



IYENGAR YOGA
CENTRE of VICTORIA

N E W S L E T T E R
J A N U A R Y / F E B R U A R Y 2 0 0 7



Participants in the 1976 Yoga Teachers' Course at Yasodhara Ashram

IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA
PRESENTS

The Heart of Yoga

**An Intermediate Workshop
with Shirley Daventry French**

**For Level 3 and 4 students
or Level 2 students who have
completed at least two terms.**

Friday, January 19, 6:30 - 8:30 pm

Saturday, January 20, 11:00 am - 2:00 pm, 3:30 - 5:30 pm

Sunday, January 21, 12:00 noon - 3:00 pm

Shirley is a direct student of the yoga Master B.K.S. Iyengar and one of North America's most experienced teachers of his method of yoga. She has taught in Victoria since 1972 and gives workshops both nationally and abroad. She has been travelling regularly to Pune, India to study with B.K.S. Iyengar for nearly 30 years, most recently in October 2005.

Fees: \$185 + GST members
\$205 + GST non-members

Registration opens December 4, 2006 for IYCV members,
December 11 for non-members.

To register, drop in or phone Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria
202- 919 Fort Street, Victoria B.C. V8V 3K3
250 386-YOGA (9642)
www.iyengaryogacentre.ca

Refunds will be offered only if your space can be filled and are
subject to a \$10.00 cancellation fee.

January 19-21, 2007

IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

All members welcome! Saturday, February 3, 2007

When: 1:00 – 3:30 pm

Where: Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria
202-919 Fort Street

Program: *Asana* practice 1:00 – 2:00 pm

Annual General Meeting
(Business includes election of board
members, special resolutions, and
annual reports.)

Tea will be served.

If you think you would like to serve on the
Board of Directors for the IYCV, or on a
Committee of the Board, applications will be
accepted in the lead up to the Annual General
Meeting in February, 2007. Nomination
forms are at the front desk. Please mark
“Attention Brian Lepicq.”

contents



- 4 Reflections**
by Shirley Daventry French

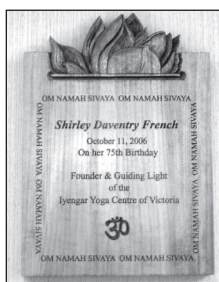


- 7 Devotion—Part 2**
by Geeta Iyengar

- 10 Intensive Workshop with Chris Saudek**
by Adia Kapoor

- 13 Let's Celebrate!**
by Leslie Hoga and Karyn Woodland

- 15 Future Directions for the IYCV – A Student's Perspective**
by Taimi Mulder



- 18 Starting Yoga at 60: An Interview with My Mom**
by Caren Liedtke

- 20 The "55 Plus" Class**
by Leslie Hoga

- 21 Jam Sandwiches and my Immovable Ways**
by Neil McKinlay



- 22 From Rush to Hush**
by Sue Riddell

- 22 Changes at the Front Desk**
by Leslie Hoga



IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE of VICTORIA NEWSLETTER

EDITOR Jane Munro

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE Lauren Cox, Monica Dimofski, Shirley Daventry French, Deborah Hawkey, Adia Kapoor, Susan Robinson, Nancy Searing, Greg Sly, Melissa Worth

DESIGN / PRODUCTION Cady Graphics

IYCV LOGO Charles Campbell, Lauren Cox

PHOTOGRAPHY Ty Chandler, Shirley Daventry French, Leslie Hoga, Karin Holtkamp, Ann Kilbertus, Jane Munro, Taimi Mulder, Greg Sly

PROOFING Susan Robinson

ADS & ANNOUNCEMENTS Deborah Hawkey, Lauren Cox, Jane Munro

DISTRIBUTION Karin Dayton

MEMBERSHIP/MAILING LIST Karin Holtkamp, Karin Dayton

PRINTING Hillside Printing

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE Jan. 15, 2007

IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA SOCIETY is a non-profit society incorporated under the Societies' Act of the Province of B.C., 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 Mr. B.K.S. Iyengar.

The Newsletter, published regularly by the IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA SOCIETY, provides current information on events concerning Iyengar yoga in the Victoria area.

Send contributions, articles, photographs, drawings, information or suggestions to the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria Newsletter: 202-919 Fort Street, Victoria BC V8V 3K3. For information on activities and events, call (250) 386-YOGA (9642) or visit our website: www.iyengaryogacentre.ca.

Permission is hereby granted to reprint any of our material, except that copyrighted by the author or artists. When reprinting, please credit this Newsletter and send us two copies of the publication containing our material. Copyright material is only available with written permission.

The editor/newsletter committee hold the right to publish or edit all articles at their discretion.

Newsletter Advertising Policy (Adopted February 20, 2004)

In keeping with the mandate of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria Society Directors, 2004, to update, review and document policies and procedures, the newsletter committee submitted a policy which is a revision of the 1996 policy and has been adopted by the Board of Directors as follows:

1. Advertisements must not conflict with the aims of the newsletter of the IYCV.
2. Advertisements must be only for Iyengar Yoga
3. Priority given to advertisements regarding:
 - IYCV events
 - IYCV sponsored events
 - IYAC events

COURSE REGISTRATION:

Drop in:
202-919 Fort Street,
Victoria, B.C. V8V 3K3

Phone:
(250) 386-YOGA (9642)

Refund policy:
Refunds will only be offered if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$10 cancellation fee.



SHIRLEY DAVENTRY FRENCH WAS AWARDED SENIOR CERTIFICATION FROM B.K.S. IYENGAR. SHE HAS BEEN TEACHING SINCE 1972 AND FOUNDED THE IYENGAR YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA IN 1976. SHIRLEY LIVES IN VICTORIA AND TEACHES WORLDWIDE.

Gifts to shake your chakras was the heading of the e-mail. I was about to put it into the trash when curiosity got the better of me: I clicked and opened it. Among the usual advertisements for sales of mats and other yoga related stuff was a list of books, one of which caught my eye. It was entitled *Sivananda Buried Yoga* and written by someone called Yogi Manmoyanand.

Now, even more intrigued because I have a deep respect for Swami Sivananda and the integrity of his work, I clicked again to read these words of Manmoyanand: “Mr. Sivananda kicked me out of the yoga class because I insisted on knowing the finer aspects of yoga like why the lotus pose is so called, or what the *surya namaskar* has to do with the sun.”

Any authentic Yoga Master is likely to eject a student who *insists* on knowing something. The problem here, I thought to myself, was not Sivananda but Manmoyanand's attitude. It is an interesting dilemma for a beginning student, because curiosity is an essential ingredient in the pursuit of yoga.

One of the fundamentals of yoga is learning to surrender. Paradoxically, at the same time one is encouraged to question virtually everything in life. Under the tutelage of a Master Teacher or Guru, one is given clues which will lead towards answers to questions which keep coming up for you. These questions can be as mundane as *how to interact with a teenaged son or daughter who is pressing all of my buttons*, or as esoteric as *who am I?* Each answer, in turn, leads to another question. Question after question will arise.

I learned this one winter, early on in my yoga studies, during a three month residential course at Yasodhara Ashram, which in those days was called the Yoga Teachers' Course. It was the 1970s and yoga had exploded on to the scene along with other practices emanating from the East. There was a demand for teachers, and people who knew virtually nothing about yoga were out there teaching. At that time, not unlike today, there was a split between those who believed yoga consisted of entirely of postures or asanas, and those who were interested only in the spiritual side and ignored their bodies. From what I see today, however, the physical side and superficial things such as having the right clothing and other accoutrements are given even more emphasis. Spiritual teaching, if touched on at all, is delivered in clichés or sound bites.

Credentials in yoga were rare in North America in the seventies. When I began teaching at the Y in 1972, I had completed about a year and a half of weekly classes, and taken a ten-week teacher training course which consisted of two hours once a week. Believe me, this was more than a lot of people when they began to teach; and, alas, it still is!

One of the many admirable qualities of my first yoga teacher, who had established a program of classes at the Y, was how she encouraged her students to establish a daily practice. In fact, she often told us not to take so many classes, but instead to practise at home. She also touched on the philosophy, although as a convert to Roman Catholicism, she had a problem with some of yoga's concepts such as “God within” and reincarnation. She did, however, encourage us to read about yoga, and one of the books she regarded most highly was *Light on Yoga*. She also invited Swami Radha to Victoria to give a series of talks on yoga psychology and philosophy, and this is how my path led me to Yasodhara Ashram.

One of the fundamentals of yoga is learning to surrender.

I was not looking for a fitness program when I entered my first yoga class. I was very fit, following an exercise program of my own, skiing, playing tennis. In fact, I was teaching fitness and swimming at the Y. It was there, in the shower after swimming that I met Carole Miller, who was enrolled in the new yoga program. Talking to her, as we dried ourselves and dressed, I became intrigued and signed up for one of these classes. The physical side was not very demanding, although I quickly learned that I was strong but not particularly flexible especially in some areas. It was not until later than I began to make a connection between this fact and my life! But gradually, in these yoga classes an understanding began to emerge which was accelerated with the advent of Swami Radha on the scene. Was it possible that the problems in my life had something to do with my mind?

