*, and not a muscular *Navasana*. The legs rest while the spine and head are supported and the abdomen is relaxed. When people feel too heavy in the abdomen, or have an ulcer or gastric reflux, this kind of *Savasana* also helps them because it reduces the burning sensation.

In supine *Savasana*, the spine may be elevated with a pillow, bolster, or blanket. The heart region may be supported with a rolled head wrap, brick, or quarter-round block, or even the slanting plank. The

head is positioned higher than the chest in order to relax the throat if somebody has throat problems, thyroid problems, breathlessness, asthma, etc.

Prone *Savasana* is another pose. The person lies down on the stomach with the tops of the feet completely facing the floor, toes turned in, heels turned out, and the backs of the thighs turned completely out. The arms may be placed either sideways, backwards, folded, or any different style as a person needs. Weights may be placed on the backs of the thighs when there is severe backache or sciatica. The legs may be belted when the ankles are tilting. The knees are separated and padded, but the ankles are belted together in osteoarthritis. For some people, sometimes the knees go too much away. In this case, the knees are belted together and the feet are separated to avoid problems in the knees. You need to adjust the position in *Savasana* according to one's problem. But finally, the traditional, original, authentic, and right way of doing *Savasana* is only the supine way.

While *Savasana* has so many positions, sitting doesn't give relaxation. The person says in the article that you can sit and relax as in *Savasana*. Sitting *Savasana* we do only in the train or plane. If I have to travel from Pune to Bombay, often after Lonavala I may take a nap. Everyone on the train has a nap. But I don't call it *Savasana*. It's sleep. Suppose you have a longer journey to travel, from Pune to Bangalore, and you have several naps in a sitting posture. The body collapses. It can't be *Savasana*. Swatmarama says, "*Sharavat Bhumau*." When you lie down on the floor, *Savasana* can become *Sranti Haram* and *Chitta Vishrantikarakam*. That doesn't happen in sitting. The energy force does not get distributed. *Uttana* means extended or expanded, fully lengthened. It doesn't happen while sitting. Therefore, the sitting *Savasana* is not a *Savasana*. We give asthmatic patients *Swastikasana* and *Dandasana* sitting, supporting the chest, because the person feels

breathless. This is called as *Upashraya sthiti*. In *Upashraya sthiti*, one reclines a bit backwards, like one has push-back chairs in the airplane or train. When the chest is supported, the person feels nice. The breathing becomes free. It's a *Savasana* for that person since one breathes freely, but it's not a classical *Savasana*. People who feel breathless, who feel very heavy in the pelvis, women especially who have a heavy menstrual flow, become restless. When the menstruation is having a heavy flow, the mental tension is there all the time. If you put them in *Dandasana*, *Swastikasana*, or *Baddha Konasana* with an arching back, they feel nice and find solace in this position. They feel the mind resting a bit. The crumpled, contracted, and constricted chest finds freedom. The cramped organs get space within. With the methods one can certainly remove tensions, hardness, and heaviness. One can overcome breathlessness. But finally one has to go to the original and classical *Savasana* in order to taste the real essence.

Guruji has developed and taught so many things. I wanted to inform you that even the practice of *Savasana* is done by students in so many ways. It is for you to find out what you have to gain, what you have to learn, and how you have to practice. If the class had only one pattern, it would have closed within a day.



But that doesn't happen because of the feelings, the experiences, the sensitivities, the changes. The transformation occurs. One has to watch those transformations. All the methods that Guruji has given have to be studied. Everything has to be felt and experienced. I hope you have understood. Thank you very much.

The entire lecture was recently published in the Iyengar Yoga Odyssey 2001 magazine entitled Sadhana. Sadhana was produced by Ms. Steinberg as the official conference magazine for Geetaji's visit to California last year. Sadhana contains original photographs as well as a colour centrefold of Mr. Iyengar's practice. The magazine is still available for wholesale and retail distribution. Information on the latter is at the IYNAUS website, inya.us.org.

Please note that the photographs shown within the reprinted lecture are those taken at the Canadian Conference in May of 2001. The photos were taken by Nancy Bleck and Susan Stewart. ☺

Are you wondering where your teachers are?

The following Victoria Yoga Centre teachers are traveling to the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute in Pune this year to study with the Iyengars.

Leslie Hogya	September
Wies Pukesh	October and November
Robin Cantor	December

Lauren Cox will be teaching in Hong Kong for Linda Shevloff in September while Linda is studying in Pune.



VICTORIA
YOGA CENTRE'S

Friday Night Gathering

Date: Friday, Sept. 23

at the Victoria Yoga Centre
202-919 Fort Street

Asana Practice 6pm

Potluck diner 7pm

Bring food to share and
your own plate/cutlery

*Everyone is welcome to join us.
Bring a friend, partner or family member.*

By donation. Free to members.



Good Luck

To Li Milnewho
is moving away
from Victoria

A First Year

by Leslie Hoya

As I write this, it is hard to believe that a year ago we still didn't have a space nailed down. We were waiting for approval from City Hall for occupancy of 919 Fort St. We had been working steadily from January onwards to create a vision of what we wanted and then to search for a new space. However, when Shirley Daventry French announced she would not teach any classes in the fall at the Y, we were really propelled into high gear.

Up until we began this search, we had functioned as a home-based, volunteer society. Our biggest concerns had been organizing workshops, establishing teacher training guidelines, meeting newsletter deadlines, awarding scholarships, arguing about new t-shirt designs. That was all about to change in ways we could never have envisioned.

Everything about the yoga centre has been transformed since we moved into our new space and continues weekly to evolve and grow.

We opened the doors September '01 and waited to see if anyone would sign up for classes. Renovations were going on while we answered the phones, people were coming and going through every door with hard hats and ladders (see previous issue for more information on this period!).

I have thanked the many, many volunteers who helped us create and build our own space in past issues, but from this

perspective, I want to express deep gratitude to Greg Johnson and his wife Debra. We are indeed so fortunate to have a dedicated student like Debra, whose husband Greg is a general contractor. Greg supplied the necessary trades people at bargain rates so we could get the major construction work accomplished all in a professional way with all the proper building permits and so on.

At one point we realized that Greg's schedule had us continuing construction into October. He had not realized only days remained before students would be arriving. Suddenly, he had to arrange for the plumber, electrician, dry wallers all to come and finish their work! Somehow, he managed to schedule these trades people juggling his own needs to help us. The electrical inspection was down to the wire, but we did it!

As I said, every aspect of the yoga centre has changed since we opened the doors in our new space. Class schedules are more flexible, now that we make up our own deadlines. We have added or deleted classes as needs change, requests come in. We have been able to run classes in both studios in peak hours, run workshops in one room and classes in another. We added a second teacher training intensive for the Junior Intermediate curriculum, which would have been nearly impossible to do at the Y. And then because of demand, added a new student intensive at the end of August.

The other side of the coin is added responsibility for advertising, cleaning,



maintenance of the space, and so many other details the Y took care of for us. Registration policy, refunds, NSF-cheques were all things we didn't need to worry about before. We have constant calls from people requesting information and wanting guest teachers, wanting us to buy things or requesting a bursary.



The office is staffed with some wonderful people who field these calls, namely Britta Poisson and Christine Dimofski, assisted by Karin Holtkamp and Ty Chandler, all of whom volunteer beyond the hours they work (See the new Volunteer Column featuring Britta elsewhere in this issue). When our office is closed, a fleet of volunteers sit at the desk during class transition times helping with registration and selling props.

At the time of our opening in October, we were just glad to have a space without wires hanging from the ceiling or cracks in the floor. Now we look for ways to improve our space such as adding more shelves, a new carpet would look nice in the office, and there's talk of installing some better lighting. We began with the bare minimum of work completed to make running classes possible. We had one computer and one phone line;

soon we needed two of each. If we had more quiet office space, we would add a third computer.

The most significant impact of having our centre is, I think, a much greater sense of community. It is our space, and it feels like home. There are pictures of B.K.S. Iyengar, of his family, a framed letter he sent congratulating us on our opening. There are statues and photos honouring the sage Patanjali and a beautiful tapestry with the om symbol over the front desk. We even named our computers; "Sita" is the main computer and "Ram" is in the small office. I love coming in and seeing Ty or Gwynneth checking their email on "Ram". Or Greg heating up his supper after Monday night class before he plays music downtown or seeing Tom and Gary come in to practice at our members practice times. Or some kids hanging out in our library while their parent's are in class. Or Britta wandering around before she leaves looking for where she might have left her shoes.

At our first anniversary we are refining, and we are settling in, and making a cup of tea. Without you, our members, donors, students, volunteers, board members we wouldn't be here! ☯

Newsletter Advertising Costs



Victoria Yoga Centre

Effective September 1, 2002

Full page	\$150.00
Half page	\$75.00
Quarter page	\$37.50

Consideration will be given to reducing rates for non-profit societies.



The Victoria Yoga Centre is pleased to present

An Intermediate Workshop

with *Chris Saudek*

for teachers and students in the tradition of Iyengar Yoga

November 22 - 24, 2002

Victoria Yoga Centre
202 - 919 Fort Street



Chris Saudek has been a devoted student of the Iyengars for more than 20 years. She has studied extensively at the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute in Pune, including two times when she stayed for more than five months each. The training Chris received as a physical therapist gave her valuable background for her study of yoga. Chris is a precise and disciplined, caring and innovative teacher. She is the director of the Yoga Place in La Crosse, Wisconsin and certified as a senior intermediate teacher of the Iyengar method.

Fri. Nov. 22 6:30-9pm

Sat. Nov. 23 10am-1pm and 3-5pm

Sun. Nov. 24 9am-12pm and 1:30-3pm

Fees:

\$200 for Victoria Yoga Centre Members

\$230 for non-members (includes membership)

all prices subject to GST

Registration opens September 3. Cancellations will be refunded only if your place can be filled. Credit card or cheque payable in Canadian funds to the Victoria Yoga Centre.

Call or mail the Victoria Yoga Centre:

202-919 Fort Street

Victoria BC V8V 3K3

(250)-386-YOGA (9642)

For more information contact: Ann 1-250-598-0976

or email stpatrick@entirety.ca

As Victoria Yoga Centre teachers, students and volunteers celebrate the first anniversary of the Centre's long-awaited yoga space, it is timely to consider the ways in which we can all make our own space for yoga. Just as YVC members and volunteers have created this bright and airy teaching space, we as individuals can create space for consistent home practice – in our days, in our homes and in our minds.

The Basics of Practice

by Krysia Strawczynski

At noon on a Sunday in late May, Leslie Hogya led a short workshop called "What to Practice?" Over thirty people who represented a range of skill levels attended. I, a novice in Leslie's over 55 class, was among them.

First, we had a general discussion about why people came to the session, then Leslie talked about some of the impediments to practice, the reasons and value of practice and gave some practical advice about when and how to practice. I found the information interesting and useful.

She began with her observation that of the people who came and kept coming to yoga classes, a few never practiced, some practiced occasionally and some did so frequently. She has seen people who take to practice immediately while others struggle to get into the habit. I was heartened by this news; it gave me hope. Leslie read a short poem by Chris Lea published in the March/April issue of the Victoria Yoga Centre newsletter that

wryly describes a number of excuses why not to practice: laziness, stress, time, sleep among others. It is a good list but, of course, only scratches the surface.

So why practice? Workshop participants shared some of their reasons. These included a desire to reinforce class learning, to improve strength and flexibility, and an interest in the journey that yoga practice promises. Leslie quoted two sutras in relation to the value of practice: sutra 1.16, "The pains which are yet to come be and are to be avoided" and sutra 1.13, "Practice is steadfast effort to still these fluctuations."

Leslie took a realistic approach. She acknowledged that people lead busy lives that provide many reasons and even more excuses why not to practice. Her advice is to start with whatever works for us in our life as it is now. If we can manage only 10 to 15 minutes in the morning, then start with that. If we need to split practice in to a morning and evening session, then do that. She assured us that however we start, if we keep at it then inevitable the desire to practice will build until it does not feel right to not practice.

Where to practice is wide open. All we need is enough space for the mat.

Having dealt with why, when and where, we then learned about what to practice. Apparently, it is the first "pose", the *Getouthematasana* that is the hardest for most people. Having mastered that, the practice can proceed.

Practice starts as the classes do with some moments of silence and stillness. This quiets the mind so that our attention can be gathered and focused on what we are



doing and experiencing. It provides space for expanding our awareness.

The sequence of poses that follow should trace the same trajectory used in class. We begin with quiet poses and then build up to stronger more energetic poses and then back to quieting poses before ending with *Savasana*, corpse pose. A practice is balanced; yin and yang, tension and relaxation, head up and head down. The energetic poses are those with the head erect, eyes open and so Leslie advises ending the practice with poses where the head is down and the mind is quiet.

During our practice session, Leslie stressed that the first priority in practicing is to develop mobility and stability and after that attention can be paid to refining the poses. On how long to hold a pose, she recommended that in the beginning, we hold a pose until we felt that's enough. As we develop stability and stamina a kitchen timer can be used to increase holding time.

As in class, every practice ends with 3 to 10 minutes quiet in *Savasana*. This gives us time to integrate the practice and again to still our minds before we go back to busyness.

If you want more guidance on the sequence of poses to include in your practice, the front desk has some outlined in handouts. I recommend the handout entitled "Table for One? You, Yoga and Your Dining Room Table".

I enjoyed the workshop. I left confident that I would know what to do after the *getoutthematasana* and inspired to take this first most difficult step more often. ☺



Can you help?

The Victoria Yoga Centre is in need of a TV and VCR.

Donors and Gifts Thank you!

The following people have generously contributed to the Victoria Yoga Centre.

Donations:

Tadasana (Up to \$200)
Vi Chubak

Thank yous:

Caroline Taylor-Sly and Greg Sly for creating a special donation fund for the Victoria Yoga Centre in lieu of gifts at their recent wedding.

Bruce Cox for building our beautiful suggestion box (Bruce also supplies us with the wood blocks).

Amanda Grant who joined the office volunteers and the newsletter collating committee.

To all the newsletter distributors (every two months the newsletter is stapled, folded and put in envelopes by volunteers): Amanda Mills, Karin Holtkamp, Alisa, Karen Dayton, Keiko Alkire.

Li Milne for the beautiful picture of Shirley with BKS Iyengar that is in the front lobby.

Nina Zak for designing our new office shelving unit (she also picked the great colour for Studio B).

So many talented people have helped us in so many, many ways!

Teacher Training Intensive July 2002

When it came time to end this year's teacher training intensive, Karen Berezon graciously presented our teachers with beautiful bouquets of flowers along with the following words:

On behalf of the introductory teacher training intensive participants, I would like to thank Ann Kilbertus, Leslie Hogle, Linda Benn and Marlene Miller for the parting of your knowledge and experience, your detailed and firm teachings, for challenging us, nurturing us, preparing us and connecting us.

This week has been profound and incredibly beneficial. Your harmony as a team has been so wonderful and effective. So from the depths of our *Paripurna Navasana* and the heights of our *Adho Mukha Vrksasana*, namaste.



Each year, participants are requested to express their understanding of a particular yoga sutra in any manner they choose. This year, we studied sutra II.16: "Heynam dumkham anagatam" – the pains which are yet to come

can be and are to be avoided. Many students chose poetry as the vehicle in which to convey their understanding. The following is one such poem:

A Conversation With God

by Maggee Spicer

"Lord," said Maggee. "Deliver me from the suffering that occurs when I judge myself."



"Maggee," said the Lord. "Rather than judging yourself, study yourself."

"Lord," said Maggee. "Deliver me from the suffering that occurs when I think that I will be judged by others."

"Maggee," said the Lord. "Listen to and learn from others."

"Lord," said Maggee. "Deliver me from the suffering that occurs when I cling to those I love."

"Maggee," said the Lord. "Let go of those you love. They will love you more."

"Lord," said Maggee. "Deliver me from the suffering that occurs when I try to teach from power."

"Maggee," said the Lord. "Teach only from love and let



go of the fruits of your teaching.”

“Lord,” said Maggee. “Deliver me from the suffering that occurs when my body aches and I am in pain.”

“Maggee,” said the Lord. “Welcome pain and let it become your teacher. Do not cling to or identify with

your pain. Practice.”

“Lord,” said Maggee. “Deliver me from the suffering that occurs when I anticipate difficulties at work.”

“Maggee,” said the Lord. “Why anticipate? If a difficulty arises in the present, deal with it in the present.”

“Lord,” said Maggee. “Deliver me from the suffering that occurs when I am guilty of not being pro-active.”

“Maggee,” said the Lord.

“Renunciate. Do not cling. Find small ways to lighten your footsteps on the planet.”

“Lord,” said Maggee. “Deliver me from the suffering that occurs when I anticipate growing older.”

“Maggee,” said the Lord. “Think of the alternative.” ☯



New Office Hours

The Victoria Yoga Centre has NEW office hours
10am – 1pm
Monday to Saturday

NEW

Early Morning Class

Starting In September 2002
With Corrine Lowen
6:30-7:30am



This Is What Dying Is

by Wies Pukesh

"Death is unimportant to a yogi..."

– B.K.S. Iyengar from *The Tree of Yoga*

The reverse of this saying can also be said: "Death is all important to a yogi..." Coming from the ideal way of being where all else falls by the wayside and one is merely focused on one's true path, death becomes unimportant. However, we have to have fully embraced death in order to understand the illusion of death and only then can we become fully alive. Up till that point I would say death should keep one consciously occupied. Of course we are constantly dying; we are not what we were a moment ago, but when we talk about death it is generally understood when the body stops functioning and is separated from the Self within. When the body dies it is (most of the time) unconsciously performing the ultimate *Savasana* or corpse pose. In *Savasana* we approximate "a corpse" scanning the body in order to let go, to relax, which also requires a quieting of the mind. The breath becomes smooth and calm which is as Mr. Iyengar tells us, "refreshing and renewing for the yogi".

Savasana is an important part in my beginner's classes. The body is ready to relax after the asanas and many find a deeper relaxation than they have experienced in a long time. The first few times I give a detailed description of all the parts to relax, beginning with the feet. But then I like to bring in some of the higher concepts of yoga in order to relate the fact there is more to yoga than just the physical aspect. In some way I bring in the mind/

body connection, the breath, the influence of the breath, the idea of sharpening one's will and of surrender, of withdrawing the senses and of being "alone", without attachments.

But is what we do in *Savasana* comparable to dying? I would say for most of us not really. I have always been fascinated by death. I volunteered for many years at Hospice and even now working with the elderly, I am often witness to someone dying. This has taught me a lot about attachments. People closest to my idea of self (e.g. same age, same sex, same circumstances) were the most painful to see go. Young people dying were painful because of all the potential that seemed to be lost. Middle aged people were painful because they died at their peak of their accomplishments and never had the chance to look back upon their lives. Death for the elderly I find often a relief, many have been ready for years. Old age is an excellent antidote for the fear of dying. The person whose death I had the hardest time coming to terms with was a young woman with a six month old baby; to leave this task of mothering behind her was overwhelming. Her grief is deeply carved in my heart.



In what state do people die? Mostly in the same state they lived. That's why self-study is so important. At the end there is not the energy, the time, nor the know-how to consciously clean up one's habits. And when the mind keeps turning to anger, fear, self-pity, doubt,

confusion, etc. during one's life, it certainly will do so at the end.

Can we influence our death at all? Yes, I have seen many times people choosing what time to die, waiting for a birthday, a family member to visit, and often waiting to be alone.

Is there life after physical death? Absolutely. Every time someone dies I feel a shifting of energy in my own body, sometimes softly, sometimes with great choruses of "hallelujahs". Once I was taken away from someone who was just going into death and the whole night long every cell in my body was on edge as if the positive and the negative were not matching up. Another time I was privileged to witness someone starting to breathe after 20 minutes of not breathing, when her husband fell emotionally apart and demanded her to come back.

At the end of the dying process I have always noticed a period of restlessness. I interpret this as the final grasp of the life force on the body before having to let go. I have been privileged to be witness of some very clean deaths. One person, who was active and in control over her life till the end, laid down and consciously gave herself over to the death process, which seemed to me similar of someone giving birth; hard work, taking one's full concentration and rhythmic, regular in and out breaths of a certain amount with emphasis on the out breath and then no in breath, but just a pushing out of the exhalation, which would then stop, before starting on an in breath again. The gap of cessation became bigger, until there was no return of inhalation.

The problem is that there is a period before we actually die that we do not have control over our worldly environment and because of the times and the culture we live in this might be a time when others impose their ideas of death on us. I have seen some horrible and very distasteful interventions during that time by well-meaning people who had not searched deeply within themselves to discover their own attitude towards death. Therefore I cannot emphasize enough

that it is extremely important to think of one's death, how one wants to die and to make others aware of that. And for the sake of the rest of humanity negate your small self as much as possible when approaching someone who is dying. This process of self-knowledge is not done by just talking about it; lie down in *Savasana* and go through the dying process. Have someone who is trained to do so, lead you through death. Don't circumnavigate the squirmy issues, hang in there, go through them! Make a list of the most precious things in your life: your kids, your eyesight, your continence, etc. and scratch them off one by one. Better still, have someone else scratch them off at random, and feel the result of having these things taken away. This is what old age is, this is what dying is; not lying in *Savasana* and starting with relaxing your big toes. And after all that work towards Self-knowledge, *Savasana* will probably be a lot deeper. ☯

YOGA PROPS FOR SALE

Blankets (Grey Wool)	\$37.45
Bolsters	\$55.00
Eyebags (Barley)	\$ 8.03
Eyebags (Flax)	\$10.70
Foam Blocks (Pkg. Of 4)	\$26.75
Sandbags	\$21.40
Sticky Mats (Blue, Green, Purple)	\$42.80
Straps (Regular length)	\$10.70
Wooden Blocks	\$21.40

(All prices include GST)

For sale during office hours
10am - 1pm, Monday to Saturday
at the Victoria Yoga Centre
202 - 919 Fort Street
250 - 386 - YOGA (9642)

A Salute to the Sun

by Sue Riddell

Reading the announcement about the Sun Salutations workshop scheduled for June 21, the summer solstice, posted on the door of the Victoria Yoga Centre Sunday morning prior to class I remember thinking, "That's for me!" For the past two years I have wanted to be part of the 108 Sun Salutations event held by the Salt Spring Centre for Earth Day but it has always been a case of the spirit is willing but the body is weak. The concept of a "Sun Salutation" could also be taken as "Son Salutation" for my husband and I as our oldest son Scott passed away suddenly in an accident April of 1997 – his memorial service was held on Earth Day that year which was a coincidence (if you believe in coincidences) since he was a strong supporter of environmental causes. Perhaps I could honour his memory this way.

Missing my chance other years, this workshop spoke to me. No more excuses such as Friday nights are difficult as I work late, and/or Saturday is a work day for me as well, it should be held in the daytime, etc. etc. Signing up up that day I was committed.

Time passed quickly, soon the longest day of the year arrived. As Studio "A" filled quietly, we all silently read down the lists of Sun Gods provided for us:

- 1) *Aum Mitraya Namah*
- 2) *Aum Ravaye Namah*
- 3) *Aum Suryaya Namah*
- 4) *Aum Bhanave Namah*
- 5) *Aum Khagaya Namah*
- 6) *Aum Pusne Namah*
- 7) *Aum Hiranyagar Bhaya*
- 8) *Aum Mirichaye Namah*
- 9) *Aum Adityaya Namah*
- 10) *Aum Savitre Namah*
- 11) *Aum Arkaya Namah*
- 12) *Aum Byaskaraya Namah*

The thought occurred "Why am I here?" Doubt had reared its ugly head. "I would much rather be at home visiting with our pet cockatiels and sipping a latte!" Doubt is in the mind, laziness is in the body – both obstacles on the path to be overcome.

Ty Chandler welcomed us and we were on our way sitting in *Virasana*, lifting our chests, hands in prayer position and watching our breath. "The mind's only duty is to watch the breath" was a comment I found very helpful. We spent a few minutes this way then chanting three *aums* followed by the invocation in call and response being thankful for all of our teachers, the path of yoga, the health of our bodies and the opportunity to practice.

Tadasana, Uttanasana, Adho Mukha Svanasana, Urdhva Mukha Svanasana, Chaturanga Dandasana, back through upward and downward dog, jumping softly forward, *Uttanasana, Tadasana*.

We went slowly through the finer points of all the poses involved in a Sun Salutation. We added triangle (*Utthita Trikonasana*) and warrior poses (*Virabhadrasana*



II) "like the filling in a sandwich". Then we were on our own to praise each God and complete a Salutation each at our own pace. With the heat generated in our first hour the second hour sped by on wings. I finally got the hang of flipping my feet back and forth between downward and upward dog. So intently were we focused on each asana I did not realize I had bent a toe backwards and it was stiff and numb until I tried to walk to the huge array of goodies that awaited us at the end, now that is concentration! *Savasana* after so much effort was the deepest and most calming I have experienced.

Thank you Ty for your humour and encouragement. We will be back, you can be sure. ☺

C o n g r a t u l a t i o n s

On your
recent
marriage,
Caroline
and Greg!



The Victoria Yoga Centre

Is pleased to offer scholarships for the following workshops:

Ramanand

Sept. 27-29, 2002 \$100

Please apply by Aug. 27, 2002

Going Deeper

Nov. 2-3, 2002 \$60

Please apply by Oct. 2, 2002

Chris Saudek

Nov. 22-24, 2002 \$100

Please apply by Oct. 22, 2002

Apply in writing to The Scholarship Committee and give to your teacher or mail to:

Scholarship Committee

Victoria Yoga Centre Society

202-919 Fort St. Victoria BC V8V 3K3

*For more information contact
Amanda Mills or Wendy Boyer at 386-9642*

Scholarship Applicant Criteria:

Scholarships are offered to Victoria Yoga Centre members who have demonstrated:

- A sustained interest in yoga by way of regular attendance in asana classes and workshops.
- Appreciation for the uniqueness of the Iyengar method.
- Willingness to study yoga philosophy and psychology.

Generally, an individual may be eligible to receive a scholarship only once in a program year.

Application Procedure:

Candidates may apply directly to the Scholarship Committee or be nominated by a Yoga Centre member or teacher. Application and/or nominations must be submitted in writing and include:

- Applicant's name, address and phone number.
- Name of the applicant's yoga teacher.
- A brief description of the reason(s) for the request.

Applications are due at least four weeks prior to the applicable workshop or event.

Yoga 101

by Leslie Hogya

This is excerpted from a letter to B.K.S. Iyengar

Carole Miller who is a University of Victoria professor and certified Iyengar yoga teacher, recently taught a yoga course for credit in the Physical Education Department at UVic. The Victoria Yoga Centre co-operated with the university to give the students a broader perspective. Leslie Hogya, Victoria Yoga Centre President, went to the class in the first week and talked about the yoga centre, the types of classes we run, how we opened our own centre, etc. The second week, Shirley Daventry French visited the class and got them jumping into *Chaturanga Dandasana*. The students could not believe she was 70 years old! Shirley also gave a lecture on yoga philosophy. The third week, the students came to the yoga centre and Ann Kilbertus showed the students ways of adapting the poses with ropes, the trestler, *Halasana* bench, etc. Carole also required each student to take another class in the community and the Victoria Yoga Centre provided free passes to the students to assist them in taking their outside class at the centre.

Since this was a credit course, there were some written components. The students were photographed every day in the poses, and the students picked three poses to reflect upon. They used the photos to help them see their progress over the term. Another assignment was to respond to the guest teachers. The course was offered in the summer session which had the advantage of meeting daily for three and a half weeks, instead of once a week over several months. This provided consistency in their practice, and allowed them to build their understanding from day to day. There was very positive feedback from the students – some are now taking classes at the centre. ☯

Thoughts on the Annual Salt Spring Retreat

by Susan Bowen

When Melissa Worth, one of the rotating newsletter editors, came up beside me on Friday night of the retreat and said my name with that certain tone that people have when they are about to ask you for a favour, I knew something was up. What followed surprised me – “Would you be willing to write something for the Yoga Centre newsletter about this weekend?” My first reaction was a mixture of pride for being asked, quickly followed by a half-dozen reasons why I didn’t want to do it.

Having recently started a new job and with no vacation time in sight, I had planned for this weekend to be a mini holiday – an escape from work and caring for my injured partner. The thought of having to pay



Shirley Daventry French sheds light
on *Baddha Konasana*

attention and write about it were not in my “vacation” plans. But I had said “yes” – I was committed. The upside was that I *did* pay attention and as a result I gained much more from the experience than I otherwise would have.

As I have only been attending Level 1 classes since last November and had never been to this infamous retreat, I wasn’t sure what to expect. I know now why it is so popular that people return year after year to recapture the experience of a whole weekend with Shirley Daventry French and the wonderful atmosphere that is the Salt Spring Centre.

The setting is wonderful and after settling into my room I ventured onto the woodland trail that follows Blackburn Creek through a beautiful forest. The sense of release was immediate and I found myself feeling quite emotional as I let go of my life in the city and the challenges it brings, and surrendered to the peace of this place.

The retreat began with the first of several beautiful vegetarian meals lovingly prepared by the staff of the centre. Dinner was followed by *Savasana* and one of my dreams came true that first night – to be able to come out of *Savasana* and go directly to bed without having to drive home!