The first verse of the first chapter of the Buddhist text, *The Dhammapada*,¹ describes my predicament succinctly: “What we are today comes from our thoughts of yesterday, and our present thoughts build our life of tomorrow: our life is the creation of our mind.” Having emigrated from London to Victoria, supported and worked for my husband as he established his medical practice, given birth to three children in four years, tried first to change the school system, then to bring about a revolution in Canadian politics, finally I paused long enough to take a look at myself. Perhaps some of my energy should be focused in this direction? A different kind of revolutionary thought!

After six years of practising yoga, four years of teaching, and several workshops with Swami Radha and another Sivananda disciple called Swami Venketesananda, it had become clear to me that I had barely skimmed the surface of yoga. I decided to immerse myself a little further by taking the 1976 Yoga Teachers’ Course at Yasodhara Ashram.

This course gave a grounding in many aspects of yoga practice and philosophy. Further, because it was residential, and in a remote area, it was difficult to run away whenever the going became tough. Its three month duration also gave time not only to

Was it possible that the problems in my life had something to do with my mind?

discover what changes needed to be made in one’s life, but to establish practices which would help sustain those changes on return home. Similar benefits accrue from making the pilgrimage to Pune. Spiritual learning is not intended to be used as an avoidance of life, but a means of learning to live life to the fullest.

The course included theoretical and practical sessions on *Patanjali’s Sutras*, the *Bhagavad Gita*, *Hatha Yoga*, *Mantra Yoga*, *Japa Yoga*. We were introduced to selfless service through *Karma Yoga*, and the devotional practices of *Bhakti Yoga*. Throughout the three months there was an emphasis on *Jnana Yoga*, the study of the mind. We explored personal, cultural and universal symbolism, learned how to interpret dreams, how to practise the Divine Light Invocation². We were given techniques for concentrating the mind, and practised chanting and meditation. We examined our use of language and how to cultivate our speech. We endeavoured to calm our emotions and refine our senses. We began each day with an *asana* class and ended with *Satsang* where we chanted, meditated and listened to readings from spiritual and inspirational texts. We learned that all our faculties could be used as spiritual tools if that is what we chose. We also discovered how innovative we could be in sabotaging this purpose.

From the moment this course began we were inundated with questions. I was quite content about this at first. We were expected to produce written papers in response to these questions, containing not a definitive answer but our own understanding at that moment. Later, we would come together as a group with either Swami Radha or a teacher trained by her, and read our papers out loud. I like writing so I was not at all unhappy about this; neither was I shy about revealing my thoughts. Unlike some others in the group, I was generally eager to read my papers.

¹ Translated from the Pali by Juan Mascaro. Pali is the language of the Buddhist scriptures of Ceylon, Burma and Indochina. It is connected with Sanskrit in the same way as Italian is connected to Latin.

² The Divine Light Invocation is a spiritual practice for Healing and Realizing the Light within. A booklet on this practice by Swami Sivananda Radha is available from Ashram Books at Yasodhara Ashram.

Our motives for being there were as diverse as our backgrounds.

All papers had to be typewritten in duplicate so Swami Radha would have a copy to follow as you were reading (these were the days before computers). Some of us were late night people so would be tap tap tapping until well into the night. Others were early risers and would be up well before the crack of dawn, because that was when we were expected in the *asana* class. The tap tap tapping continued throughout the night!

As we read our papers, Swami Radha would sit there soberly with a highlighter in her hand and you could see her marking various passages. After reading their papers, students would be questioned about what they had written, or asked to explain what they meant if it wasn't clear. They might be encouraged to penetrate further into some areas, or be warned about the consequences of certain ways of thinking and being. No-one was ever told what to do; rather encouraged to question, investigate and discriminate.

There were fourteen of us on this course ranging in age from early twenties to around sixty: four men and ten women. Although the course was supposedly a teacher training course, few of the fourteen were interested in becoming yoga teachers. Two of us were yoga teachers already, two were physicians, two university professors, one a school teacher, another a psychologist. One young man was just out of university, and a young woman, not long out of high school, had signed on as a cook in remote logging camps to earn the money for this course which was not inexpensive. Six of us were English, two or three American, and the native born Canadians came from different parts of the country.

What were we all doing at an ashram in the middle of winter in the middle of

the British Columbia wilderness? Our motives for being there were as diverse as our backgrounds. During one meeting, Swami Radha, who was German-born, said that we had probably crossed paths in previous lives and had karma to work through in this one.

Certainly it was an intensive three months, during which I experienced a full range of feelings and emotions about my fellow students – one of whom was my husband! All of us learned a great deal about each other and a great deal from each other. And all of this occurred under the guidance of Swami Radha and a small coterie of teachers for whom I developed tremendous trust and respect. These teachers were full-time residents of the Ashram, directly trained to teach by Swami Radha and closely supervised by her.

This 1976 course was the last time that Swami Radha was the principal teacher, although of course she continued to train others for this work and oversee how they carried it out. For some of the more personal growth workshops such as Straightwalk and Life Seals, our group was divided into two. Patanjali speaks of levels of aspirant as mild, moderate and intense. With only seven of us subjected to Swami Radha's scrutiny for three or four days these workshops were indeed intense!

A few years after I took this course, its name was changed to Yoga Development Course because that was how it had evolved. Most of the participants were there because of existential crises, emptiness or confusion. Teacher training was premature and would be offered later to those who had completed the course work, and established discipline in their practice and study of yoga. Swami Radha subscribed to the old fashioned idea, which is shared by B.K.S. Iyengar, that first you become knowledgeable about yoga and proficient in its practice before you train to be a teacher. Moreover, such training is a priv-

ilege which has to be earned. In fact, traditionally any transmission of teaching from Guru to pupil has to be earned: the disciple has to prove his or her readiness and worthiness.

As the course at the Ashram proceeded, the questions gathered pace. Every day there was a new question, a new paper to write, and sometimes two. For six weeks of this three month course, I surrendered to the process and got on with it. I was still expecting that towards the end of the course someone would give me some answers. Then one day I realized that no-one was going to give me any answers. If I were serious about this spiritual path, I would have to find out for myself. With this discovery, for a few days I became restless and resentful, until I accepted that I was a free spirit (a very popular concept in the seventies). I was not trapped. I was not a victim. I had a choice: either surrender and get on with it or leave. I stayed.

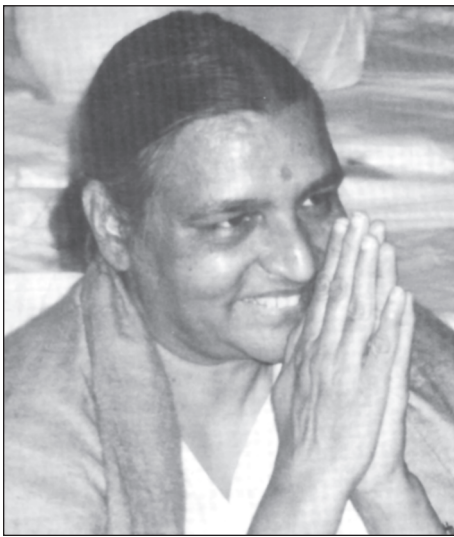
It is the same when you travel to Pune to study with Guruji. In my second class with him I was faced with the stark reality of a choice between holding on to my pride or learning from him. You cannot have both. You cannot control the manner or the timing of the teaching. This is the Guru's prerogative. You do not insist on explanations; although at appropriate times you can ask questions which may or may not be answered. That will be at the discretion of the Guru, who may feel you are not ready or perhaps undeserving of the answer.

Contrary to the spirit of equality and entitlement prevalent in the West today, in yoga all students are not treated equally because all are at different stages in their evolution and facing different obstacles. Each one of us has our own *karma* to work out. If and when we present ourselves at the feet of a Guru, we will be given what we need to move closer to the Light, and not what we want. This is the teaching of yoga. This is the lesson of life. ॐ

Devotion—Part II

by Geeta S. Iyengar

This is the second half of an article published in Yoga Rahasya, Vol. 13, No. 2; 2006, pp. 13-25. Many thanks to Rajvi Mehta, Yoga Rahasya editor, for giving us permission to re-print this article. You will find the previous part on pages 7-10 in our November/December 2006 issue.



If the concept of God is unknown, if you do not know what God is, then how can you surrender—Isvara pranidhana?

Yoga is a binding thread which unifies all of us from different cultures and backgrounds. However, our society, religious practices and upbringing being very diverse often makes it difficult for us to understand certain dimensions and aspects of yoga which are possibly very unique to Indian culture. One such aspect is devotion. Once a question was asked to Geetaji at the New Zealand Iyengar Yoga Convention in May 2003 that many students do not practice devotion to God or Gods and they wondered as to whether they could be true Iyengar yogis if they did not practice devotion. The response given by Geetaji is reproduced here.