Saturday morning was my first experience of pranayama and it left me wanting more. After breakfast on Saturday morning we got down to business. As I was paying attention to what went on around me I felt appreciation for the excellent preparation I had been given in Level 1 classes by Ann Kilbertus. Even though there were people in the room with many years of yoga



Supta Padangusthasana II

experience, I didn’t feel out of my league. At least not until later when my legs were screaming at me to move and my brain was screaming “What are you doing here? You paid money to inflict this kind of pain on yourself. Get me out of here!” And I saw a pattern in my life: when things get tough, I want to run away – an important lesson.

After a much appreciated lunch, I was ready for the afternoon session. I was grateful that it seemed a bit less intense than the morning session and I was happy that I hadn’t run away. One of my favourite parts of the weekend was unexpected - Shirley’s talks before each practice session covering a range of topics from karma to the meaning of non-attachment, and anecdotes about Mr. Iyengar and his family and Shirley’s adventures in Pune.

Saturday evening’s *kirtan* was the perfect way to end the day. As I watched the face of a young woman as she chanted with such joy and devotion, I asked myself if I had ever felt such pure joy – certainly not in recent memory, possibly never!

Sunday morning’s pranayama was as inspiring as Saturday’s and was followed by more of that wonderful Salt Spring Centre food. As we settled in for the Sunday morning asana practice and gathered around to

listen to Shirley, I noticed a hawk outside the window circling just above Shirley's head – a fitting sign of the inspirational talk and practice that followed.

In the end, the request to write a short article on the weekend was a huge lesson in itself. By paying attention, taking mental notes and listening more closely to the seemingly incessant chatter of my mind, I learned something about yoga and something about myself. Early on in the weekend when a suggestion was dropped in my ear that I move this way here or bend more deeply there, I was paying attention as I watched my ego rise and I could remind myself that I'm here to learn. By the time we were in the final asana of Sunday morning, I was only too happy to have a correction indicated that helped me to go deeper into the pose. I can hear those comments repeated now when I practice these asanas at home.

This short weekend at the Salt Spring Centre has helped to deepen my commitment to continue practicing yoga and inspired me to keep on the yogic path for my physical health, my sanity and my spiritual growth. Many thanks to all involved and to Melissa for asking me to pay attention! ☯



Short Workshop at the Victoria Yoga Centre

Yoga Karunta: Working with the Ropes.

With Ann Kilbertus

Friday, October 18, 2002

6:30 – 9:00pm

Cost for workshops:

2 hours: \$30 +gst members, \$35 +gst non-members

3 hours: \$45 +gst members, \$50 +gst non-members

The Victoria Yoga Centre

202-919 Fort Street 250 386 YOGA

Volunteers

Over that past year, many volunteers have helped make the Victoria Yoga Centre a welcoming and appropriate space in which we are able to practice yoga in the Iyengar tradition. Volunteers continue to work in all kinds of ways at the Victoria Yoga Centre. This is the first column of a new series that will introduce a few of the folks who give a great deal to our community.

A Bit About Britta

by Jane Monroe

She sits at the front desk, holding the Centre open: providing information, taking registrations, answering telephone calls. Relaxed and alert, she radiates welcome and interest.



Britta assisting in the Special Needs Class

She's French – you might guess this from her name, Britta Poisson – and attended a French language high school in Windsor, Ontario, where she grew up. Later, she studied art and film, going to school to become a practicing artist. After a while, she wanted to discover what interested her – as distinct from what the world pressed her into making. So, she pared her life down and started listening to herself. It was then that she met yoga. "When I placed my body in those forms," Britta said, "something resonated in me. I felt like a tuning fork striking the right note."

About five years ago, she and her companion moved to Victoria. From the first class at the Y with Linda Benn, she felt, *Yes – I can learn here!* One day, a teacher asked for someone to help with the Special Needs class – move bolsters, get props. Britta thought, *I can do that*, and volunteered. The Special Needs class is still her favourite. She loves watching teachers work with the different needs and feels she's learning all the time. It delights her to see faces and bodies change by the end of the class.

Britta also volunteers in other ways. In its first year, she gave the Victoria Yoga Center one day a week of her services. As its first employee, she was paid for four days as a receptionist and donated the fifth. She also helps out with the Back Care Class and serves on the Victoria Yoga Centre Board. *I can do that* is a recurring theme for her.

Student, volunteer, first employee and now, would-be instructor – Britta's newest challenge begins this fall as she enters the teacher-training program.

Three Things Britta Says:

"I feel so much better when things are sparse and I just have my mind to contend with – yoga helps me get rid of clutter."

"When I started yoga I already knew what it felt like to work creatively. What hit me was: oh, yeah! yoga is my creativity!"

"People may feel they have to know everything to volunteer, but in fact they don't – it's an opportunity to learn." ☯



Weeping Warrior

by Vernaye Heuft

Ever wonder why you are drawn to certain poses? *Supta Virasana* is my favourite refuge, and recently one of my students helped to illuminate why. She said, "I love the poses that make me feel vulnerable. All my life I've had to have control, raising kids on my own and having to be so strong. This posture is such a release." This insight came from a fifty-something, tight bundle of strength and pains, a propped-up mother, grandmother and war-weary warrior.

The first time I rolled my calves out, placed heels by hips in an unnatural fold, and exhaled deeply into that uncertain back-lengthening descent, I knew I landed exactly where I was meant to.

Supta Virasana offers a special refuge for *rajasic* souls; those type 'A' personalities who have courage in abundance but so much trouble letting go of it. I've pondered the name – reclined warrior/hero pose. I've heard *Virabhadrasana I*, *II*, and *III* referred to as exalted warrior, proud warrior and brave warrior. While I don't know the origin of these names, the adjectives fit. These warrior cousins emanate such heat and ferocity. Courage overflows from exalted warrior's solar plexus. Strength spills forth from proud warrior's fingertips. The brave warrior offers a bounty of vitality through her raised foot and hands. What then does our reclined hero/warrior offer? What is the kinship between this warrior and her yogic cousins? The familial connection

lies in that as this wise warrior reclines, she volunteers her surrender to an unknown destiny and that takes courage, pride and faith.

Supta Virasana answers the serenity prayer; grant me the courage to change the things I can, the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, and the wisdom to know the difference. Plan to visit *Supta Virasana* frequently and to stay awhile. It takes time. Letting go isn't on anyone's agenda. One day while reclined back with solar plexus open, heart revealed and jugular exposed, the psychological impact of surrender hit me full force. This surrendered warrior holds a deep emotional well. Sometimes it overflows on the surface with sobs from deep in the belly of that primeval force I recognize as ego. When I can love this war-weary warrior, I can let go. Yes, this is release. ☯



Replies To The Suggestion Box

Red Mats

Answer. Sorry no, we have blue mats from Germany, Shirley's favourite (they don't come in red).

Longer Sessions

Answer. Look for two Level One classes in fall term that run for two terms.

A Shower

Answer. A shower would be good, but we would need more space to put it - there's no room anywhere!

Early Morning Class

Answer. NEW early morning drop-in, Tuesdays, 6:30-7:30am.

Upcoming Assessment Dates:

2002

Oct. 18-21	Introductory Syllabus	Montreal
Nov. 15-18	Junior Intermediate 1	Calgary

2003

Jan. 17-20	Junior Intermediate 3	Toronto
Jun. 20-22	Introductory 1 & 2	Edmonton
Oct. 17-19	Introductory 1 & 2	Winnipeg
Nov. 21-23	Junior Intermediate 1	Ottawa

Please note:

The Introductory 1 & 2 Assessments are held annually the third weekend of June and the third weekend of October.

New Beginnings

by Leslie Hogya

A special thank you to two retiring editors of our newsletter, Neil McKinley and Caren Leidtke. The pages of our newsletter have been bolstered, enhanced, and beautified, with grace, humour, good sense, fine editing, discriminating choice of articles and photos by both of these long time newsletter editors and yoga students. They have been quietly withdrawing their time from the newsletter ever since the big splash issue for Shirley Daventry French's special birthday issue and



**Neil and Caren bending over backwards for the
Yoga Centre newsletter for six years!**

party last September (Maybe just one too many special issues wore them right out?). They have given countless hours of editing, typing, re-typing, interviewing, more editing, phone calls, meetings,

more meetings for many years that has helped our newsletter be consistently fine. Neil, Caren, we will miss your editing skills, but hope you will continue to pen an occasional piece for us to publish. Thank you, gracias, merci. No matter what language, it doesn't quite say it enough for all you have both done.
Love, Leslie

Editor's note: Fortunately Neil and Caren will continue to grace the newsletter committee with their fine proofing skills. Thank you, both! ☯



YOGA VIDEO NIGHT – At the Victoria Yoga Centre

Friday, Sept. 20.....6:45 - 8:15pm

Bring your own popcorn and a friend.
Be inspired!

The VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

Program of Classes in the Iyengar Approach to Yoga

Term 1: September 9 - November 3, 2002

Level 1

Day	Time	Instructor
Mon.	12:00 – 1:30pm	Lauren Cox
Mon.	7:30 – 9:00pm	Ann Kilbertus (16wks)
Tues.(B)	10:00 – 11:30am	Robin Cantor
Tues.(B)	5:00 – 6:30pm	Melissa Worth
Tues.	7:30 – 9:00pm	Ty Chandler, Corrine Lowen
Wed.	6:15 – 7:45pm	Ty Chandler (16 wks)
Wed.	7:45 – 9:15pm	Gwynneth Powell
Thurs.	8:30 – 10:00am	Linda Benn
Thurs.	4:30 – 6:00pm	Melissa Worth
Fri.	10:30 – 12:00pm	Linda Benn
Fri.	5:00 – 6:30pm	Gwynneth Powell
Sat.(B)	9:00 – 10:30am	Corrine Lowen
Sun.	10:30 – 12:00pm	Ty Chandler
Sun.	4:30 – 6:00pm	Chris Dimofski

Level 1/2

Day	Time	Instructor
Wed.	9:00 – 10:30am	Ty Chandler

Level 2

Day	Time	Instructor
Mon.(B)	7:30 – 9:00pm	James Currie-Johnson
Tues.	10:30 – 12:00pm	Chris Lea
Tues.(B)	6:30 – 8:00pm	Melissa Worth
Wed.(B)	6:15 – 7:45pm	Gwynneth Powell
Wed.(B)	7:45 – 9:15pm	Robin Cantor
Fri.	9:00 – 10:30pm	Linda Benn
Sat.	9:00 – 11:00am	Marlene Miller
Sun.	9:00 – 10:30am	Ty Chandler
Sun.	3:00 – 4:30pm	Chris Dimofski

The VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

Cancellation Policy: Refunds less \$10.00 will be given only in the case of an emergency.

Class schedule subject to change.

New classes may be added. Check at
www.victoriaiyengaryoga.com
or call 386-9642

No classes on Monday October 1, 2002



The VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
#202, 919 Fort St.

Level 2/3

Day	Time	Instructor
Mon.	10:00 – 12:00pm	Lauren Cox
Tues.	5:30 – 7:00pm	Ann Kilbertus, Gwynneth Powell

Level 3

Day	Time	Instructor
Thurs.	10:00 – 12:00pm	Linda Benn
Thurs.	6:00 – 8:00pm	Ann Kilbertus

Level 4

Day	Time	Instructor
Mon.	5:15 – 7:15pm	Shirley Daventry French

Drop-Ins

Day	Time	Instructor
Wed.	12:00 – 1:00pm	Chris Dimofski
Thurs.	12:00 – 1:00pm	Lauren Cox
Fri.	12:00 – 1:00pm	Ty Chandler

Experienced Drop-In

Tues.	12:00 – 1:00pm	Chris Lea
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Men's Yoga

Thurs.	7:00 – 8:30pm	Greg Sly(B)
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55 & Better

Wed.	10:30 – 12:00pm	Ty Chandler
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Special Needs

Wed.	4:30 – 6:00pm	Shirley D. French, Ann Kilbertus
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Back Care

Mon.	4:00 – 5:15pm	Linda Benn
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Gentle

Wednesday	4:30 – 6:00pm	Robin Cantor (B)
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Restorative

Thurs.	5:30 – 7:00pm	Wendy Boyer (B)
Fri.	4:00 – 5:00pm	Gwynneth Powell

Pre Natal

Thurs.	8:30 – 10:00am	Robin Cantor (B)
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Focus On Women

Fri.	9:30 – 11:00am	Chris Dimofski (B)
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Early Morning

Tuesday	6:30 – 7:30am	
Corrine Lowen		

Introduction To Pranayama

Wed.	7:00 – 8:00am	Ann Kilbertus
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Pranayama

Sept. 19 & 26, Oct. 3 & 10		
For Level 3 & 4 students who have a pranayama practice		
Thurs.	7:00 – 8:00am	Shirley Daventry French

YOGA CALENDAR

SEPT 2002

3-7 Registration Week
13 Friday Night Gathering
20 Friday Night Video
21 Teacher's Meeting
27-29 Ramanand Workshop

OCTOBER 2002

18 Yoga Karunta with Ann Kilbertus
18-21 Introductory Assessment in Montreal
25-27 Father Joe Periera in Cumberland
26 Teacher's Meeting

NOVEMBER 2002

2-3 Going Deeper with Shirley
Davenport French
15-18 Junior Intermediate Level I
Assessment in Calgary
22-24 Workshop with Chris Saudek
30 Teacher's Meeting

DECEMBER 2002

15 In the Light of Yoga Workshop
Celebrating Mr. Iyengar's birthday

JANUARY 2003

17-20 Junior Intermediate Level 3
Assessment in Toronto
31- Workshop with Shirley Davenport
Feb. 2 French for Experienced Students

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION FORM:

Please complete this form and send it with your cheque or money order to the Victoria Yoga Centre Society,
c/o Constance Barker, 202-919 Fort Street, Victoria BC V8V 3K3

Membership/Subscription fee is \$30 and renewable each January

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

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E-mail: _____

☐ Do not mail me my newsletter during sessions, I'll pick one up at my class.

☐ Receipt Required.

VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

NEWSLETTER



Nov/Dec 2002

Subscribe Now





Victoria Yoga Centre presents

The Heart of Yoga

An Intermediate Workshop with Shirley Daventry French

Friday January 31-Sunday February 2, 2003

For Levels III and IV students or Level II students who have completed at least 2 terms

"Perform each asana as a mantra and each pose as a meditation, then the light will dawn from the centre of your being." B.K.S. Iyengar

Shirley Daventry French is a longtime student of B.K.S. Iyengar and has travelled to India many times to study with the Iyengars, most recently in February 2002. Shirley's significant understanding of the teaching comes through in her direct approach.



Giving workshops at both national and international levels, her dedication to the art and science of yoga is apparent. With a unique personal perspective, Shirley brings traditional yoga philosophy and psychology to the forefront of her teaching.

Shirley spends many weekends teaching students in other centres. Don't miss this opportunity to study with this devoted and insightful teacher on her home ground.

Times

Friday 6-8:30pm

Saturday 10:30-1:30pm, 2:30-4:30pm

Sunday 9:30am-12:30pm

Cost

Members: \$175 + gst

Non-Members: \$205 + gst

Registration

for members opens Nov. 25, 2002

for non-members opens Dec. 2, 2002

Register at

#202-919 Fort St.

phone: 250-386 YOGA (9642)

www.victoriayogacentre.bc.ca

Refund Policy: providing your space can be filled, a \$10.00 service fee will be charged.

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The VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY is a non-profit society incorporated under the Societies' Act of the Province of British Columbia, whose purpose is "to encourage the physical, mental, and spiritual growth of its members and other interested persons of the society at large by the study and discipline of Yoga." The Society owes its inspiration to Swami Sivananda Radha and Mr. B.K.S. Iyengar.

The Society Newsletter is published regularly, providing current information on events concerning yoga in the Victoria area and the Yasodhara Ashram. Published by the VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY.

Anyone wishing to contribute articles, photographs, drawings, information or suggestions may contact the

Victoria Yoga Centre Newsletter:

202 - 919 Fort Street

Victoria BC V8V 3K3

For more information on Victoria Yoga Centre activities and events, please call 386-YOGA or visit our website: www.victoriaiyengaryoga.ca

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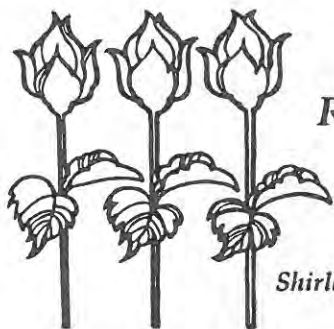
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Note: The editor/newsletter committee hold the right to edit all articles at their discretion. It should also be noted that not all articles submitted are printed in the newsletter due to space and other considerations.



Reflections

by
Shirley Daventry French



The year 1984 is notorious because of the book by George Orwell, but for Iyengar Yoga aficionados it is noteworthy as the date of the first North American Iyengar Yoga convention in the presence of B.K.S. Iyengar.

The convention was to be held in San Francisco, and

as soon as I heard Gurujī would be coming I made up my mind to be there. At that time I did not know that I would be one of three Canadians invited to teach; the others being Maureen Carruthers who was living in Vancouver and Liz McLeod of Edmonton. There was also to be a Medical Forum at the conference and my husband, Derek, was invited to be one of the faculty of four doctors along with Maureen's husband Bruce, Mary Schatz from the United States, and Dr. Karandikar from Pune — all of them students of Gurujī.

In the months preceding the convention the news spread that Gurujī wished to see teachers teaching and would be making rounds and dropping in on classes. There were eight hundred students and a good many classes so obviously he would not be able to see

everyone. I experienced a mixture of nervousness and excitement at the thought of teaching in front of Gurujī; but as it happened he did not come into any of my classes, although I heard his voice nearby a couple of times and anticipated his imminent arrival.

Directly after this convention, Gurujī was coming to Canada to visit Vancouver, Victoria and Edmonton. In correspondence about his visit, he told us he would not teach — a promise which was thankfully broken in all three cities. He did, however, want to see local teachers teaching. The program we arranged in Victoria involved classes being held simultaneously in three studios at the Y with a roster of teachers slated to teach. Gurujī would wander around and give feedback. His visit also involved celebratory events like a luncheon in his honour arranged by Swami Radha at Radha House Victoria, and a banquet at the Crystal Garden where Gurujī, naturally, was the Guest of Honour. Sitting with him at the head table were other honoured guests including Swami Radha and Peter Pollen, the Mayor of Victoria. In this beautiful setting, we feasted, gave speeches, listened to performances by some talented musicians and singers, and socialised. Gurujī was in splendid spirits and charmed us all.

That evening I was especially happy and relaxed not only because of my delight at having Gurujī in my city, staying in my home but because that morning I had taught in front of him for the first time and had one of the most incredible and rewarding experiences of my life.

Earlier that morning, before teaching I was not so relaxed. I left home early to go to the Y where the classes would be held to make sure that everything was in order there. Derek would come a little later with Gurujī. It is a half hour drive from where I live to downtown Victoria. Not surprisingly, the knowledge that this day Gurujī would see me teach for the first time occupied my mind. What an opportunity! What a challenge!

In my youth I had been an athlete, an actress and a solo singer, diverse activities which were all enhanced by some adrenaline flowing through my system. This heightened state of awareness enabled me to give my best performance. However, I also knew that too much adrenaline made me edgy and unable to do my best.

In September 1984 as I drove into town, I thought about what it is that creates nervousness. Where does it come from? Why? What had I to fear from Guruji observing my teaching? In answer to these questions the following thought materialised: *If I am on the wrong track, isn't it better to find out now rather than spend any more time going in the wrong direction?* And with that thought I became quite sober and my nervousness transformed into eager anticipation and curiosity. Before leaving home I had done a spiritual practice called the Divine Light Invocation putting Guruji's visit in the Light. In the car I silently uttered another prayer: *Please God let me show what I know.* There is absolutely no possibility of showing something I do not know, but from past experience I had learned that nervousness can prevent what I do know from coming through in a coherent way.

When I arrived at the Y I found that the committee working on this visit had done an excellent job. Things were well organised. Lists were everywhere and monitors (the old fashioned human kind) were directing students to the appropriate rooms. Nervous teachers examined the order of teaching. Eager students looked for a spot close to the front or back of the room depending on their disposition, not knowing yet that it really makes no difference because when Guruji is in a room every spot is close to him.

The program began, Guruji arrived and moved from room to room observing many classes and teachers. I was teaching in a large gymnasium with my back to the entrance doors and about as far away from them as you could get in this space. The class was looking at what I was showing with their backs to the door. I knew the

exact moment Guruji entered the room even before seeing him – as did everyone else. The energy in the room had become supercharged. Quickly Guruji strode over towards me already instructing me how to teach even before he reached the group. Patanjali tells us that *"Yoga is the cessation of the fluctuations of the mind"*. In that room not one mind was fluctuating at this moment; certainly not mine! From then on I felt as if I were in a speeded up movie as Guruji moved around the room showing me this, pointing out that, so much, so quickly. Thankfully I was able to concentrate and follow him not only physically but with my mind and all of my senses - drinking in this opportunity. When he left to enter the next classroom the students and I looked at each other, let out a collective exhalation and laughingly exclaimed: *Wow!* The Victoria Iyengar Yoga community had never experienced teacher training at this level. And so it went on throughout his time of observing us.

After I had taught I joined Guruji's entourage and followed him into other classrooms. Most of the teachers were open to him and open to learning and consequently were encouraged and shown how to hone their skills. As Guruji himself would say: he built them up.

Guruji's approach varied from teacher to teacher. In one room a man was standing in front of the class teaching in a monotone, partly due to nervousness, and the students were working lethargically. There was no energy in the class. Guruji intervened loudly and strongly until a spark was ignited in the teacher, who came to life and began to teach with enthusiasm in a spirited voice. The students too were transformed.

Following him was a woman. Plenty of vivacity here, but the teaching technique did not meet with Guruji's approval. He interrupted her and told her fairly succinctly what needed to change. Then he told her to continue, which she did but unfortunately continued to teach in the same way. After going through this

procedure several times without any change in her, Guruji became exasperated, strongly voiced his disapproval and left. Hard as this must have been, she could still have learned from it and in that case the experience would have been worthwhile. Rather than this, she found solace and support in the sympathy of a few of the students who reassured her that she was a good teacher, that they liked her, and that Guruji had no right to treat her that way. I wonder if any of them considered why Guruji was there. Imagine that a Yoga Master whom you call your teacher comes into the room where you are teaching and all he has to say is: very good, very nice as if there were no room for improvement.

I am currently reading the book *A Beautiful Mind* about the Nobel Prize winner, mathematician John Nash. One section I found particularly interesting was about his wife who was a graduate student in one of his classes. She gained admission to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology as a physics major, one of only two women in the class of 1955. The courses were demanding and she struggled to maintain a C average. The author of the book, Sylvia Nasar goes on to say that this "was a respectable performance in those days before grade inflation turned a C into a subaverage mark". Why, I wondered, did grade inflation happen? Has it been beneficial? When so many people get straight A's, what has happened to the space for them to improve? I am sure they worked hard for their grades, but where is the sense that there is still much so more for them to learn? What satisfaction does it bring to know that no more than this was expected of you? In the presence of Guruji, for those of us whose field of study is yoga, there is no doubt of the vastness of the subject and the enormous gap between his knowledge and that of even the most skilled among his pupils.

All those teaching in Victoria that day in 1984 were calling themselves Iyengar Yoga teachers. All had put themselves voluntarily into this situation where they were going to be seen by the Master of the Iyengar

tradition and given feedback. Some took the criticism well, listened carefully to what he had to say and when they continued made a sincere effort to change their teaching. In those cases Guruji gave them more. The woman mentioned above, was not ready for guidance, particularly of the direct kind that comes from Guruji. As far as he knew, he might never see this teacher again. The opportunity to guide her presented itself and he took it. This is his duty.

I have seen the above scenario repeat itself at many conventions when Guruji has been present. Teachers who had built up considerable reputations, who had gained name and fame by using the Iyengar name, when facing B.K.S. Iyengar himself were unable to take any criticism of their methods. Many of them dealt with this experience by moving on to another kinder, gentler guru or simply carried on and gave a new name to their method. Of course, B.K.S. Iyengar is not going to be the guru for everyone and I hope that some of these people found an authentic spiritual guide whose direction they were prepared to follow.

There is such a temptation as a yoga teacher to equate being popular with your students with being a good teacher. A popular teacher may or may not be a good teacher. When your students tell you what a great class you taught, you may or may not have taught a good class. The feedback here is seductive but it is unreliable for a variety of reasons. Many students want to be entertained, have a pleasant time, feel good, enjoy themselves rather than strip away the veils of ignorance which shield them from reality. Many teachers prefer to cling to their illusions.

For some time I have been taking private lessons in French from a woman from Paris who loves her language and loves to teach. At my request, my lessons consist mostly of conversation because the way I learned French in England years ago put more emphasis on reading and writing rather than speaking the language. We chat away and every so often she

interrupts, looks me straight in the eye and says: "un peu de grammaire!" She has observed that again and again I get stuck or go off in the wrong direction because of my lack of a certain grammatical tool – perhaps the inability to conjugate a verb or the misuse of tenses. It might be confusion about conjunctions or my lack of connecting phrases or some other recurring mistake which restricts my ability to express myself. Or, in of sins to the French language purist, ignoring the subjunctive! My feelings don't enter into it. There is no sense they have to be spared because it is clearly acknowledged by both of us that I am far from fluency. To make progress in that direction a little structure and discipline is required. This teacher not only speaks the

language beautifully, she is an expert teacher with many tools at her disposal to help her students. Apparently I have quite a good accent but not much time is spent congratulating me on this, because what use would it be if I went to France pronouncing the words perfectly while putting them together in a stream of meaningless phrases unintelligible to the listener?

Thank God for the candor and integrity of great teachers like Guruji and my French guru, Giselle, who have enough respect for their art and their pupil that when I am going in the wrong direction, they redirect me towards the light of understanding. ☉

for Guruji



Birthday wishes
from the
Victoria Yoga Centre



Short Workshop at the Victoria Yoga Centre

Inspirations from India I

With Leslie Hoggia

Friday, February 14, 2003

6:30 - 9:00pm

Inspirations from India II

With Wies Pukesh

Friday, April 25, 2003

6:30 - 9:00pm

Inspirations from India III

With Robin Cantor

Friday, May 30, 2003

6:30 - 9:00pm

Cost for Workshops:

2.5 hours: \$37.50 + gst members,

The Victoria Yoga Centre
202-919 Fort Street 250 386 YOGA

From the Editor

by Greg Sly

The Victoria Yoga Centre began its first full cycle of terms in our new home this September, after almost a full year of operation. Shirley's opening remarks to the returning Level IV class reminded us of *last* September when we had a transitional studio at the Victoria Shambhala Centre.

It seems to me that these days our yoga community is cresting in waves of abundance, harvest and reproduction. The fruitfulness of the fall season's harvest may actually fill our kitchens, pantries and freezers; metaphorically it is a time of reaping what we have sown.

Assessments and certifications of new and advancing Iyengar Yoga teachers are proceeding with regularity. The varieties of workshops and number of intensives have multiplied. New Iyengar Yoga Centers are opening, and large numbers of teachers and students are traveling to Pune, to study at the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute.

And wonder of wonders, there are babies popping up everywhere! I know of at least ten yogi mothers or couples whose babies have just been born, or are about to be. Isn't it wonderful how the community is growing? When I shared our own "good news" with Shirley, about my wife Carolyn carrying our first child, she happily reported that a child born to parents who practice yoga is indeed having a very auspicious start in life.

As our due date approaches my perceptions are open to themes of birth and rebirth. Abundance and harvest: Re-seeding and the reproduction and expansion of the yogic way of life. I am filled with gladness and wonder at the fruitfulness of the local, national and global Iyengar Yoga Community. Salutations to Patanjali, to Guruji, Geetaji and Prashant for their teachings of yogic wisdom that cannot but bear fruit and radiate

with abundance!

A time has come to shine a spotlight on how yoga is experienced as a "Gem for Women" during the course of pregnancy. We will hear from Carolyn Taylor-Sly on the fluctuating mind finding stability in the *yamas* and the *niyamas*. Certified Iyengar Yoga teacher Maggi Feehan explores *asana* in her new "bovine" proportions, with joyful results. The Victoria Yoga Centre's pre-natal yoga program is taught by Robin Cantor, also certified and mother of four. She will tell us about her classes and the liberation of the women in them.