The stages of Samadhi

Sage Patanjali speaks about the four stages of *samadhi* [profound meditation] namely *vitarka*, *vicara*, *ananda* and *asmita samadhi*. The whole process of *samadhi* is such that the intelligence has to get purified and ripened. You have to cleanse your consciousness, your *citta*, to transform it in such a manner that it undergoes the different stages of *samadhi* to get itself purified.

It is a long process. Sage Patanjali also knows that people like you will ask him what will be your fate since you do not practise devotion to God. He answers, “Have faith in yoga and practise the methodical eight aspects of yoga with faith. Have vigour [and] keen and sharp memory of the goal so you proceed on the right path. Develop the process of contemplation and increase the awareness. You might be either quick or slow but go through the whole process. If your intelligence is ripe enough, surrender yourself to God.” So it seems that he is giving alternative methods.

When two different dishes of food are placed in front [of you], you may ask me whether ...[you] should have this or that. [In that case] then it means that ... [you may choose from] ...any of these two. But, here there is no alternative. Sage Patanjali says that generally people cannot directly develop devotion from the heart. Therefore, they cannot have [achieve] *Isvara pranidhana* and cannot surrender to the Lord. We may [also] use the word *bhakti*—devotion, dedication—because the word...[is] simple.

But he [Patanjali] knows *Isvara pranidhana* is not that easy. If the concept of God is unknown, if you do not know what God is, then how can you surrender? If I say, “Now, all of you are going to surrender yourself to God,” you will ask “please tell us what is God?” Otherwise, how can you have devotion and dedication to an unknown object or an unknown entity? So Patanjali says: first follow the whole process of yoga methodically.

In following the process you develop devotion. If your intelligence reaches the state of maturity, then you don’t need [to make] any [extra] efforts as *Isvara pranidhana* happens naturally. You surrender to the Lord without any effort. You do not even doubt the existence of God. But when you question how to practice devotion to God, know well that you [because you have this question, can only at this stage] practice the surrendering to the unknown entity. How can you surrender to the unknown entity? And that’s why the question comes, what is God? If the unknown entity is known, then the devotion arises and flows directly from the heart.

So Patanjali says, *klesa karma vipaka asayaih aparamrstah purusavisesah Isvarah*

Nescience, pride, attachment, aversion, clinging to life are our afflictions, our weaknesses.

[God is the Supreme Being, totally free from conflict, unaffected by actions and untouched by cause and effect] (*sutra* 1.24). The nature of God as defined by Patanjali is absolutely opposite to what we are. We are caught in *klesas*, afflictions, all the time.

Our afflictions and our karmas

These afflictions are mentioned in the second chapter: *avidya, asmita, raga, dvesa, abhinivesah*—nescience, pride, attachment, aversion, clinging to life (*sutra* 11.3). All these afflictions are our weaknesses. We think we know everything. We think that everything is real in this world. We take it for granted that everything is going to be permanent. That is the lack of understanding which is called *avidya*. That is the first affliction.

Asmita is a kind of egoistic approach; [an approach] which is attached to that “I” which is not the real “I.” This “I” relates [to] feelings such as “I am a practitioner of Yoga. I am so and so; I have got a big house.” It makes us identify ourselves with our belongings. That is *asmita*.

Then we have *raga* [desire, attachment, pleasure]...springing from our

attachment to [that] very “I.” *Dvesa*, aversion, exists because of attachment. We say, “Oh! I like that person.” Then we say, “Oh! I dislike the other one.” The root of this “likes and dislikes” is within us. We are attached to some human beings, some friends of ours, in one way, and we have an aversion towards other people whom we do not like. This is our nature and that is why Patanjali points it out. We are so much attached to ourselves that we are afraid of our own death. Therefore, we remain clinging to this life [*abhinivesah*], thinking that it is permanent. We are totally caught in these afflictions.

God is beyond these afflictions and unaffected by them. We think of God [as] having a human form. We think that he takes birth and dies like us. This is not so. Here, Patanjali makes us realize that God is the one who is free from all afflictions. He is the Supreme Being in that sense. That is why he is called as *purusa visesa*. We each have an individual soul. This soul is called *purusa*. But God is above *purusa*. Therefore, he is *purusa visesa*. He is a special soul and not like one of us.

We get afflicted with *klesas*. These afflictions lead us towards *karma*. We store these *karma*, which give their fruits in every birth. We have to see that these *karma* will be [can be] lessened. How can we do this? Only by doing good, virtuous *karma*!

Behind each *karma* there is a certain desire, intention and inclination which depend upon afflictions. So the *klesa* leads towards *karma*, and *karma* gives *vipaka*, the fruits of actions. We all get the fruits of our actions. That is how our destinies are made. Patanjali is not bothered about who is good, who is bad. He says, “You clarify yourself, you cleanse yourself, by performing good actions and dedicating the fruits. Do not hanker after enjoying the fruits.” God is above all afflictions, actions and fruits of actions. He is untouched by these aspects. *Aparam rstah* means untouched. That is how God is. That is how *Isvara* is.

How do I know God?

“How am I to know this God?” That is the question that arises in your mind. God, as explained by Patanjali, is not in the human form. Patanjali’s concept of God is formless. How am I to know? How am I to visualise God? We only have senses of perception to see something, touch something, feel something, smell something, so how to know this God? So if God has to be known,

scholarships & bursaries

**Members' Scholarships
are available for all long
workshops and intensives.**

Please apply in writing at least one month prior to the workshop you are interested in. See Calendar for dates.

Scholarship applications for Weekend Workshops are due one month prior to the workshop. Scholarships for Special Events and Intensives are due two months before the event.

Student Bursaries are available to all students presently enrolled in classes. To subsidize your term fees please apply three weeks prior to term.

Applications and details for both are available at the reception desk.

Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria
202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C. V8K 3K3
(250) 386-YOGA (9642)

*God is recognised with the sacred syllable aum.
A true and faithful practitioner of Yoga will
automatically develop devotion.*

Patanjali says, “The name of God is *aum*. God is represented in *aum*. *Aum* is called *pranava*.” From time immemorial, God is recognised with the sacred syllable *aum*. You open the mouth to speak. The first pronunciation is “a a a.” Then when you go half way with the process of closing, you say “u u u.” Then when you close your mouth to finish you say “m m m.” So with the pronunciation of “m m m,” the lips get closed.

The syllable *aum* indicates the beginning, middle, and end of the process of speech. Read *Light on Yoga* and you will know the different aspects of *aum*. The word *aum* is like a spectrum of light indicating the wholistic and holistic concept of God. According to Patanjali that is the name, the expression of the God. You need to do *japa* [a repetitive prayer] of the sacred syllable, divine symbol *aum*, repeatedly with freshness of mind so that the meaning of *aum* is self-revealed. In order to have the emotional bearing in your heart about the Supreme Soul, you need to do *Isvara pranidhana*. *Isvara* is God and *pranidhana* means to have intense devotion with total one-pointed attention of *citta*. If you are unfit to have such devotion then Patanjali asks you to follow the set up programme of *astanga* yoga—namely *yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, *pranayama*, etc.—in the frame of *tapas*, *svadhyaya* and *Isvara pranidhana*.

The feeling of devotion and dedication

The [feeling of] devotion and dedication is an inner feeling. It does not come from the head but from the heart. If you have to become a real yogi, you have to practise yoga. You have to practise [the] eight aspects [of yoga] and one day it just happens. You just feel the spiritual heart filled with devotion. You may feel like

having an idol of Sage Patanjali and do the *puja* and worship. So do it. You may begin to do *japa*; again, simply do it. Just as Lord Krishna says in *Bhagavad Gita* that even if you offer him anything—such as leaves, flowers, fruit, water—or repeat his name, or surrender the fruits of [your] actions [to him], he is pleased, he is satisfied. [But] your mind has to be clear. It is not that God is going to drink the water offered by you. Basically you have to [your goal is to] develop devotion and dedication. Through *karma* and *jnana*, you have to reach [arrive at] *bhakti*. So the yogic path is inclusive of all these aspects. It is a complete path. Knowing that you are on the right path, you need not worry about how to worship God. You just practise and the day will come when you begin to understand that [*bhakti*]. A true and faithful practitioner of yoga will automatically develop devotion. Yoga cannot be practised without devotion to God.

So knowing very well the problems of neophytes, Patanjali hasn't forced *Isvara pranidhana*. He knows that all cannot

surrender to the God—the unknown entity. *Isvara pranidhana* requires not only a different mental set up but also maturity of intelligence. Therefore, one should have *sraddha* (faith), *virya* (vigour to practice), and *smrti* (memory). Remember that you are practising yoga. Remember the ultimate aim of yoga, the very purpose of yoga. Yoga is not practised for earning money or to build up your profession. Lastly, after *sraddha*, *virya*, and *smrti* [you find] *samadhi-prajna*—the maturity of intelligence which leads towards *samadhi*.

Sama means equal and *dhi* means *buddhi*. *Buddhi* is intelligence, the inner intelligence. *Prajna* is intense awareness. The intelligence has to spread equally everywhere with sharp awareness when you practise *asana*, *pranayama* or *dhyana* [meditation]. The memory of the ultimate aim is hidden in this *samadhi-prajna*.

Iyengar-Yoga is basically teaching you to develop this awareness. In order to have this *sama-buddhi*, you need devotion. Primarily, the ego has to drop so that *buddhi* remains untainted. Such clear and pure intelligence cleanses and sanctifies the consciousness—*citta*. Devotion comes from that pure heart. Therefore, when it is said that yoga is *samadhi* and *samadhi* is yoga, understand that this is the approach. ॐ

Women Working Wisely

A Short workshop with Ann Kilbertus

2-5 pm, Saturday, March 17, 2007

Women go through many phases of life and our work in each of these phases changes.

This workshop invites women of all ages to come together as sisters and learn basic principles of how to work wisely and well with Yoga. As Sutra 2.16 advises us:

The pains that are yet to come can be and are to be avoided.

Fees: \$36+GST for Members | \$42 +GST for Non Members

Refunds will only be offered if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$10.00 cancellation fee.

An Intensive Workshop with Chris Saudek

by Adia Kapoor

Chris Saudek has been coming to Victoria to give workshops at the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria for many years, and her reputation precedes her. Having been reluctant in the past to register for her workshops because of how challenging they were rumoured to be, I surprised myself this year by deciding to join her workshop on November 4th and 5th. How pleased I am that I did, as I've moved forward with my practice feeling stronger than before and with an excitement (which workshops tend to give us) about the work Chris challenged us to do.

A quick Google search for information on Chris reveals cursory details about her as a teacher. She is certified at the Senior Intermediate Level III and is a devoted student of the Iyengars. She is the director of The Yoga Place in La Crosse, Wisconsin and has been studying the Iyengar method since 1978. Chris made her first trip to study in Pune in 1980 and has been teaching regular classes and workshops since 1982. Chris is also a physical therapist, which gives her a valuable background for teaching yoga. She is well known for her understanding of the therapeutic applications of yoga and of anatomy. Based on these tidbits and Chris's reputation at our yoga centre, I was sure the weekend workshop with her was going to be a gold mine of learning. So, I opened my mind and prepared myself to absorb.

Chris began the weekend with a teacher-training workshop all day Friday. I didn't attend that, but when those teachers and the rest of her students came together on Saturday morning, Chris first asked what we remembered from her workshop the year before. When many people were able to recall specific

Chris reminded us many times to infuse our practice with Bhakti (devotion), Yukti (skill), and Shakti (power).



Ann Kilbertus and Chris Saudek

poses, or the focus of work on particular areas of the body, or groups of poses, Chris further clarified her question by asking what we remembered of the *totality* of her last workshop. It was evident she hoped we would take away and keep not only the details of her teaching, but also the essence of our learning and understanding. Keeping her question about what we remembered of the totality in mind, I was careful not to get too bogged down in the specifics of her teaching

during the workshop. Many of the points she emphasized were quite lost on me; but I look forward to the work of beginning to understand more of what she was teaching. I expect this work will take a lifetime! However, it is the totality of her teaching that I have really carried forward.

Here are a few pearls of wisdom from Chris that I'd like to share with you:

- She stressed that we should work hard in each stage of the pose. We shouldn't just rush ahead to the future, trying to get to the point where we have reached the final pose and can hold it; rather, we should be mindful and present at each stage, entering and exiting.
- To the teachers, she emphasized the importance of teaching the same thing in different ways – that one has to be creative as a teacher in coming up with different approaches to teach things for different students. Explaining one point in the same way over and over may not get it to “click” with everyone; a teacher's work is to teach in a way that is meaningful to the wide variety of students.
- Chris reminded us many times to infuse our practice with *Bhakti* (devotion), *Yukti* (skill), and *Shakti* (power), and not leave any one of these out. This was most evident as we struggled with challenging repetitions of progressively more difficult backbends or inversions (such as *Adho Mukha Vrksasana* – Handstand). We needed *Shakti* (power) to get into the poses (such as by “flinging” ourselves at the wall in Handstand) or to remain in poses when we felt tired, *Yukti* (skill) to work in the

poses towards perfecting the asana, and *Bhakti* (devotion) to surrender and allow ourselves to be in the poses, however far we got with them.

- Compassion for ourselves and for others—both as students and as teachers—was also a key theme of the workshop. This figured prominently for me when I would come out of a pose earlier than the people around me. I was then reminded of Chris's instruction to have compassion for myself and my limitations, and also to look around and see others in beautiful poses – and to have joy for them. Again, this comes back to practicing with *Bhakti* (devotion) whether we are students or teachers—working with compassion and love. Humour is also important. Chris reminded us to remain light and not take ourselves or everything too seriously, although we must be serious and work hard at our practice. Sometimes hard work can be fun! We laughed a lot in her workshop.

All in all, the intensive weekend was very hard work, which left me just as exhausted and challenged as I'd expected. But what has stayed with me most is that although we did so much hard work together, Chris left us with more hard work to do!

I was also grateful to Chris for reminding us how blessed we are to have the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria when she thanked us for inviting her to come. Thank you, Chris, for your wisdom, compassion, and devotion, and for sharing all these with us! ॐ

Iyengar Yoga Association of Canada

ASSESSMENT DATES

March 16-18, 2007
Edmonton

Jr. Intermediate I

June 15-17, 2007
Kelowna

Introductory I/II

June 15-17, 2007
Ottawa Introductory I/II
(In English and French)

October 19-21, 2007
Toronto

Introductory I/II

November 16-18, 2007
Vancouver

Jr. Intermediate II

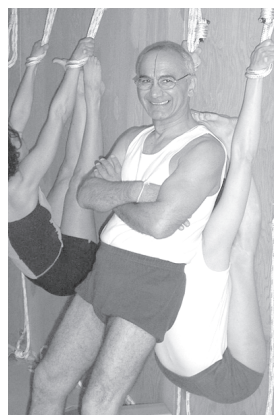
April 18-20, 2008
Toronto

Jr. Intermediate III

Junior Intermediate Workshop with Faeq Biria

for level 3 & 4 students

May 4 - 7, 2007



Faeq Biria is the Director of the Centre de Yoga Institute de Paris. He is one of Mr. Iyengar's foremost teachers, and an ambassador for his work. He travels to India annually and is a strong link in the worldwide community of yoga in the Iyengar tradition.

Faeq has noted: "My experience shows that in order to get something deep through this workshop, four or five days are necessary. If not, the workshop remains only an experience and the real aim of the practice, which is transformation, will not be reached."

This workshop will offer a unique opportunity to study with this dedicated and inspiring teacher.

Classes are from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm, with a short lunch break on site. Times subject to change

Open to level 3 & 4 students who are able to hold headstand and shoulderstand for 5 minutes or more.

Fees: \$440.00 + GST IYCV members
\$480.00 + GST non-members

Registration opens:

February 5, 2007 for IYCV members
February 22, 2007 for non-members

To register, drop in to or phone the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria

202-919 Fort Street
Victoria, B.C. V8K 3K3
(250) 386-YOGA (9642)
www.iyengaryogacentre.ca

Refunds will only be offered if your space can be filled and are subject to a \$50.00 cancellation fee.

A Thank You *from Shirley*

I would like to thank all of you who helped me celebrate my 75th birthday.

Thank you for all the flowers, cards and gifts.

Thank you to Leslie and Ann for stepping in at short notice when I was too sick to teach the class.

Thanks to all those who chanted *sutras*, demonstrated *yoga-asanas*, paraded on the catwalk, and gave speeches during the afternoon celebration.

Thank you to those who attended the evening dinner at Spicejammer, who toasted and roasted me, and brought a special day to a festive close.

Thank you to all the organizers of the various events.

It took many people a lot of time to arrange everything for this celebration, just as each week a great number of members of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria donate their time to keep our

space and all of its programs running and healthy. We are a community minded organization with karma yoga at its heart, and I am proud to be a part of this community.

May we continue to be inspired by B.K.S. Iyengar and honour him in our work.

May we keep the spirit of Yoga alive and well in our centre,

Om namah Sivaya,
Shirley Daventry French

Refining our Teaching

a Workshop for teachers and teachers in training

With Shirley Daventry French

March 23-24, 2007

Focusing on the evolution from Introductory
to Intermediate teaching.

Friday, March 23, 2007 6:30 – 8:30 pm

Saturday, March 24, 2007 11:00 am – 5:00 pm

(1 hour lunch break time TBA)

Fees: \$120.00 + GST IYCV members | \$130.00 + GST non-members

To register, drop in to or phone the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria
202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C. V8K 3K3
(250) 386-YOGA (9642)
www.iyengaryogacentre.ca

Refunds will only be offered if your space can be filled
and are subject to a \$10.00 cancellation fee.

Short WORKSHOP

Exploring Trikonasana

With Linda Benn

**Saturday,
January 27, 2007**

3:15 pm - 5:00 pm

Levels 1 & 2

Fees:

\$20 + GST for IYCV members

\$24 + GST for non-members

Refunds will only be offered
if your space can be filled
and are subject to a
\$10.00 cancellation fee.