Also in this issue we present the first portion of Prashant Iyengar's "A Class After a Class". This brilliant paper has become indispensable to the VYC's Teacher's Training Program. Enjoy. ☺

YOGA PROPS FOR SALE

Blankets (Grey Wool)	\$37.45
Bolsters	\$55.00
Eyebags (Barley)	\$ 8.03
Eyebags (Flax)	\$10.70
Foam Blocks (Pkg. Of 4)	\$26.75
Sandbags	\$21.40
Sticky Mats (Blue, Green, Purple)	\$42.80
Straps (Regular length)	\$10.70
Wooden Blocks	\$21.40

(All prices include GST)

For sale during office hours
10am - 1pm, Monday to Saturday
at the Victoria Yoga Centre
202 - 919 Fort Street

250 - 386 - YOGA (9642)

In the Light of Yoga

a special benefit workshop in celebration of the
84th birthday of Yogacharya B.K.S. Iyengar

Sunday, December 15, 2002

1:00 - 4:00 pm

at The Victoria Yoga Centre

202 - 919 Fort Street

1:00 - 2:30pm

Asana Practice

All levels

2:30 - 3:30pm

Restorative Practice All Levels -

Coming to a Close with Ann Kilbertus

3:30 - 4:00pm

Refreshments

Cost

\$40 + gst Yoga Centre Members

\$50 + gst Non Members

Register at

The Victoria Yoga Centre

250-386-(YOGA)9642

or by mail to

The Victoria Yoga Centre

202 - 919 Fort Street

Victoria, BC, V8V 3K3

Payable in Canadian funds by credit card or cheque



Teachers

Shirley Daventry French and Ann Kilbertus are accomplished teachers in the Iyengar tradition. Each has travelled to India to study at the source of this practice. And each is presently an instructor at the Victoria Yoga Centre's Teacher Training Program.

All proceeds from this workshop go to the B.K.S. Iyengar Scholarship Fund which assists teachers, training teachers and committed students to attend classes at the institute in Pune.

In Our Mailbox



In Alberta we have a longstanding association, the Yoga Association of Alberta, that acts as an umbrella for all the various yoga groups in the province. When it was founded over forty years ago by a very small group of yoga enthusiasts – among whom was the CIYTA's own Hilda Pizarro – yoga was a strange word here, and there was a need for banding together simply to explore a common interest in yoga. Now the YAA is a large and expanding body, still comprised of individuals “organized into a unit or manifesting usually with awareness of some unifying trait.” This is the definition Webster's Third New International Dictionary gives for “community.” Our community's original purpose was to promote and support the development of yoga in the province and establish a general standard of teaching that would reflect commitment to a practice in a recognized tradition. That is still the association's mandate. In short, the YAA is an effectively operating community.

We in the CIYTA are in the habit of referring to ourselves as a community. But after my experience at the Assessment Training Workshop this August at the YYC, I think we need to choose a new term of reference. I know students of Iyengar Yoga in Victoria don't take the closeness of their working relationship for granted, especially after all the work of opening a new studio. But the working rapport you have established among yourselves was extended — it seemed to me — without hesitation, without question, to the rest of us who came from the B.C. mainland, from Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario. It wasn't simply your generosity as a tight-knit Iyengar Yoga community. There was a common bond that automatically included us. At first, the term “family” came to mind to describe it. Gururji's commitment to

those who practise and teach his work is like that of a parent and his students regard their practice as descending directly from him. Insofar as Iyengar Yoga is the common denominator of our practice we are familial, but there was something more practical, less metaphoric, in operation. Of all the definitions that I could find under “family” only one stood out, the one whose synonym was “fellowship.” When a family acts beyond kinship with a sense of being “bound together by philosophical, religious or other convictions” (Webster's again), it becomes dynamic and creative, a force for the evolution of its members.

From Shirley's ever-more refined presentation of Iyengar Yoga to the ideas everyone contributed, the workshop enriched our knowledge and understanding for both practice and teaching: It was so valuable to practice, discuss, exchange perspectives and evaluate each other's respective *asana* and teaching practices with a critical and appreciative eye. But more valuable to me was this collegiality and fellowship. Not only did it reconfirm how much the practice of yoga in the Iyengar tradition means to me. It demonstrated that however much I've benefitted from being a member of a larger yoga community, my “family practice” is what will concentrate and clarify my *sadhana*.

Judith Mirus ☺

Congratulations

to the Mumbai Iyengar Yoga community
on the opening of their new centre
IYENGAR YOGASHRAYA
in the presence of Gururji B.K.S. Iyengar

We wish Gururji's many students in the
metropolis of Mumbai Light on the practice
of yoga in their new premises.

A Balanced Mind

by Carolyn Taylor-Sly



Carolyn in Chair Sarvangasana

While recently conversing with two fellow yogis, I was reminded of the depth of yoga. At the time of our discussion I was five months pregnant, and experiencing many physical and psychological changes in my body and mind. Friends, co-workers and family would frequently express their ideas of how “small” I looked, and my roller coaster mind would run down the track and lead me to fear. I began to wonder, “Am I too small?” “Is this normal?” “How big should I be?” It was in this state of doubt and fuzziness that I was speaking with my yoga friends when one of them asked me “Are you still doing yoga?” I happily responded that I was currently enrolled in a class, adding though, that “I feel like I will be missing out on future workshops. Ramanand is coming!” It was then that my yoga comrade reminded me, pointing at my belly: “Look at what you are doing. That is yoga.”

Urrrrrrch the roller coaster mind was de-railed and started down a new track. I began to recall all the ways in which I have incorporated yoga in my life. Often in our daily lives our thoughts are influenced by others and the world around us. These thought waves can

bring fluctuations and disturbance to our sense of calm and contentment, and they had been affecting my sense of balance.

As I practice *asanas* there is an awakened state of awareness. I am aware of the *yamas* and *niyamas*. I practice *ahimsa* (non-violence) as I protect and nourish the being within. I practice *santosa* (contentment) with this changing physical body. There is peace, harmony and balance that comes with freedom from afflictions (*aparigraha*). As I approach the ninth month of pregnancy and feel the knocking in my belly, I am thankful for the teachings of yoga and for my friends who remind me of the depth of yoga. ☯

Water Buffalo Asana

by Maggi Feehan

Hmm... caught you already, haven't I? New to the Water Buffalo Asana I presume? Well, to be honest, I too was a neophyte water buffalo yoga student, but that was a long time ago ... when I had a different body, before I was pregnant, and learned the joys of practicing yoga with bovine awareness.

Picture this: Tall, thin yoga student suddenly has a massive beach ball shape in the front of her body. She steps onto the mat and stands in *Tadasana*. There is a new sway to the back, weight is being pulled forward, and feet that once stood side-by-side now



have to move apart to accommodate fuller thighs. The words “rotund”, “bellicose”, “portly” move through her mind.

Into *Trikonasana*. The floor is further away than ever before. The shoulder blades squeeze their discomfort into her mind. Turning the rib cage means moving a dome. She thinks of the Sistine Chapel, the Taj Mahal, a mosque.

Headstand is a long way up. Recalling larger students she has taught, she has a pang of compassion that tears down both sides of her neck. Her weight falls earthward as lofty flesh threatens to implode.

This is when it comes to her: I feel like a water buffalo doing yoga!

Just then a friend calls. Her truth is revealed to his understanding ear. To her surprise, he tells her, “I think water buffalo are one of the most graceful animals in the world.” Graceful! Surely, he jests...

Hope gets the best of her as her mind turns a corner. Perhaps, perhaps I don’t even know what a water buffalo is. How then would I know how it might approach *asana*? A quick trip to the internet and all secrets are revealed.

She sees the picture of a large beast swaying with gentle movement as a small child rides on its back. Another image: of a massive beast plucking its way



Cathy in Supta Baddhakonasana

rhythmically through marshland. She reads that they are survivors, adapting to the heat of India as readily as the cold of a Montana farm. She learns they are obliging, willing, an animal ready for play, for work, for whatever new challenges come along.

Up into headstand again. This time, she lifts the shoulders strongly, breathes fully, her weight lengthening up to the sky. In her centre, a bountiful belly releases; there is space, there is openness, a calm blue field where a yet-unborn child lays curled, awaiting its moment to be born.

She moves into shoulder stand. A sore lower back is wonderfully stretched, she works still powerful legs, allows the cooling nourishment of the pose to open her heart, embalm her mind.

More *asanas*: *Supta Virasana*, *Supta Baddha Konasana*, *Adho Mukha Svanasana*. The kiss of poses. The peaceful nectar of the Gods.

Ahh... she smiles, releases into *Savasana*. Water buffalo women, indeed, nourishing the child inside. A tickle on her rib, a rolling, a playful tumble within. She thinks she can hear the baby laugh – the contented sigh of a water buffalo *asana* baby.

Namaste, Water Buffalo *Asana*. Grace under pressure and joy has most certainly arrived. ©



Cathy Ferguson in Adho Mukha Virasana

Yoga & Pregnancy

by Robin Cantor

I have the privilege of being a yoga instructor to pregnant women. It's very exciting to arrive at class



early Thursday mornings to see the glowing faces of these big-bellied women. They're all delighted to be so full of life.

They're keen and eager to learn *asanas* that will keep them strong and healthy throughout their pregnancy. Many women have Iyengar Yoga experience. Most

are very fit. We begin class with standing poses and stay as close to the classic pose as possible. Some students may have to modify with props in order to maintain a steady, easy breath. In *Tadasana* they'll take their feet hip distance apart with the toes slightly in and the heels slightly out, to allow the proper position of the uterus. There is no need to avoid any of the poses because they are adapted specifically to the needs of this pre-natal class.



Asanas such as *Parvatanasana*, *Ardha Chandrasana*, *Parsvottanasana*, and *Prasarita Padottanasana* are useful for relieving morning sickness. An emphasis is placed on *asanas* that will prepare their bodies for the duration of pregnancy, minimizing labor pains and encouraging an easy delivery. Important *asanas* that are practiced each week are *Baddha Konasana*, *Supta Baddha*

Three Generations of Adho Mukha Svanasana



Robin Cantor



Robin's daughter Raquel



Robin's granddaughter Jordan

Konasana, Upavista Konasana and Malasana. Sometimes we "rock and roll" on our hands and knees—a very soothing forward/backward action followed by hip rolls. We do it because it feels good and it makes us laugh!

We share tips about midwives, breastfeeding, specialists in chiropractic for colicky babies and pregnant women, how to relieve leg cramps, birth stories and much more.

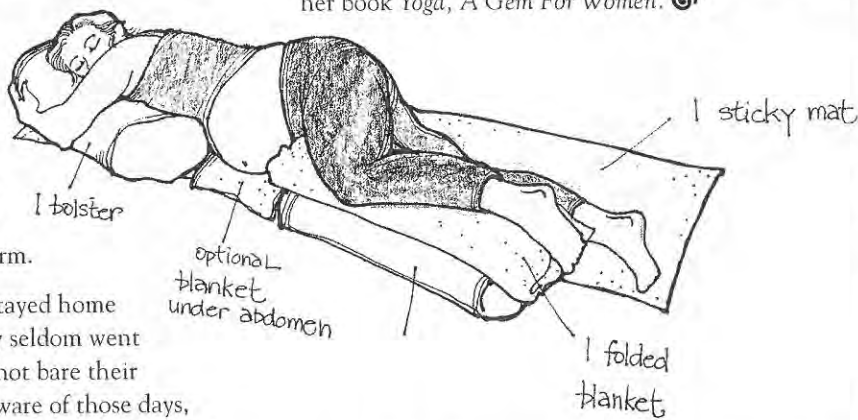
Students are invited to return with their babies shortly after giving birth, for about six weeks. At this point they're ready to move on to their regular classes. It's not unusual for me to be teaching an *asana* with a baby tucked under one arm.

These women's grandmothers stayed home when they were pregnant. They seldom went out in public and certainly did not bare their bellies! Today's women are unaware of those days, there's a wonderful innocence and feeling of comfort about their bodies and the growing life within.

More than twenty years ago when I first began studying

and practicing yoga, I was already a mother of four. Had I been more conscious sooner I would have wanted to experience the benefits of pre-natal yoga during my child-bearing years. The legacy lives on though, as most of my children practice Iyengar Yoga, and now I teach my grandchildren!

I would like to extend my gratitude to Geeta Iyengar for her guidance and teachings on this topic, through her book *Yoga, A Gem For Women*. ☯



Side lying Savasana: An example taken from "Guidelines for a Healthy Pregnant Woman in Introductory Yoga Classes" in development by YYC.

Upcoming Assessment Dates:

2002

Nov. 15-18 Junior Intermediate 1 Calgary

2003

Jan. 17-20 Junior Intermediate 3 Toronto
Jun. 20-22 Introductory 1 & 2 Edmonton
Oct. 17-19 Introductory 1 & 2 Winnipeg
Nov. 21-23 Junior Intermediate 1 Ottawa

Please note:

The Introductory 1 & 2 Assessments are held annually the third weekend of June and the third weekend of October.

Victoria Yoga Centre Society

Annual General Meeting

Friday 24th January 2003



6:00pm meeting

7:00pm Potluck

At the Victoria Yoga Centre
202-919 Fort Street, Victoria

Please forward nominations in writing to
Leslie Hogya at above address

All members are welcome



Victoria Yoga Centre is pleased to present

A Workshop with Marie Andre Morin

For Levels II thru IV

March 21 - 23, 2003

Victoria Yoga Centre

202-919 Fort Street

Marie Andre Morin is a certified Senior Intermediate III teacher from Montreal. She is a devoted, disciplined and knowledgeable teacher. As a student of B.K.S. Iyengar, Geeta Iyengar and Prashant Iyengar, Marie Andre is a strong link to the Iyengar tradition. She has travelled to India to study with the Iyengar's many times. She has also studied extensively with Faeq Biria of France. Marie Andre is the director of the thriving Centre de Yoga Iyengar de Montreal.

Times

Fri. Mar. 21 6:30 - 9:00pm
Sat. Mar. 22 11:30 - 2:30pm + 3:30 - 5:30 pm
Sun. Mar. 23 12:00 - 3:00pm
(Times to be confirmed)

Cost

Members: \$175 + gst
Non-Members: \$205 + gst

*Cancellations will be refunded only if your
place an be filled. Credit card or cheque
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Registration

Opens January 30, 2003

Call or mail

The Victoria Yoga Centre
#202-919 Fort St.
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*For more information contact:
Leslie Hoggia c/o the Victoria Yoga Centre*

*Kind permission has been granted by Yoga Rahasya,
to reprint this transcript that was published
as a supplement, in January 2000 on the occasion of
the Silver Jubilee Celebrations of the RIMYI.
Due to its length we will publish it in a series of three parts.*

A "Class" After A Class

Yoga-An Integrated Science (Part One)

by Prashant Iyengar

Today you were saying, "Objectify the mind." Can you explain this strange instruction?

What is an object? An object is something which you can know, something which you can keep in front of you and watch. Yoga, as you are all aware, is something to know yourself with, and how do you know yourself! Basically, the point is that we identify ourselves with the mind so much. When the mind is happy, we are happy. When the mind is sorrowful, we are sorrowful. When the mind is excited, we are excited.