Let's Celebrate!

by Leslie Hogya and Karyn Woodland

Let's celebrate! The program committee kept that idea foremost in mind as we planned events around Shirley's 75th Birthday. We wanted to have fun, and yet to honour her. Without Shirley Daventry French, her energy and input, there wouldn't be an Iyengar Yoga Centre in Victoria; at least, it would not be in its present form. We are a not-for-profit society with a collective of teachers, many volunteers including our Board, a world-respected newsletter, and more. We work together collaboratively to help foster the teachings of Iyengar yoga.

Shirley is demanding, exacting, and serious as a teacher. She uses her considerable gifts with language and as a story-teller, weaving yoga philosophy into her talks, making it accessible to all. She is encouraging and supportive in difficult times. She also exudes a zest for life and laughter.

Ideas flew about the planning meetings as we formulated our vision for the event: chanting, demos, skits, a yoga "fashion" show, someone in a wig? Wayne as MC, Indian food, music! We also wanted in some way to let the younger members of the IYCV society know more about her.

So, celebrate we did! On Saturday, October 28th, many students, teachers, family, and friends gathered to honour our beloved Shirley on the wonderful occasion of her 75th birthday. (October 11th is her actual birthdate.)

The celebrations began at 11 am with a workshop, which was to have been lead by Shirley. Regrettably, she had come down with a nasty respiratory virus in her travels. For the first time – ever! – Shirley had to cancel a work-



Asana demonstrations

shop. Leslie Hogya and Ann Kilbertus graciously and competently picked up the torch. Wendy Boyer read a letter from Shirley which said in part how fitting this was as both Leslie and Ann had recently successfully completed their assessment as Senior Teachers. (Currently, only 10 teachers in Canada hold this honour; the first six certificates were given by Guruji; and the next four, including Leslie, Ann, Marlene Miller and Linda Shevloff, were awarded at the first ever Canadian Senior Assessment in Montreal.)

The afternoon's festivities continued with the chanting of Chapter 1, "Samadhi Pada," from *Patanjali's Yoga-sutras*. Those who lead the chanting had begun rehearsing at the beginning of the summer and did an admirable job of Sanskrit pronunciation.

Next up was an awesome demonstration by a group of teachers of the beauty and art of *asana*. The peak of this lively and lovely performance included several consecutive drop-overs (from *Sirsasana*). Ty Chandler found the music and choreographed the piece.

Shirley noted that the people in the demonstration represented all ages: they were in their 30s, 40s, 50s and 60s! The 'troupe' was rewarded with long and loud applause from the appreciative audience.

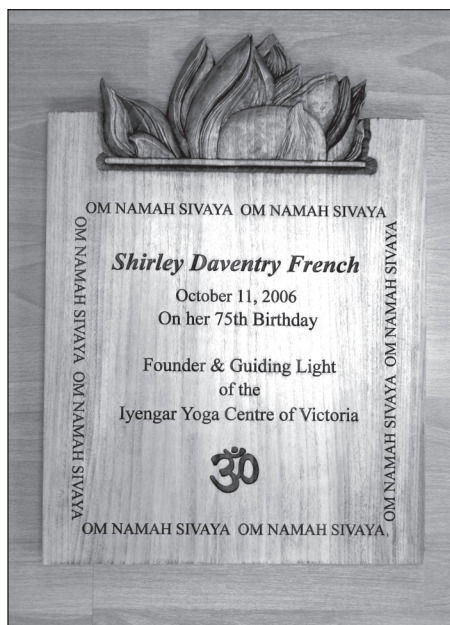
A lighter tone then prevailed as we moved to the fanciful. The fun included giving Shirley a preview copy of her oft-promised book: *The Secrets of the Inner Groins*. As Maggi Feehan presented it, she said it should be kept in a brown paper wrapper. Then there was a show of yoga fashion (or not). In classes when we tie ourselves up with belts, pad our backsides with blankets, or bandage our heads we often joke about it being the latest in yoga fashion. This show depended on spontaneity and adlibbing. Ann found the music, Amanda Mills gathered our ideas together into a "script," and away we went, down a runway of mats. Leslie was first out with the 70s kaftan she wore when she taught her first yoga class. Various and sundry costumes followed, including Pune shorts and several outfits involving the creative use of belts.

The circle of Shirley's influence is wide, and during the celebrations, we had a generous donation and a beautiful flower arrangement presented by the members of the Peninsula Yoga centre. Linda Shevloff from Hong Kong had helped produce special t-shirts with Shirley's mantra, *Om Namah Sivaya*, (praising Siva) which many of the celebrants wore. And finally, once the committee came up with the idea of giving Shirley a plaque, it was carved by David Eeles and produced by the Kelowna Yoga House. The circle of support spreads far.

Shirley's birthday concluded with a wonderful dinner at Spicejammer Restaurant. This restaurant was chosen for several reasons, an important one being the quality of the food! Delicious curries were prepared lovingly by the owner, Billie Essa, who is also a yoga student and supporter of the centre.



Sutra chanting



The plaque

When we arrived at the restaurant, we were greeted with flamenco guitar music played by Calum Blades.

Many people came to some or all of the events of the day—both those currently teaching or taking classes, and also several former Board members and teachers. During the dinner quite a few took the opportunity given by the MC, Wayne Unger, to come up and speak of Shirley's importance in their lives, or to roast her—a bit. We came together to enjoy the teachings, the fun, the food and all the festivities, working and playing together to pay tribute to Shirley, our founder and guiding Light.

THANKS to the many, many people who made the day such a great success! ॐ

Congratulations



The following candidates achieved certification during the Senior Intermediate I Assessment, October 13-15 in Toronto, and the Junior Intermediate II Assessment, November 17-19 in Victoria.

Senior Intermediate I

Leslie Hogya, Victoria
Marlene Linda Miller, Victoria
Ann Kilbertus, Victoria
Linda Shevloff, Hong Kong

Junior Intermediate II

Robin Cantor, Victoria
Judith Mirus, Edmonton
Robert Walker, Calgary
Gaye Barter, Toronto
Karen Major, London, Ontario
Nadia Horodinsky, Mississauga
Theresa Mcdiarmid, Toronto
Suzanne Fitzpatrick, Toronto

Future Directions for the IYCV

—a Student's Perspective

by Taimi Mulder

At the 2006 January teacher's meeting, Shirley Daventry French raised a number of provocative questions regarding the future direction for the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria (IYCV). The following excerpts are from a paper Taimi Mulder, who was then in her first year of the IYCV's teacher training program, wrote in response to Shirley's questions. Their dialogue remains worth thinking about at the start of 2007.

*Teachers are
at the forefront
of our work,
in the same way
as an actor is
on centre stage.*

Shirley Daventry French: Teachers are at the forefront of our work, in the same way as an actor is on centre stage. Actors depend on a huge team of people to produce any play or film in which they perform. Similarly, there is a vast body of work and personnel behind every class we teach.

When the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria came into existence, the thought that it would provide a livelihood for anyone was in nobody's mind. Our focus was on establishing a community which would support us on our own spiritual journey. The Victoria centre was built on the underlying premise that selfless service makes you divine.

Taimi Mulder: I am of the opinion that yoga and the centre (IYCV) should not provide a sole livelihood for those involved. Inevitably there will be some individuals who may end up making their living from their involvement with the yoga centre, however I would prefer to see that happen by accident rather than design.

It is difficult to be detached from the work of the centre if one's existence depends on it. But, detachment from outcomes is fundamental to a healthy yoga centre whose goals reflect and propagate the teachings of the eight limbs of yoga. I use the word "detached" in the sense of emotional detachment and cessation of desire, as recommended in the *Yoga Sutras (vairagya)*, rather than meaning a lack of caring, lack of responsibility, or lack of involvement.

Being able to maintain a detached perspective with respect to the yoga centre's work is critical as it is too easy to disguise one's personal

wants within the guise of what is good for the centre and others. This type of delusion is a natural one for humans and often difficult to penetrate in one's self.

All this being said, there is work that needs to be done at the centre and it is only right that the centre pay these costs, making the issue not as clear cut as one would hope for.

SDF: As you know, I have been travelling to Pune since 1979. When I am there, I hear nothing but appreciation of our centre and its work. In this material world where yoga has become commercialized and trivialized, yogis from around the world express their appreciation for the spirit of co-operation in which we have worked for over thirty years. We have earned this reputation by our *sadhana* as a group. Can it be sustained in the current climate of yoga, or have we become an anachronism?

TM: I fully believe it can and that this type of *sadhana* is NOT an anachronism. Working successfully in large groups develops and requires the skills of letting go and the practice of personal responsibility for one's actions and emotions without placing those responsibilities on others. The IYCV is a collection of talented and caring individuals who practice these skills with their hearts. And like all practices, it takes time to gain experience and learn skills. As a larger group with its own centre, the IYCV is young and, like all adolescents, we need to grow into our new body. The soul is still there.

SDF: In a faculty as large as ours there are bound to be shifts and disturbances. Yoga involves struggle. Iyengar Yoga attracts strong minded people and as the ego begins to feel threatened by our practice, it strengthens its attempts to remain at the forefront of our attention. *Antarayah*, the impediments mentioned in Patanjali's *Yoga-sutra* I.30, and the *klesas* of *sutra* II.3 are not overcome easily.

TAIMI MULDER IS A GEOPHYSICIST WORKING FOR THE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF CANADA (GSC) AS AN EARTHQUAKE SEISMOLOGIST. SHE HAS BEEN A YOGA PRACTITIONER FOR APPROXIMATELY SEVEN YEARS, AND IS ENTERING HER SECOND YEAR OF TEACHER TRAINING AT IYCV.

*It is my belief that quality work,
from the heart, always speaks
for itself.*

As we entered 2005, teacher training continued. More people became certified. Yoga proceeded on its wave of popularity. More and more Iyengar classes were established throughout greater Victoria in public and private centres and homes.

It's tricky, because it is the mandate of our centre to propagate yoga and in particular Guruji's work, but this proliferation of classes means that there is more competition for students. Many of you teach at other centres which are able to offer cheaper classes than ours because they are subsidized by our taxes. Or, they appeal to the lunchtime business crowd because they have showers; or to young mothers because they have day care. Perhaps you teach in your home. Each additional class you take on competes with us for a finite pool of students. There is no right or wrong here; merely a different focus of interest.

TM: I believe this diversity of classes is supportive, especially when the teachers maintain a link to the IYCV and inform their students of its events and programs. These other teaching locations in the Greater Victoria area attract students who probably would not come to the IYCV. I can only think that making well-taught classes available to all these people contributes to the mental and physical health of the greater community we all live in. And, some dedicated students from these classes eventually do find their way to the IYCV.

Due to the support of its membership, the IYCV is able to provide a well-rounded "yoga educational centre" in a manner that smaller studios and community recreational centres cannot. By this I am referring to the substantial knowledge-base and the

variety of perspectives which illuminate our curriculum, the opportunity to work with a variety of senior teachers on a regular basis through classes and workshops, the existence of rope walls in both studios, the availability of props and practice space, the library, the newsletter, and the "yoga store."

The question is how to encourage students to make the step to IYCV in such a way that the student maintains contact with both the community classes and IYCV. I see the IYCV as the core of the teachings in the greater Victoria area. It is easy to go where one knows the people and feels comfortable. Perhaps a circuit of IYCV senior "guest" teachers passing through the community classes during the year might strengthen the relationship and provide familiarity and continuity, making it easier for students in the community classes to come to the IYCV.

SDF: Throughout North America and much of the Western world, many people, skilled and unskilled, are making a living teaching yoga. Not surprisingly, Iyengar teachers are also looking at this option. It takes time and money to become a certified Iyengar Yoga teacher. Our training is second to none. Why should we not earn a decent living as does that man or woman down the road with so much less training?

TM: As a student, I believe yoga should be accessible to all. I have a full-time job which pays moderately well and even at the current reasonable rates of the IYCV, I find that I invest quite a bit of my income into yoga classes, to the point that I make choices with regard to classes and workshops based on my finances. Many individuals work at jobs close to minimum wage and I would like to see their access to classes reflected in the class fees.

SDF: What does Guruji have to say about this? He deplores the commercialization of Yoga; but he also says that we have to charge money—just make sure that we give more than we

Come to the

Friday Night Gathering

Friday, February 23, 2007 at 6:30 pm

*Meditation with Neil McKinley
followed by Potluck Dinner.*

*Please bring a vegetarian dish to share
at the Potluck Dinner following the meditation.*

Free for members. By donation for non-members.

55 Plus Workshop —Strength & Stamina

With Wendy Boyer and Leslie Hogle

Saturday, February 10, 2007

1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

levels 1 & 2

Fees:

\$30 + GST for IYCV members

\$35 + GST for non-members

receive. Prashant Iyengar is unequivocal that we should not view teaching yoga as a livelihood. If we need to earn money (as does everyone who is not independently wealthy), he says we should find a job elsewhere to support us. Again and again he has spoken and written about this. Geeta speaks more of finding and fulfilling one's duty, and sets an exemplary example as a *karma* and *bhakti* yogi. All of them emphasize that we must first and foremost be practitioners, and warn that once teaching becomes a primary means of earning a living there is a temptation to look at students as a source of income, and want to hold on to them for this purpose.

TM: I, too, deplore this commercialization of Yoga. Yet if we look at money as a "promissory note," this view changes a bit.

We give yoga classes and receive promissory notes in return. There are some basics that the IYCV needs to survive: a roof over our heads, a continually-available means of registration for classes and workshops, the tools to manage that, professional layout and printing of the newsletter. The IYCV makes choices about how to acquire such basics. These choices are based on the number of promissory notes available. This, in turn, is dependent on a trade-off between the number of students who come and the number of teachers available.

For its basic requirements, I believe that IYCV should pay the cost of doing business. The items that we purchase from our wider community, and our existence at this base level, should not depend upon the charity of others.

But, I believe all the IYCV activities beyond this level of basic survival should be the product of *karma* yoga. Defining the basic needs for survival of the centre, and separating those needs from the teaching, provides a solid foundation for the IYCV society, enabling it to carry on through times of thick and thin. The number of students and the number of teachers will fluctuate.

SDF: Hopefully the thoughts I have put together here will stimulate your own. My education involved a tradition of debating, and a debate necessarily has opposing views; but a debate also comes to a conclusion where a decision is made to support or oppose the motion.

TM: Thank you for raising these questions! I believe that the right course of action inevitably makes itself known, given the chance. In many instances, resistance to change and opposing views are due to misperception, and all those fluctuating thoughts which accompany that. This reminds me of a bumper sticker I recently saw – "Don't believe everything you think." Debate is a healthy way to air perceptions and inspect one's own resistance to alternative viewpoints. Often another way can be found which addresses the majority of concerns with the minimum of fuss.

I have one last word on perceptions. It is my belief that quality work, from the heart, always speaks for itself. Location and advertising make little difference with regard to work at this level.

For example, the Sooke Harbour House is considered one of the top ten restaurants in North America and it is a difficult place to get to. Many exceptional and well-known institutes do not advertise and are located in out-of-the-way locations. Yet people find and journey to these destinations. They are discovered by word-of-mouth; they thrive on the quality of their offerings, and on the faith, generosity, and spirit with which they are offered (along with some astute financial management). Do not squander resources on the perception of advertising. Quality organizations that recognize us will mention us. Have faith, work from the heart, and the rest will come. ॐ



Patti Kahlo for
washing our tea-towels.

Linda Poole for volunteering
on Thursdays.

Theron Morgan
for cleaning

And, thanks to all the people
who volunteered & helped
out with the assessment in
November!

Co-ordinator
Extraordinaire:
Rosemary Barritt

Computer Tech:
Charles Campbell
Gary Wong

Drivers:
Rosemary Barritt
Bruce Cox
Leslie Hogle

Timers:
Linda Benn
Wendy Boyer
Leslie Hogle

Cooks:
Glenda Hingley
Jane Jonas
Patty Rivard
Nina Zak

Students:
Gary Wong
Leslie Hogle
Jane Jonas
Keri Taylor
Sharon Richmond
Robin Cantor
Ty Chandler
Lauren Cox
Linda Larsen
Kim Nunn
Kelly Murphy
Britta Poisson
James Currie Johnson
Evelyn Nixey
Diana Cole
Sarah Godfrey
Marnie Friesen
Paulette Hendry
Glenda Balkan Champagne
Ann Kilbertus
Jill Morin

Starting Yoga at 60:

An Interview with my Mom

by Caren Liedtke

If memory serves right, my lovely life partner and I have been doing yoga on and off since the fall of 1989. My mom knows some of the people in the Victoria yoga world from other arenas, so over the years, we have sometimes chatted about how they were doing, as well as the classes I was taking and the workshops I had been to. Our conversations were casual, so I was surprised when she started taking a class in the fall of 2001. I was even more surprised, pleasantly so, that she took to it. She registered for another session, and another, added a second class, took a few workshops, and bought a few books.

I was curious to find out what it was that had prompted my mom to start taking classes and what it was about yoga that kept her coming back. I thought her story might be of interest to others beginning yoga at a similar stage in life. And so, it was with great pleasure that I sat down to interview my mother, Dorothy Liedtke.

Caren: When did you start taking yoga?

Dorothy: I think it has been five years, which is as long as the center's been open.

Caren: How old were you at that time?

Dorothy: I guess I was 60.

Caren: What made you decide to take a yoga class?

Dorothy: I had this daughter and her husband who had been doing it for a long time and mentioned it now and then. I guess for the usual reason, which when I think back now is funny, to improve my flexibility.



Caren Liedtke and her mother, Dorothy Liedtke

Caren: Why is that funny?

Dorothy: Because I don't think that's the reason I go to yoga now, but that was the reason I started. I don't think my flexibility has gotten any better either!