Yoga psychology tells us that it is the mind which is excited, that it is the mind that is sorrowful. And, as Indian philosophy believes - even Sage Patanjali says - that the soul does not have anything of the nature of pain, pleasure, loss, gain, success, failure, fortune, misfortune... All those polarities, those dualities are not for the Self, not for the Soul, they are all for the mind. So, in our business of life, our normal work of life, we identify ourselves with the mind so much, therefore we become the mind. And philosophy says, metaphysics says, that we are not the mind, that the mind is our instrument. You are not your hands, you are not your legs. You say "my hands", "my legs", "my body" and "my brain"... You also say "my intelligence". You also say "my mind", but at the same time, you identify yourself so much with the mind, like between a lover and



beloved. If something happens to the beloved, if the beloved is suffering, the lover is in agony, because there is so much identification between the two.

Similarly, between us and the mind, between the "I" and the mind, there is so much attachment and mine-ness that anything happening to the mind is happening to us. And philosophy tells us that it is not true. Metaphysics says that it is not true. It is your mind, it is one of the instruments within one of the parts of you.

Just as I said the leg is a part of you, and the hand, and the brain - similarly, the mind is a part of you just as the limbs are different, as your body is different than you. Now, if you want to know the mind, the only way is that it must be an object. You can only know the objects. Subject is the knower. Subject will not be made as knowable. You cannot know the subject. Subject is the knower.

Object is the knowable. So, if you want to know the mind, the mind must be objectified and that's why, in yoga psychology, you are made to watch your body, you are made to watch your breath, you are made to watch your mind also. When you watch your mind, your own awareness, naturally it is objectification: the mind is objectified, and if you objectify the mind, the result of the process is that you develop a superior subject.

Suppose the mind A is your subject and with it, you know the things - the book, the table, the stool, the mountains and rivers. Now, with the mind A, subjected to enquiry; it becomes an object and the finer mind becomes the subject. So, let us call it mind No. 2; it is mind No. 2 which is now the subject. Now, when you make the mind No. 2 as an object, mind No. 3 surfaces. Obviously, what happens? It is interpenetration, like the onion whose skin you can peel out - there are various layers - you remove them and ultimately you come to the stem of it. Similarly,

the mind is like an onion or garlic: you have to remove the external coats and the layers of it to reach the core. That is how the mind is to be objectified so that finer mind comes to the surface. The mind No. 2 becomes the object, then mind No. 3 becomes the object... and ultimately you go towards the core. That is how you can have what is called Self-study, or understanding of the Self(*svadhyaya*). That is how you go closer towards the core body. So if you want to proceed from the peripheral body towards the core body, apart from body mind, and finer and finer mind - that is how the refinement in your consciousness takes place, and ultimately, you can be going towards the core. That is how the objectification of the mind is peculiar to yoga psychology.

THE THREE IMPORTANT ASPECTS IN OUR SYSTEM

Sequencing - Technical intricacies - Timing

You said that sequencing asanas in a certain way allows us to observe the mind and to manipulate the mind

So you were here for Guru Purnima day (1998). On that day, I spoke about the important three aspects in our system:

- the first one is: technical intricacies
- second one is: sequencing
- and third one is: timing.

These are all peculiar to our system in the sense that is what the Patanjali system is. About sequencing, naturally, if you do only one pose, one *asana*, with whatever profundity, whatever penetrations, it will have a particular effect. For example, even if you do *Sirsasana* with all these intricacies, you will get a particular effect. But then, if you stop your practice with *Sirsasana*, you are deprived of the evolution of progress which should come on account of *Sarvangasana* following *Sirsasana*. So therefore by sequencing, you can augment the effects of your practice. And practice of *asana* can build up its effects to a particular level; but if you wish to have a structure, then there has to be a sequence of *asanas*. By merely

doing *Sarvangasana*, you will not get the benefits. You do *Sirsasana* today and *Sarvangasana* tomorrow, and the day after tomorrow just forward bends, imagine what effects you can get. But suppose you have the proper sequencing, the effect of the *asana* can be built up. So the purpose of sequencing is to raise up or elevate the structure of the serene mind and enter a yogic state. When getting a serene or sublime mind after a good class, can you say this is because of one ? You cannot say this is because of one *asana*; in that case, after that *asana* you should have got the effect. For example, after *Sirsasana*, you should have got that effect, but you don't get it. You get it after the class. You get it after the class because the structure is boosted up on account of the correct sequencing of *asanas*. So the effect you get, what are called the "benefits", can build up. Like *Sirsasana* benefit is particular then if *Sarvangasana* follows it. From there you build up. Otherwise, if you do *Sirsasana* from here, you will come to here. You stop your practice, you go down. Tomorrow, from here you come to *Sarvangasana*, you come again here, again you go down. But suppose you do *Sirsasana*, then *Sarvangasana*, then forward bends, then the effects can be built up.

It is like the money you put in a bank. When you make the deposit, the money goes on increasing. But, suppose you deposit hundred pounds in the morning and withdraw hundred pounds in the evening. If you do this everyday, deposit in the morning, withdraw in the evening, what will happen to your bank account?

So, by sequencing the *asanas*, you get accumulated benefits and the overall effect also can be augmented. And this is not just sequencing, it is not just *Sarvangasana* after *Sirsasana*, or *Sirsasana* before *Sarvangasana*. It is *Sarvangasana* in a peculiar way when you have done *Sirsasana* in a peculiar way, which it has to follow. With technical intricacies of practice you will come to know that *Sirsasana* is not the same everyday. Although you might have all the notes and *Light on Yoga* mentioned: these are the techniques of *Sirsasana*. If you are mature in it, then you will know

that the techniques, the finer techniques, do change - which are not articulated in the book and cannot be articulated in a book. Suppose you read about the techniques of *Sirsasana* in *Light on Yoga* and you do it. But the effects of *Sirsasana* done after backbends will be different from the *Sirsasana* done after forward-bends although you may apply the same techniques. So it depends upon how you have done a pose and that determines how you should do the next pose. That is how the sequencing has to be built up. It is not just standing poses, then twistings then forward-bends, *Sirsasana*, and then *Sarvangasana* and *Setu Bandha, Viparita Karani*. There is no concept of a sequence there. The technique of pose will depend upon what has preceded and how it has been done. Your *Sarvangasana* will depend upon how the previous pose has been done, what is the pose and how it is done.

SUBJECTIVE JUDGEMENT IS TO DEVELOPED

So, in sequencing, as I said on that day, all the three aspects are to be blended: the technicalities, the sequencing and timing. Even if you meticulously observe all the technicalities, you will not get the effect. You also have to practice for timing. If you do *Sirsasana* for one minute very, very precisely, you are going to get no effects. You have got to stay for some length of time, like a gestation period. There must be some time between input and output. Even if in your microwave, food is cooked fast, you cannot say that it is done in no time, there has to be some time. So the timing is important and sequencing must be a blend of all the three. You cannot just do *asana* by following timings, you have got to follow the technicalities: how to do, what to do, how not to do, what not to do.

Then, also the sequencing will depend upon, how you do the pose. Of the three aspects, sequencing has an equal role, compared to other technicalities and timings. But without sequencing you will not have the building built in a proper structure. You do *Sirsasana* in the morning, effects are brought; after one hour or two, for *Sarvangasana* again, it starts from base. The

structure has to be raised up and for that you require sequencing in quick succession. You cannot do *Sirsasana*, wander about for ten minutes, take a stroll, walk, do nonsense and then go into *Sarvangasana* or chat with people and go to *Sarvangasana* again: it will not have the effect, because the structure has to be continuously maintained. This is how sequencing is important - it can give you structure.

One pose will not give you the structure even if you do it as good as Guruji does. Guruji also will not enjoy just *Sirsasana*, or just *Sarvangasana* perfectly, he knows *Urdhva Dhanurasana* perfectly, *Setu Bandha* perfectly, but still he will not get the effect, which he would get by sequencing. He will not get the total effect unless the sequencing is observed, and that is why he has discovered sequencing. Anything else?

Can you give an example of sequencing?

Everyday you are observing this in the class! Sequencing again cannot be a regimentation, like *Light on Yoga* mentions a course or daily practice, or something like that... That way sequencing cannot be said as "these are the cycle of *asanas*: first, you do standing poses, then twistings, then *Sirsasana*, then *Sarvangasana*". It is not so regimented. *Sirsasana* will depend on how you have done the standing poses, why you have done the standing poses. There are various reasons to do standing poses, various paradigms to do standing poses. So, once you understand that, then sequencing is something which is to be developed subjectively. Until you develop that intelligence, the teacher has to guide you: "after this, do this"; "before this, do this"... but once you understand yoga psychology then you will know how you have done *Sirsasana* and then what should follow that *Sirsasana*. It is not necessary that *Sarvangasana* should always follow *Sirsasana* immediately. It depends upon how you have done *Sirsasana*, why you have done *Sirsasana*. If you have done *Sirsasana* and immediately want to do backbends after that then there is no point in doing *Sarvangasana* after that *Sirsasana*. It will not give that

much effect.

Suppose you are practising *Sirsasana* and you are going to do backbends after that. When you finish *Sirsasana* you will get a phone call saying that you must come back in half an hour. You will say: "why should I do backbends, I'll do *Sarvangasana*", but you will not get the benefit of it because this *Sirsasana* was conditioned by your backbends which were to follow. So in the class, suppose we take *Sirsasana* as a preparation for backbends but something happens, you get an emergency call and you need to go in 15 minutes and hence you cannot do backbends. The teacher says: "go to *Sarvangasana*", you will do *Sarvangasana*, there is nothing wrong but the effect will not be struck- which should have been by *Sarvangasana* after backbends. So sequencing is not such a regimented thing. It depends upon your frame of mind, how you have done it, then it depends upon how you should do forward bends, or how you should do twistings before *Sarvangasana*. They are very subjective judgements. Only in classes we can give you several varieties and all these varieties will not be suitable to all the seventy, eighty members of the class, because it depends upon in what state of mind they have come here. Somebody might have got an appointment to go to the court after the class, so there is a tension. So many things are there, there are so many subjective judgements, and I think there would be no such book mentioning that "these are the sequences". General outlines will be there as you get it in *Light on Yoga*, but then, if you go into the deeper aspect, there cannot be such a science, so rigid a science. It is a science, but it is a very subjective science. It depends upon the particular state of mind that you are in, at that point of time: if you have to go to the court, or if you are going to travel.

So all those things condition your mind. You have come to the class, which ends at 9 o'clock, and you have got to catch your train at 9:20; so naturally, all those things influence your mind. The teacher might be telling you "be quiet", "be serene", but definitely, compared to others, you will not be serene. So it is a

very subjective thing, it cannot be so generalised. But you must know the principles of it. Once you know the principles, once you know the psychology and physiology of *asanas*, then you will be able to make a proper schedule of sequence of *asana*. All of them do *Sirsasana* in a class, all of them don't do it identically, they will not be able to do it because of different frames of mind. So in class, to some extent there is a regimentation; but when it comes to your practice, you need not regiment. You should know what state you are in and how you should build up your sequence. It is a science, but it is not such a rigid science; it is a fluid science, because it is subjective. It involves a subjective judgement.

These judgements are like inner laws that we have to understand and follow?

Yes, that is why you have to know the physiology and psychology of the pose. Once you know those aspects, then you will be able to have your own proper judgement for sequencing, otherwise you will have to depend upon the teacher. If you are doubtful: "what should I do after this, this or something else?" And you might ask your teacher: "what should follow and how it should be done," etc. But, once you know those things, you will have subjective judgement. You don't have to think: "after this should I do this or not this?" That faculty of subjective judgement is to be developed, and for that, you must understand psychology of the pose, physiology of the pose, what is happening to the pose, what is happening in the pose.

But it takes time

Of course. Until then, you have to depend upon your teacher.

SAFETY MEASURES

But we can also have wrong judgements?

That is a theoretical question, that I might be capable of mistake. But the yoga system is such, the technology of *asanas*, or any yogic technology is such, that there

are many, many safety measures. You are not playing with electricity, although you might think that there is fear of playing with your *prana*. But the very system has a lot of safety measures, hundreds of safety measures, which will give you indications and will not make any catastrophe unless you are subverting the science. For example, after having done *Savasana*, you go and jump for *Viparita Chakrasana*. If you are trying to challenge yourself, that you have now rested for half an hour in *Savasana*, and can get up and immediately go for jumping, full arm drop back and all these things, it would be foolish to do so. So, unless you make such blunders, there is no danger. There are always safety measures. The science is so developed that there is very little danger. It is so evolved that there are lots of safety measures and there is no danger, unless you do the wrong things. Like wrong principles applied, like counter-poses, and no sequencing: anything can be done! Like you go exercising, and you feel like doing *Sirsasana*, so you do *Sirsasana*; after *Sirsasana* you feel like doing jumpings, so you do jumpings; then after that, you feel like doing *Viparita Karani*, so you go for

Viparita Karani, then you come out and you do a fast *Halasana* /*Paschimottanasana* cycle. Such foolishness can only be dangerous and harmful to the practitioner. But, if you have a teacher, who has given you certain sequences and you follow them, then there is no danger. As you develop, you will get the wisdom, intelligence, perception and you will get the subjective judgement. So there is no harm - the question: "I might go wrong", is very theoretical, but that is not very applicable unless you're deliberately blundering, and subverting the science.

DO/MAINTAIN/ & COME OUT/ OF THE POSE

Can you tell us about external and internal (organic) technology of asanas and about techniques of doing, staying and concluding asanas?

For example, you know the techniques of *Tadasana*, *Trikonasana*: how to observe your feet, legs, spine, chest, arms, hands, fingers and thumbs. You know that there are anatomical techniques, skeletal and muscular techniques about how to work on your skeletal, muscular body and joints. Similarly, you can understand that if you know the position of the sternum and position of the chest in *Tadasana*, you can merely imagine that there is a position of the intestines, colon and liver in *Tadasana*. Or in *Trikonasana*, if you know that the spine should be like this, then the chest, or the legs should be like this, it also means that as you think about the position of your legs and arms, you must also know that there is a position of the inner, organic body, as this is also a part of the *asanas*. And, therefore, you create certain actions to do the pose, and you do certain actions (you are supposed to do) to maintain the pose. Because this is not just exercising, like aerobics, where you create movements, successive movements, or isometric successive movements. But here, it is not just movement, you have got to breathe there, you have got to stay in postures. So there are certain actions which have to be carried out not just for doing the pose but to maintain the pose, and there are some actions for

Congratulations!!

At the Introductory Level I/II Assessment in Saskatoon the following teachers were successful in obtaining certification:

Level I

Ginette S'guin-Swartz	Saskatoon
-----------------------	-----------

Level II

Jutta Dewitt	Edmonton
Nancy Dutaud	Ottawa
Sonja Evans	Calgary
Miranda Jones	Saskatoon
Linda Kaytor	Waterloo
Michele McLean	Toronto
Val Petrich	Calgary

coming out of the pose. So, there are 3 aspects in *asanas*:

- 1) doing
- 2) staying and maintaining
- 3) coming out.