Caren: What's the reason you go now? How has your reason changed?

Dorothy: It's very important and I won't miss my two mornings. I wish I could go every day. It brings some quiet, some peace. I like the poses. I also like the chanting. Everything.

Caren: How long had you been taking classes when you started to feel that way?

Dorothy: Probably sometime in my second year when I stopped feeling so self-conscious about chanting. It was really gradual.

Caren: Neil and I had been doing yoga forever, so what clicked or made you want to go?

Dorothy: Maybe it was the right time. I heard about the new center. I would never have gone if it had been at the Y.

Caren: Why?

Dorothy: It just seemed like another program at the Y. I didn't want to go to the Y. I did that a long time ago with the kids. It had no appeal. The Yoga Centre seemed somehow special, different.

Caren: Why did you join the 55 and Over class?

Dorothy: That's where I thought I belonged.

Caren: Looking back was that a good start?

Dorothy: It was an excellent start. It wasn't full of young 20 somethings in the latest stretch clothing with awesome flexibility. It was not an intimidating class. There were people like me. Even though some of them had been there forever, it wasn't intimidating.

Caren: Now you take a 55 and over and a regular class, is there a difference between the two?

Dorothy: Yes, there is a difference. The regular class is a little more of a challenge, but some of Leslie's [55 and Over] classes are very challenging, too.

Caren: The Friday morning class that you're taking has mostly middle-aged women in it, right?

Dorothy: Yes, but some of them have been going for a long time and are very good. Mostly I've gone past the point where if the class can do better or more than I can, too bad, I can't do it. It's not that I'm not trying. I do the best I can and that's it. We did backbends today, which I can't do. I tried, but it killed me. I thought, "No, I shouldn't be doing

backbends.” I did my wimpy little try, anyway.

Caren: Yes, but you have a significant back injury.

Dorothy: I know.

Caren: Why should you be doing backbends?

Dorothy: Well, I shouldn’t because I can’t.

Caren: Part of yoga is acknowledging where you’re at.

Dorothy: Yes, I know.

Caren: So the only difference in the classes is the level of difficulty?

Dorothy: We [my mom and her friend Patty] decided that we wanted to go more than once a week. Well, there was only one 55 and Over class, so then we went to a Level 1 class. After a year and a bit, Level 1 became very boring in that it was always Level 1. I all of a sudden realized that I was past Level 1, but the only choice was Level 2, which then is a challenge. They started another 55 and Over class, but it was a beginner’s class. And it was in the small room and it was full. When we wanted to drop back, Britta said, “No, you’re not leaving Level 2.”

Caren: You’ve been doing yoga for five years, what physical changes have you noticed?

Dorothy: I don’t know. I’d like to think I’m better, but some days I think I’m worse. Stronger legs, I guess. More attention to what my body does. The teacher says, “Feel this muscle,” and I think, “Yeah, sure.” Then this last term, I could feel it happen, and I thought, “It really does happen! I guess I’m not dead there.” That has been really funny.

Caren: Anything outside out of class?

Dorothy: I feel guilty if I don’t have a daily practice. On holidays I did at least half an hour every day and really enjoyed it. I was reading in one of the books that

anything is considered a practice. If you do one pose while you’re making dinner, it’s considered a practice, but what’s one pose a day do for you?

Caren: More than nothing.

Dorothy: Well that’s where I’m at. I do something every day even though I don’t think one or two poses is a practice.

Caren: Did you have a practice right from the beginning?

Dorothy: No. Not until my third year.

Caren: So your first two years you just took classes?

Dorothy: Yes.

Caren: What made you start to have a practice at home?

Dorothy: I was just absorbing more. I was sure a home practice would help with some of the poses, like plank pose. I needed to develop some upper body strength. I realized I wasn’t going to get it doing plank pose in class once every three weeks.

Caren: When you first started, what did you home practice look like?

Dorothy: Downward Facing Dog. That stretch where you put your hands on the counter and arch your back up. That would be about it.

Caren: A couple of poses. How many times a week?

Dorothy: At least twice a week. I do back stretches every day. But I never thought that counted as a practice.

Caren: What do you think about or understand about the philosophy behind yoga? Does it matter to you?

Dorothy: Yes, it matters, but it’s very difficult. I enjoy it when the teachers read something from Mr. Iyengar’s book. I have his book and I do read it. I think it’s a very good life philosophy. I also like that they stress that it’s not a religion. You can be whatever religion you want

and accept the yoga philosophy. It’s a great way to live, something to strive for. I like the “in the moment, here and now” sort of thing.

Caren: Do you think you would have stayed with yoga if you hadn’t had a friend to go to class with?

Dorothy: Yes, I would have stayed, but whether I would have taken two classes or not, I’m not sure. Going with a friend is very supportive. Some days when we come, we say, “If you hadn’t been standing on the corner [waiting to be picked up], I would have said, ‘I’m too tired. I’m going to stay home.’” You can get into bad habits. You don’t go once because you’re too tired or you don’t like something. You don’t make yoga your priority if there isn’t someone else. Having said that though, I never miss when Patty is away and she never misses when I’m away.

Caren: How did the 55 and Over Salt Spring Retreat come about?

Dorothy: Leslie always talked about the Salt Spring Retreat when she came home. A couple of us in class said, “Why don’t we have a retreat?” We started looking for a place and that’s how it happened.

Caren: What did you like about it?

Dorothy: You just have this whole weekend where you do nothing but yoga.

Caren: One of the things I imagine that was nice was to hang out with people who are your own age.

Dorothy: The interesting thing was getting to know the people that were in the class better. It went from being a class of strangers to being a class of people that you are comfortable with. The first year I took classes, I really enjoyed the yoga, but the class felt cold. It made me think that when there are new people in the class, I should also say “Hello.”

Caren: Do you think about getting older?

Dorothy: Well, not really. I don't feel old. I know I'm old, but my own perception of myself is not as an old person. My body might have its creaks, but I don't think of myself as an old person.

Caren: Do you see yourself doing yoga for the rest of your life?

Dorothy: I do. If I didn't, I'd really miss it. I think it's given me something. What, I don't know. I'd like to go every day. I really enjoyed it and it's always a challenge.

Caren: Thanks, mom. It's been really great to talk to you about yoga.

Dorothy: Yes, it's been lovely. We should do this again. ॐ

CAREN LEIDKE TEACHES ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT A PRIVATE LANGUAGE SCHOOL DOWNTOWN. SHE WORKS IN THE MORNINGS AND DOES THE MOM THING (SHE IS SAMANTHA'S MOTHER—THE ONE WHO KNOWS NOT TO PUT BUTTER ON JAM SANDWICHES) THE REST OF THE TIME.



Melissa Worth spotting Marlene Miller.



The "55 Plus" Class

by Leslie Hogya

I was speechless when I returned to Victoria this past October, and came in to teach the "55 Plus" class. There before me was Ruth with a beautiful orchid and card from the class to congratulate me for passing my Senior Intermediate I assessment. Luckily for them, there is always a pose for almost any circumstance, so while I recovered my voice, I put them on the floor for *Supta Padangustasana* (a reclining pose).

The members of this class, assembling every Wednesday for many years, have become a group of friends. They practice *asana* together, learn to do *Uttahita Trikonasana* yet one more way, and repeat *Downward Facing Dog* a myriad of times. Their legs are straight, their chests open, their eyes bright. We call it the "55 Plus" class, but most are in their 60s and even 70s; I do not know their exact ages.

What makes it different from an ordinary class? They are not beginners, nor do we stick to the introductory syllabus. I teach many of the more complex poses, adapted to their ability. I teach at a slightly slower yet still demanding pace. I adapt balancing poses by making sure there is always a wall or chair to hold onto.

The class begins in the lobby as the members arrive and exchange news of the week, and sometimes ends over lunch or a cup of tea at noon. In November 2005 we held the first retreat for this age group. It was a wonderful weekend with time for penetrating deeper into the work of Iyengar yoga, for reflection, for meals and shared walks.

I always feel that I am as much a student in the class as the other participants, for we learn and grow together. At the beginning of the fall term, I asked what they hoped to accomplish this year. One said, "I just want to maintain!" With Mr. Iyengar turning 88, we have our model. Prashant has said he is an example of changeless change. He doesn't appear to age and change, but of course he is always practicing to seem changeless. ॐ

Jam sandwiches and my Immovable Ways

by Neil McKinlay

NEIL MCKINLAY TEACHES MEDITATION THROUGHOUT THE CITY, WHICH ALLOWS HIM AMPLE TIME TO MAKE SANDWICHES FOR HIS DAUGHTER. THE TWO OF THEM CAN OFTEN BE SEEN PLAYING BARBIE, PRINCESS, AND HIDE-AND-SEEK TOGETHER. THIS ARTICLE WAS REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION FROM THE WINTER 2007 ISSUE OF *LEARNING TO NEWS: OCCASIONAL REFLECTIONS ON LIVING*. LEARNING TO NEWS IS THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF NEILMCKINLAY.COM.