You may be very scrupulous about going to *Trikonasana*; you adjust your hip, your buttock bone, your groins - see, imagine you are on the right side. Now, you know how the right buttock bone should be moving, how the right groin should be moving etc. But when you come out of the pose, do you observe those things? When you come out of the pose, you just come out. You are analytical, slow, meticulous, careful in going in to the pose, but you come out of the pose - when the teacher says "come out and do this", in one stroke. But when you go down, you go by stages. At every stage you observe, the different movements of the different parts; but when you come up, you don't observe so much. So, *asanas*, not being just movements like any other exercises, are states. *Asanas* are states. You have to stay in *asanas*. If you have to stay in *asanas*, it implies that you have got to go to the pose. You have got to go to *asana* and then you have to come out of the *asana*. So, there is commencement, the state of *asana*, and conclusion of the *asana*. All three have a set of techniques. And, therefore, the technique of going down has a particular scope, but when you stay in the pose, there are so many things to do, to adjust the pose, because the moment you take the right hand down in *Trikonasana* it is not done and over. After taking the right hand down, left hand up, you do so many other things like turning the waist, turning the back, stretching the spine, opening the chest, rolling the shoulders back. So all those things are done after you go down to the pose. After having gone down, you continue to do something by rotation, etc., opening etc. So still you are doing. But then what happens? You come out when the doing is over - when we can't think of the next point, when you think that all the points are exhausted and you do not know anything -, you immediately come out. That is not proper. You have

not stayed in the pose, you have not done. You are doing there, you are doing and doing and doing... and you have not stayed.

And therefore, after having completed the doing aspect of *Trikonasana*, you must stay there. That's when the pose starts, and not when the right hand goes down and left hand goes up. The pose starts when you have done all the checkpoints known to you. If you have done them, then the pose starts, and then you are supposed to start staying in it.

So the timing concept of *asana* is also wrong with many of you who keep a timer: *Trikonasana* for one minute on the right side, then you go down and see the timer. Maybe for fifty-nine seconds you are doing and doing and doing, in the sixtieth second you come out: where did you stay? When did you stay? You took fifty-nine seconds to do the pose, and sixtieth second you came up. So, when you are staying in the pose, you continue to do something to maintain the pose. Because you do not know the next point, and you have completed all the points. And now, you are maintaining those points in the *asana*, whatever they are. When you have done the pose, you have to maintain it and the timing of the *asana* starts there. And that creates the circulation of the pose, the *pranic* circulation, the psycho-mental circulation, awareness circulation. The *Trikonasana* is composed and you have to stay in the pose. Then, when you are going to come out, meticulously, scrupulously, carefully, you have to observe certain points: how to recover and not collapse, not lean forward. For example, in backbends: for e.g., *Rajakapotasana*. A beautiful *Rajakapotasana* is done! Beautifully photographed! Now it is clicked, the photograph is taken, then what happens? Hops! Hands and legs suddenly are let loose and they come on the floor with a bang! *Rajakapotasana* or *Padangustha Dhanurasana*, imagine the pose. How do you come out of it? When, they do the pose; when the pose is over, what happens? They release the leg and they bang on their hands. So where is the control? So that is why,

how you have to come out of the pose is also a very important thing, so it helps you in developing a stage. See, you have done *Padangustha Dhanurasana* and you have come out with a bang, you have created total disturbance in your consciousness. Whatever formation has taken place in the mind, it is totally disturbed with your bang. So therefore, you have to take care in ending the pose: how to end without disturbing your consciousness. As a matter of fact, you should build up the effects of the *asana* even when you come out of it, or at least maintain the effects and never lose them. So that is how we have to observe the three aspects in our system, these are part of the technicalities. How to go into the pose? How to stay in the pose, or maintain the pose? And how to come out of the pose? Then, there are actions to do, there are actions to stay, there are actions to come out.

*You spoke of REACTION/COUNTER-ACTION/
INTER-ACTION/COMPLEMENTARY ACTION/
UN-ACTION What is this jargon ?*

Now, what is action? It is not a single movement because there are other things like "counter-action", "inter-action", "complementary action". So, when an action is done, certain other things happen along with it. In *Trikonasana*, your right hand is down and you press the right hand thumb on the inner ankle to turn your pelvis. Now, the action is in the thumb, but with the pressure of the thumb something happens to the right hand, something happens to the pelvis, so it is something which is a reaction of it. When you create an action, there is a reaction. You should identify what the reaction is. The reactions are positive and negative. Some reactions might be wrong and some reactions might be right. You have to learn to identify the right reaction, and the wrong reaction. Now, in opening your chest in *Trikonasana*, it is possible that your buttocks are tucked out - beginners do that - they adjust to open the chest and stick out the buttocks; so, it is a reaction, but it is a negative reaction. Or when we ask them to turn the waist in *Trikonasana*, they again stick the buttocks out. Or when you ask them to

stretch the legs, the chest collapses. Or when you ask them to open the chest, and the legs get bent. These are the negative reactions. So, there are negative and positive reactions.

Similarly, there are complementary actions which are not reactions. Reaction is part of physics: you do an action, there is an equal reaction. Action evokes reaction. But complementary action is something that is helping it. Then there are inter-actions: the two things happen together. So in action, there is inter-action, counter-action, reaction, complementary action, and then there is unaction. When you are doing something, you will be undoing somewhere else. You do something and something else is undone. That is unaction which should not be confused with inaction or "no" action.

Can you explain the terms DO/UN-DO/NON-DO?

Say, for example, take *Parsvakonasana*. You are going to bend your right leg. It is still not bent. Your left leg is straight when you bend your right leg, the straightness is undone on the left leg, so you loose the grip of the back leg. That is, what was done is lost, so there is undoing. And also there is non-doing. When you are doing something, there will be non-doing somewhere else. And there has to be non-doing. So, action includes all these aspects. It has factors. As you know, in mathematics, there are factors. So similarly, action has factors and action means all these things: non-action + un-action + complementary action + reaction. That is what "action" is, because they all have the word "action" in them. So, that is how action is to be understood, with analysis. When you do, you don't merely do: you also undo, you also non-do. In fact, you are supposed to non-do. Suppose, in *Trikonasana*, the teacher shouts "Open your chest, open your sternum", You are supposed to keep your jaws and face relaxed. As I said in twistings today: the teacher shouts "turn", and the face is turned, the brain is turned, the mouth is turned. So, you should know you are also supposed to non-do there. Then only can you

be doing at the right place. As a matter of fact, without non-doing, you cannot be doing. Simple example: if you are coming to the class at nine o'clock, you come to the class and you do the class. How do you do the class? By non-doing at home! Unless you non-do at home, or in your office, or in your house, you can't be doing here. So, nondoing is so integral to doing. Without non-doing there is no doing at all. But what we think that "doing" means that we have got to "do it" and "do it" and "do it"...

But you must know that there is some non-doing and there has to be some non-doing; and there might also be some wrong non-doing. So all those things have to be observed. Which is "right" non-doing and which is "wrong" non-doing and is it in your action? It has to be there. The right non-action should be there, otherwise your action is not complete. If your brain is tensed in *Urdhva Dhanurasana*, then you have done the pose everywhere and also, you have done it in the brain, where you are supposed to be non-doing. So therefore, your pose is not complete and the pose is also wrong. It is not being complete and also wrong because you have not observed where you are supposed to be non-doing.

When you are doing actions, you should not get carried away in action. This morning I said, "you all get carried away in the storm of action!" Your action is like a storm. Where is the control in the storm? Where is the control in the tornado? Where is the control in the tempest? And this is what happens in your enthusiasm, in your spirit; your action is so forceful, that you are caught in the storm. So that is why you should know that it is not just the storm of action but there is something pulling back, as there should be. Gururji says many times - there should be resistance. Particularly, looking at supple people, he has often very strongly said that suppleness is not good; there must be some resistance. So all these things have to be observed, otherwise you are caught in its storm.

So, that is what we have got to understand, for example, the action of going down in *Trikonasana*.

When we are going down to the pose, what is the non-action? What is the un-action? What is the counter-action? What is the complementary action? What is the reaction? And you stay there again to watch: how do you maintain the pose? If you have to maintain the pose, you have to non-do, you have to undo, you have to do. All those things should be going on with proper synchronisation and co-ordination. Similarly, when you come out, you have to observe all those things: where should I undo? See, in *Utthita Parsvakonasana*, when you come out, you are not supposed to straighten the leg, you are supposed to undo. When the teacher shouts "stretch your leg" in *Trikonasana*, it is to undo. Now, in *Utthita Parsvakonasana*, when you come up from the right side, you are not supposed to straighten the front leg, you are supposed to undo, because you don't stretch. Imagine, what is the stretch of quadriceps and cartilages in *Trikonasana*? The leg is turning out. Or, before going to *Utthita Parsvakonasana*, your leg is straight and you bend, so again you don't do, you undo. So bending the leg for *Utthita Parsvakonasana* is undoing, and straightening the legs to come back from *Parsvakonasana* is also undoing.

So for all those aspects, the dynamics are different. The "leg straight" before *Parsvakonasana* and "leg straight" after *Parsvakonasana* is different. It is not the same. So if you develop keen observation, you will know what you do, how you do, also you must analyse. These are the paradigms; I call them "karma-scopies". You have to analyse the action. What was the action? What was the inter-action? What was the counter-action? What was the reaction? What was the complementary action? What was the un-action? What was the non-action? So then you will come to know that you do one bit, the effect is a hundred-fold. You do one thing and several things happen. Say, in *Trikonasana*, you exhale, take the buttock bone in, and turn the pelvis: so many things happen in the groin - the groin of the front leg - and in so many other places. You have done only one thing: buttock-bone in, but when you take the buttock-bone of the front leg inwards, so many other

things happen... So they are not "done" by you, they happen; you can't take credit for what has happened, you can take credit for what you have done, and not for all that has happened.

So once you develop all that analytical ability, then you also develop the mind, the proper mind. You will not take pride in your success. If you do *Vrchikasana*, you will not take pride in your achievement, because you know how much you have done and how much has happened. So you do only one bit and what happens? It is hundred times, thousand times...

What you do is, when you do elbow-balance, arch your back, bring the feet down and touch your head, that is all you do. But so many things happen when you are

doing, which you don't do - all those things you don't do, you don't have access. ☯

*Interviewed by Christine Perre in August 1998 at the R.I.M.Y.I., with the participation of Cathy Boyer, Corine Biria and Jean-Marie Perre.
Transcribed and rewritten by C. Perre.*

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Scholarship Applicant Criteria:

Scholarships are offered to Victoria Yoga Centre members who have demonstrated:

- A sustained interest in yoga by way of regular attendance in asana classes and workshops.
- Appreciation for the uniqueness of the Iyengar method.
- Willingness to study yoga philosophy and psychology.

Generally, an individual may be eligible to receive a scholarship only once in a program year.

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Candidates may apply directly to the Scholarship Committee or be nominated by a Yoga Centre member or teacher. Application and/or nominations must be submitted in writing and include:

- Applicant's name, address and phone number.
- Name of the applicant's yoga teacher.
- A brief description of the reason(s) for the request.

Applications are due at least four weeks prior to the applicable workshop or event.



The Victoria Yoga Centre

Is pleased to offer scholarships for the following workshops:

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Apply in writing to The Scholarship Committee and give to your teacher or mail to:

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Victoria Yoga Centre Society
202-919 Fort St. Victoria BC V8V 3K3

*For more information contact
Amanda Mills or Wendy Boyer at 386-9642*

Reflections on the August Intensive

by Rob Walker

When I arrived for Shirley Daventry French's five-day intensive for teachers preparing for Canadian Iyengar Intermediate certification I was daunted to see the company I was going to keep for the rest of the week. Some of the other instructors had more than 25 years experience. Some had themselves offered a yoga intensive for junior teachers a week before.

However, by the end of the week I was smiling and relaxed. We worked extremely hard from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day. But Shirley's hilarious stories, often telling of her own foibles, quickly broke the ice and helped balance the *Sthira* (firmness) with the *Sukham* (delight)!

We started with *Uttitha Hasta Padangustasana* but that was to be the only standing pose all week. Gone were *Uttitha Trikonasana* and all the warrior and other standing poses that characterize a large chunk of most of the Iyengar workshops I had previously taken. This was "advanced stuff," or relatively so, and every teacher was already certified at some level in the Iyengar system.

We did so many inversions, sometimes it was hard to tell which was the ceiling and which the floor! The crown of my head was sore! *Adho Mukha Vrksasana* (Full-Arm Balance), fingers to the side, fingers forward, fingers into the room. *Pinca Mayurasana* (Forearm Balance), palms down, palms up. *Sirsasana* and *Sarvangasana* with every possible variation. And that was just the first morning.

The mornings were spent working in detail through most of the postures at the three levels of Junior Intermediate assessment.

Afternoons were used for mock assessments, with teachers given 20 minutes to prepare to teach. Those

soon going for assessment taught two poses, an experience most described as more terrifying than the real assessment since they were teaching their peers rather than an unknown class of students. One teacher said it was worse than doing her master's degree.

Shirley's energy never flagged: her teaching always vibrant and illuminated, her style firm but compassionate, her insights endless and her knowledge inexhaustible.

Many of the teachers have studied with Shirley for years and were as willing as she to share their knowledge and humour.

For those of us coming from other parts of Canada, a pizza evening at Ann Kilbertus' home on the Tuesday evening and Indian food at Shirley's on Thursday made us feel very welcome and at home. With all of us traveling on the same path of studying and teaching Iyengar Yoga it was good for me to experience the beginning of what will hopefully develop into lifelong friendships.

Now I'm back in Calgary where I have recently taken over a yoga studio. I know a little more about Iyengar Yoga. I also have a better idea about hosting the Junior Intermediate I Assessment which happens here in November this year. ☺

YOGA VIDEO NIGHT – At the Victoria Yoga Centre

Friday, Nov. 15.....6:45 - 8:15pm

Friday, Dec. 13.....6:45 - 8:15pm

Bring your own popcorn and a friend.

Be inspired!

Student Intensive With Ty And Robin

by Jim Knox

Ty asked me to write this article even though I was only able to attend the five day Student Intensive for two and a half days. I went to this intensive basically because of my inability to form any kind of regular, independent practice. The days I was there were great.

understanding behind the *asanas*. We watched videos of the Iyengar's reciting invocations on Thursday, before Ty lead us through a vigorous hour of sun-salutations and beyond. It was a good mix between the two teachers; they worked us hard in different ways. I think Robin came the closest I've ever seen to using every prop in a single hour. Ty doesn't use the props so much in her poses, she just warns us which ones we might need dental insurance for before attempting. Tuesday was a long time ago, now, and I can't



2002 Student Intensive. Jim Knox, top left

The first day was a timed practice, which I hated to miss, but I had to. (I wonder how many other people would come to a weekly timed practice if the Yoga Center offered one?) Each day was started with *pranayama* breathing. I've never really learned the basics of *pranayama*, even though I've been to a couple of workshops where it's been contained in the curriculum. It didn't help that I missed the first and third and fifth day of this. If there's one thing you can't learn half-heartedly, it's *pranayama*. The two days I was there it was relaxing, and good, and what I could pick up was helpful, and my practice of *asanas* is deeper, so the *pranayama* probably helped.

Each day after *pranayama* there was a little chalk talk, deepening the philosophical and spiritual

remember so much what we did, but I remember being tired Tuesday night. Friday, we had a good workout on the ropes. It was a good workshop, and I felt really fantastic after even just a few days of intensive practice. The best part was definitely Thursday. We had lunch catered by the Spicejammer Restaurant. It was really quite delicious. I had samosas, and some of those little potato thingies...with the sauce. ☺

Congratulations

to the Iyengar Yoga Community
of Winnipeg upon the opening of
their new centre "Yoga North".

Faith

By Shannon McMurchy

"We know that the spiritual essence of the tree is concentrated in the juice of its fruit, which is the culmination of the growth of the tree. We pluck the fruit and savour its taste. The joy of that taste can be felt, but cannot be expressed in words."

The Tree of Yoga, B.K.S. Iyengar 1988

There are times when it feels like all that I need to know is contained within the practise of yoga *asanas*. That there, in the process of spreading consciousness and breath throughout the body, and in the heightened presence, the true and mindful inhabiting of the physical body, lies everything- simple and complete. The running commentary is silenced, and there opens a space that words need not fill. What do words add, after all, to experience? But I am a beginner, deep in the throes of wonder, and as my heart and body open under the influence of yoga, so my mind reels with the same near-vertigo, intellect thrilling at the sheer depth of wisdom of yoga. I practise *asanas*, I listen, question and read ravenously. I want to learn, and seek yoga on every front. I seem also to need to write about yoga - not to claim this knowledge or put my personal stamp on it, but to process its wisdom. My head swims, and how else to wade through?

I find that part of my learning process seems to involve a lot of semantic scrambling and thrashing about. The effects of studying philosophies that were not first penned in the English language and do not describe familiar cultural constructs, and the oxymoronic challenge of using words to describe the transcendent, combine to complicate matters greatly. I stumble, for example, over Mr. Iyengar's use of the word faith.

In *The Tree of Yoga* Mr. Iyengar writes, "the very experience of living wants you to live as a better person than you are. That is the divine spark of faith",

I have always been curious about the inclusion of the word "faith" here. Faith in what, exactly? Isn't that spark one of divine intention and aspiration, an innate desire for union with the cosmic consciousness of which we are all a part, the universal spirit of which we all carry a seed? Is this "faith", then, faith that such a consciousness exists? To say "divine spark of faith" strikes me as redundant... the spark seems, to me, to be the faith. It is the compulsion to aspire, the animating energy. It is an expression of, or individual piece, of *mahat* - the cosmic intelligence, the "spontaneous motivating force in nature" (T.O.Y.) It compels seedlings to seek light while in the ground, forces grass through asphalt, and keeps humans getting out of bed each morning in the face of often unspeakable suffering, despair and chaos. As, in fact, seedlings deep in the ground sense light and reach in its direction as they grow, so too does the seed of the universal within each of our hearts reach toward light, towards union with the cosmic, towards interconnection with other living things. That is what I understand to be the divine spark. Does the seedling in the ground have faith in light?

Mr. Iyengar describes the difference between faith and belief as being a question of experience, of subjective and lived experience over objective principle, that which might interest you without compelling you to act. I am quite sure that my above-mentioned "problem" with the word faith is that I am dragging Western connotations of the word into the reading of it. I do sense that my "spark" and Mr. Iyengar's "faith" are kindred creatures. I leave you with his words then, which are far more eloquent. "That you are existing yourself, is faith. You do not believe you are living. Your very existence is faith that you are living. But why are you living? To be a better person. Otherwise, you can just die! Let me see you die! Go and fall in the ocean! Why do you not want to fall? Because you want to live. Why? That is what you must find out. That is faith." ☸

Program of Classes in the Iyengar Approach to Yoga

Term 2: Nov. 4-Dec. 22, 2002

Holiday: Monday, Nov. 11

Note: some classes are adjusted
due to special workshops

Level 1

Day	Time	Instructor
Mon.	12:00 – 1:30pm	Lauren Cox
Mon.	7:30 – 9:00pm	Ann Kilbertus (full)
Tues.	5:00 – 6:30pm	Melissa Worth
Tues.	7:30 – 9:00pm	Ty Chandler, Corrine Lowen
Wed.	6:15 – 7:45pm	Ty Chandler (full)
Wed.	7:45 – 9:15pm	Gwynneth Powell
Thurs.	8:30 – 10:00am	Linda Benn
Thurs.	4:30 – 6:00pm	Leslie Hoga
Fri.	10:30 – 12:00pm	Linda Benn
Fri.	5:00 – 6:30pm	Gwynneth Powell
Sat.	9:00 – 10:30am	Corrine Lowen
Sun.	10:30 – 12:00pm	Ty Chandler
Sun.	4:30 – 6:00pm	Chris Dimofski

Level 1/2

Day	Time	Instructor
Wed.	9:00 – 10:30am	Ty Chandler

Level 2

Day	Time	Instructor
Mon.	7:30 – 9:00pm	James Currie-Johnson
Tues.	10:00 – 11:30am	Leslie Hoga
Tues.	6:30 – 8:00pm	Melissa Worth
Wed.	6:00 – 7:30pm	Gwynneth Powell
Fri.	9:00 – 10:30am	Linda Benn
Sat.	9:00 – 11:00am	Marlene Miller
Sun.	9:00 – 10:30am	Ty Chandler
Sun.	3:00 – 4:30pm	Chris Dimofski

Level 2/3

Day	Time	Instructor
Mon.	10:00 – 12:00pm	Lauren Cox
Tues.	5:30 – 7:00pm	Leslie Hoga

Level 3

Day	Time	Instructor
Thurs.	10:00 – 12:00pm	Shirley Daventry French, Linda Benn
Thurs.	6:00 – 8:00pm	Ann Kilbertus, Leslie Hoga

Level 4

Day	Time	Instructor
Mon.	5:15 – 7:15pm	Shirley Daventry French

Drop-Ins

Day	Time	Instructor
Mon.	6:30 – 7:30am	Corrine Lowen
Tues.	12:00 – 1:00pm	Jeannette Merryfield
Wed.	12:00 – 1:00pm	Chris Dimofski
Thurs.	6:30 – 7:30am	Corrine Lowen
Thurs.	12:00 – 1:00pm	Lauren Cox
Fri.	12:00 – 1:00pm	Ty Chandler
Fri. (Rest)	4:00 – 5:00pm	Gwynneth Powell

Men's Yoga

Thurs.	7:00 – 8:30pm	Greg Sly
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55 & Better

Wed.	10:30 – 12:00pm	Leslie Hoga
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Special Needs

Wed.	4:30 – 6:00pm	Shirley D. French, Ann Kilbertus, Leslie Hoga
Thurs.	1:00 – 2:30pm	Leslie Hoga, Linda Benn



The VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
#202, 919 Fort St.

Term 2: Nov. 4-Dec. 22, 2002

Back Care

Mon. 4:00 – 5:15pm Linda Benn

Gentle

Wed. 4:30 – 6:00pm Melissa Worth

Restorative

Thurs. 5:30 – 7:00pm Wendy Boyer

Fri. 4:00 – 5:00pm Gwynneth Powell

* This is a drop-in class

Pre Natal

Thurs. 8:30 – 10:00am Leslie Hogya

Focus On Women

Fri. 9:30 – 11:00am Chris Dimofski

Family

Wed. 3:30 – 4:30pm Lauren Cox

Early Morning

Tues. 6:30 – 7:30am Corrine Lowen

Thurs. 6:30 – 7:30am Corrine Lowen

*Fri. 7:00 – 8:00am Chris Dimofski

*Level 2 required, registration preferred

Introduction To Pranayama

*Wed. 7:00 – 8:00am Ann Kilbertus

*Level 2 required, Nov. 6 – 27 only

The VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

Class Bursary Policy

Purpose:

The Victoria Yoga Centre Society offers class bursaries on a term by term basis to students who would not otherwise be able to attend classes due to financial constraints.

Extent of Funding:

A single Bursary may cover up to 75% of the class fee. Students may apply for one bursary per term. Bursary applications for consecutive terms are permitted.

Eligibility:

Registration in, and attendance at a minimum of one term of yoga classes at the Victoria Yoga Center.

Students may apply for a bursary for any regular Victoria Yoga Centre Class during regular terms. (Bursaries do not apply to Short or Long Workshops, or special events for which scholarships are offered.)

Membership in the Yoga Center is **not** required of applicants for this bursary.

Application Process:

Bursary application forms are available from the reception desk and teachers.

Applications must be submitted 3 weeks prior to the start of the term.

The Scholarship Committee will notify the applicant by telephone at least one week before the start of the term.

New Office Hours

The Victoria Yoga Centre has NEW office hours
10am – 1pm
Monday to Saturday

Volunteers

Volunteers help out in all kinds of ways at the Victoria Yoga Centre. This column introduces a few of the folks who give a great deal to our community.

Doorknobs Like Us...

by Jane Munro

You see the two of them—Jim and Sue Riddell—attending classes and workshops as a couple. You don't see the third person who is part of their relationship with yoga: Scott—a son who drowned five years ago, aged 30, on a family holiday in Fiji.

A year after his death Sue felt her body imploding, going into hiding. She thought of stepping out into traffic in front of a big semi. A little voice said, "Try yoga". She signed up for a Gentle Yoga class taught by Leslie Hogya.

Once Sue was doing okay, it was Jim's turn. He got mad—angry with everyone and everything. A year after Sue started yoga she pushed Jim into Ty Chandler's Sunday morning Level One class.

Now they say, "Yoga saved our life, saved our marriage, and gave us back a family." Volunteering lets them return something. Jim spent every evening for a month planing and sanding and varnishing the new slant boards. He also teamed up with Connie Barker to build the *Halasana* benches—he cut out and assembled them; Connie bought the wood and did the finishing. Jim and Sue joined the building committee and helped remove the old baseboards before the new flooring went down. Jim has taken over the ordering and selling of yoga mats from Germany. Sue minds the desk

Sunday morning between classes. Once, she picked up kettles and trays of food and transported them to a teacher's intensive, and she has also stapled newsletters. They both say this is not much and that others do far more.

The challenge of yoga reminds Sue and Jim of sailing. You adjust your sails for every tack. There's a mast and stays. You feel like you've earned it when you get there. People think yoga and sailing are so peaceful. What's really going on is that you're contending with tide and wind and you keep seeing the same rock on the beach. It can be a real kick to the ego when you think you can

finally do *Utthita Trikonasana* and the teacher comes along and corrects you again. It was also an ego thing, they say, to feel guilt after Scott's death – as if they might have prevented it.

Sue says every time she does *Savasana* she feels Scott near by, over to her right. Jim says he admires people smart enough to take yoga when they're young so they'll have it when they need it. "Yes," agrees Sue, "they're not doorknobs like us who don't start until they have to."



Doorknobs turn. They let you enter closed spaces. The next time you brace your palms on a slant board and push up into *Urdva Dhanurasana*, you'll have more than your own courage boosting you into that opening. ☯

Donors and Gifts Thank you!

The following person has generously contributed to the Victoria Yoga Centre:

Tom Worth for the TV and VCR



Radha Yoga Centre

Dreams

Working with your dreams will help you to develop intuition, and it can eventually open the doors to the Divine within. But first you have to accept yourself precisely as you are, with your feet firmly on the ground of your present existence. You do not, however, have to remain a victim of your mind, letting negative thoughts and images play over and over like a broken record. Yoga is a process of dehypnotizing and waking up. As you bring awareness to your dreams and discover your day dreams and illusions, you may also find that you are capable of greater control of the mind than you had imagined.

There is a constant interplay of forces between the body, the mind, the emotions, the unconscious, other minds around us, memory and our own illusions. There are so many influences at play in the mind that we need a clear way to investigate it. Dreams can help us.

In Dream Yoga we want to bring together the conscious and the unconscious with a desire to gain mastery over the mind and to give power to the true Light within.

- Swami Radha, "Realities of the Dreaming Mind"



Swami Radha

Dream Yoga Weekend Workshop Sat & Sun Oct 26 & 27, 10am-4pm

\$40 - \$60, sliding scale

Learn to understand your unique symbolic dream language and gain independence through interpreting your own dreams. Please call 595-0177 to register.



Ascent Magazine

Expanding the mind of yoga.
Available at the Radha Yoga
Centre or your favourite bookstore.

www.ascentmagazine.com

Radha House Victoria • 1500 Shasta Place (off St. Charles, south of Fort) • 250-595-0177

YOGA CALENDAR

NOVEMBER 2002

- 2-3 Going Deeper with Shirley
Daventry French
15 Friday Night Video
15-18 Junior Intermediate Level I
Assessment in Calgary
22-24 Workshop with Chris Saudek

DECEMBER 2002

- 1 Teachers' Meeting
15 In the Light of Yoga Workshop
Celebrating Mr. Iyengar's birthday

JANUARY 2003

- 17-20 Junior Intermediate Level 3
Assessment in Toronto
24 Victoria Yoga Centre AGM
25 Teachers' Meeting
31- Workshop with Shirley Daventry
Feb. 2 French for Experienced Students

FEBRUARY 2003

- 14 Inspirations from India I
with Leslie Hogya
22 Teachers' Meeting

MARCH 2003

- 7-20 Friday Night Gathering
21-23 Marie Andre Morin Workshop
29 Teachers' Meeting

APRIL 2003

- 11-13 Felicity Green Workshop
25 Inspirations from India II
with Wies Pukesh
26 Teachers' Meeting

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION FORM:

Please complete this form and send it with your cheque or money order to the Victoria Yoga Centre Society,
c/o Constance Barker, 202-919 Fort Street, Victoria BC V8V 3K3

Membership/Subscription fee is \$30 and renewable each January

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

Postal Code: _____ Country: _____ Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

☐ Do not mail me my newsletter during sessions, I'll pick one up at my class.

☐ Receipt Required.