My daughter wanted a jam sandwich for breakfast. Easy enough, I thought. First butter. Then jam. Then another slice on top. “Here,” I said, holding the result.

Samantha gave it a cursory glance. “I don’t like crusts, Dad. Mom cuts them off.”

I went back to the kitchen with a shrug and started slicing darkened crusts from the rest of the bread. When I returned to the table, Sam was again unimpressed. “Could you cut it up, please? Like this,” she gestured, slicing with one hand.

“Into four, then?”

“Yes,” she nodded. “Four.”

This time, I arrived at the cutting board with a sigh. Looking at the clock, I suddenly felt the pressures of time weighing on me. We had a lot to do before the day got underway. “There,” I grumbled, putting the plate down. “A jam sandwich. No crusts. Cut in four.”

“Thank you,” she said, taking a piece into her mouth.

My idea of how things should go is only an idea, I thought.



PHOTO: CAREN WILLMS

Samantha and Neil McKinlay

“Dad!” she soon burst out, fueling my growing frustration. “You put butter on this?!” she accused. My hard work was now hanging in the air in front of me, dangling between two fingers. “I hate butter! Mom...”

I interrupted. “Mom never gives you butter, right?”

Samantha nodded. As if to add emphasis, she stuck out her tongue and said, “Bleah!”

Wanting this episode to end, I snatched the plate, took the quarter sandwich from Sam’s hand and rushed back to the kitchen. I stuffed the rejected creation into my face while reaching out for fresh slices. Jam, butter and bread crowded my mouth. Quite habitually, I reached for the butter tray and wiped a thin layer on the first new slice.

“Aaaargh!” I screamed. Bread crumbs flew everywhere. I placed both hands on the counter and leaned into its support.

“What’s wrong, Dad?” Samantha asked. She had a slight smile lifting her mouth. Some concern wrinkled between

her eyes. “What’s wrong?” she repeated. And then: “Is my sandwich with no butter ready?”

I let out an angry breath. *Wrong* was the fact that nothing was following my agenda. I had felt relatively on top of the day when I had woken—or, more accurately, when I had been awoken. Things were going well as I prepared that first sandwich. In other words, things were more or less following my plan.

But if there is one thing I have learned since our daughter arrived, it is that life doesn’t often follow my idea of how it should proceed. And when it does, this doesn’t last long. Lacking the niceties of most adults, children really drive this home. Where someone older might have put on a good face and eaten that sandwich, Samantha took a different approach. “Bleah!” she exclaimed.

Which points to the second thing I’ve learned since our daughter’s arrival. I am not all that flexible when it comes to my agenda. Once a plan is established, cement pours in and this becomes the

way things must go! And when they don't—well, the above offers a sense of what happens then.

Standing in the kitchen that morning, staring at the mess I'd made, I felt bad for my immovable ways. My idea of how things should go is only an idea, I thought. The practice of life involves

engaging what's actually happening.

With this in mind, I reached for another slice. I spread the jam, pressed more bread on top and got to cutting. By the time I placed the result in front of my daughter, I wasn't feeling particularly good, but I had relaxed a little. I thought I was more prepared to roll with life's

inevitable punches. "Here you go," I said, putting down the plate.

Sam looked at this for a moment. "Thanks, Dad," she then said, slipping out of her seat. "But know what? I'm not hungry anymore. Come on—let's play!" ॐ

Changes at the Front Desk

by **Leslie Hogya**

Monica Dimofski and Karin Holtkamp will no longer be working at the front desk.

You will still see Karin at the centre teaching her classes. Karin has worked at the desk and been responsible for our membership list. Karin finished her teacher training with the centre and received her Introductory II certificate this past June.

Monica is moving to Salt Spring Island. She has been with us for five years and during that time also managed to finish her degree at University of Victoria. Monica has assumed many responsibilities at the centre; she has kept the information on the web site current, among many other duties.

As with all our staff, they have helped make our centre warm and welcoming, always willing to go the extra mile.

Congratulations to you both, and we wish you all the best! ॐ



At lunch: (front row) Karin Holtkamp, Wendy Boyer, Leslie Hogya; (back row) Monica Dimofski, Britta Poisson, Bruce Cox

From Rush to Hush

by **Sue Riddell**

Last week when driving around town looking for an address that was escaping me, I became gridlocked in the Hillside Mall parking lot along with others going to the same place—nowhere! How does this happen?

After extricating myself, what did I encounter next but four fire engines at a gas station attending a car fire!

Making a quick turnaround, I headed down to the Iyengar Yoga Center of Victoria. It was time once again to gather up the mats and take them to be washed. And what did I find there? Peace and quiet that knew no bounds. In the silence

of the empty studio, I collected the mats and my thoughts.

This is the perfect time of year to take advantage of our lovely center to recharge and regroup, breathe and contemplate *Santosa*—the contentment I experience with each visit. I've been coming to Ty Chandler's early morning Timed Practice this term and find it a wonderful way to start a day. My recommendation is to try out one of the specialty classes—working with ropes, *pranayama*, or the early morning practice. Surprise yourself with something different. Your body and your soul will thank you! ॐ

Scheduled Practice Space for IYCV Members

**Sundays 12:30 - 3:00 pm
& Fridays 6:30 - 8:00 am**

Schedule is subject to change,
please call 386-YOGA (9642)
to check the schedule.

Please note:

- The supervising teacher is not there to teach or lead a practice.
- Bring your own practice sequence or find a sequence in one of the available books.
- The door may be locked; just knock loudly.



2007 calendar

JANUARY

- 19-21 Heart of Yoga with Shirley Daventry French
- 27 Teachers' Meeting
- 27 Short Workshop, Exploring Trikonasana with Linda Benn

FEBRUARY

- 3 IYCV AGM
- 10 55 Plus Workshop, Strength and Stamina with Wendy Boyer and Leslie Hoga
- 23 Friday Night Gathering – Meditation with Neil McKinley, followed by Potluck Dinner
- 24 Teachers' Meeting

MARCH

- 16-18 Junior Intermediate I Assessment in Edmonton, AB
- 17 WWW: Women Working Wisely – Focus on Abdomen with Ann Kilbertus
- 23-24 Refine our Teaching, A Teacher Training Workshop with Shirley Daventry French
- 31 Teachers' Meeting

APRIL

- 21 Teachers' Meeting

MAY

- 4-7 Workshop Faeq Biria
- 11 Big Big Practice
- 24-27 IYAC AGM, Toronto

JUNE

- 1-3 Saltspring Retreat
- 9 Teachers' Meeting
- 15-17 Introductory I/II Assessment in Kelowna, B.C.
- 15-17 Introductory I/II Assessment (English and French) in Ottawa, Ont.
- 25-30 Sadhana with Robin Cantor

JULY

- 9-14 Teacher Training Intensive – Introductory Levels with Leslie Hoga and Ann Kilbertus

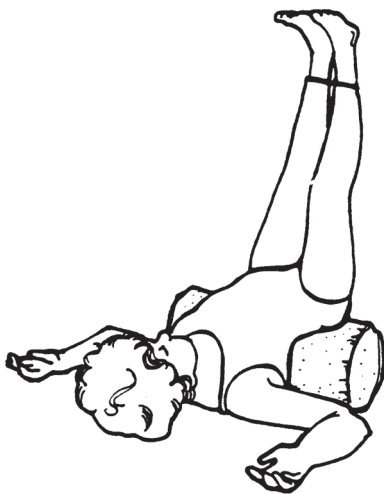
AUGUST

- 6-10 Teacher Training Intensive – Junior Intermediate Levels with Shirley Daventry French
- 22-26 Footsteps of Patanjali Retreat at Saltspring Centre with Shirley Daventry French and Leslie Hoga

Newsletter submissions

Written: Digital format is preferred—Word file or other files compatible with Microsoft Word, plain text files or emails. Hand written or printed submissions will be accepted; however, they require transposing (typing or scanning) to digital format by the newsletter committee before publication.

Photos: Prints or digital images. Digital files must be high resolution (minimum 600 dpi) for adequate reproduction. Acceptable formats are JPG (choose no compression, high quality, large file), TIFF or EPS. Preferred: save as grayscale EPS files, with no cropping adjustments or sizing.



Time to Renew!

This is a reminder that your
Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria membership
expired on December 31, 2006.

The membership subscription fee is \$40 + GST
(Canadian residents add 7% GST) and is renewable each January.

Membership benefits include:

- 5% discount on all classes
- free practice times at the IYCV
- timed practices
- having the option of getting the newsletter mailed to you
- early registration and discount for workshops
- borrowing privileges in our library
- eligibility to become a board member
- eligibility for scholarships for workshops and intensives.

To renew your membership, please fill in the form below and send to the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria.



IYENGAR YOGA
CENTRE of VICTORIA
SOCIETY

Membership and Newsletter Subscription

For a one year membership and newsletter
subscription, please complete this form and
send it with your cheque or money order to:

**Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria Society,
c/o Karin Holtkamp, 202-919 Fort Street,
Victoria BC V8V 3K3**

Membership/subscription fee is \$40 + GST,
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.