

May / June 2005



VICTORIA

yoga centre

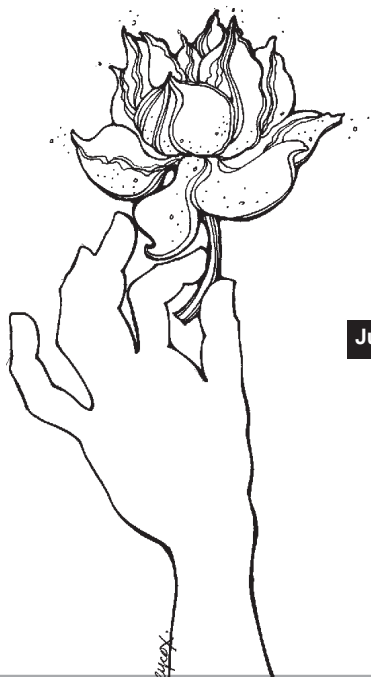
NEWSLETTER



The work of B.K.S. Iyengar takes us to Bellur, India to celebrate the world's first temple dedicated to Patanjali.

IYENGAR YOGA

Teacher Training Intensives



July 11-16, 2005
With Leslie Hogg, Ann Kilbertus and Linda Benn

This six-day course will build your understanding of teaching Iyengar Yoga based on the foundation of good practice. Leslie, Ann and Linda are experienced teachers certified at the Junior Intermediate Level III through the Iyengar Association of Canada (I.Y.A.C) and are qualified I.Y.A.C. assessors. They are involved in teacher training in Victoria as well as assisting teachers in outlying British Columbia and Yukon communities.

Preference will be given to I.Y.A.C members and those preparing for assessment in the near future.

July Intensive FULL. A waitlist is being taken.

Fees: \$560 + GST for VYC members, \$600 + GST for non members

Scholarship applications due May 7 for the July Intensive and June 7 for the August Intensive.

To register contact the Victoria Yoga Centre, 202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, BC, V8V 3K3 3250 386-YOGA(9642)

A deposit of \$150 will reserve a place. Full payment is due June 2, 2005. If you cancel before June 2 your deposit less 10% will be refunded. After June 2, refunds will only be given if your space can be filled.

August 15-19
With Shirley Daventry French

This program is for teachers certified at the Introductory Level II or higher.

Shirley is a long-time student of B.K.S. Iyengar who 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.

Both Intensives will include daily classes in asana and pranayama, the art and science of teaching and peer teaching. Philosophy and anatomy will be included.

As in previous years, Iyengar Yoga teachers from other countries are also invited to apply. I.Y.A.C. members will get priority.

Upcoming **IYAC** Assessment Dates

June 17-19, 2005
Introductory I/II
Courtney-Comox BC

Oct 21-23, 2005
Introductory I/II
London ON
Winnipeg MB

Dec 9-11, 2005
Junior Intermediate I
Montreal QC

Plan to attend!!! The 2005 Iyengar Yoga Association of Canada Annual Conference

University of New Brunswick, Fredericton

Thursday, May 26 to Sunday, May 30
Assessors Meeting: Sunday, May 30 to Monday, May 31

Many local teachers will be attending as they serve as regional representatives on the national board of directors or are assessors for teacher certification.

Cost: \$350.00 (taxes included). Prices cover all accommodation, meals and programs.

Programs include association work, an annual general meeting, assessors meetings as well as asana and restorative/pranayama classes and many other wonderful events.

Deadline for registration and payment April 30th, 2005

For brochure and registration information visit the Iyengar Yoga of Canada Website at: www.iyengaryogacanada.com/agm

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APOLOGY regarding our Nov/ Dec 2004 issue.

The Newsletter Committee presented a tribute to Geetaji's 60th birthday. In the layout there were many photographs that did not receive credit. All seven photos of Geeta Iyengar were taken by Susan Stewart and Nancy Bleck.

Newsletter Advertising Policy (Adopted February 20, 2004)

In keeping with the mandate of the Victoria Yoga Centre 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 VYCS.
2. Advertisements must be only for Iyengar Yoga
3. Priority given to advertisements regarding:
 - VYC events
 - VYC sponsored events
 - CIYTA events
 - Radha House/ Yasodhara Ashram

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.



VICTORIA yoga centre NEWSLETTER

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DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE

? 15, 2005

VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE 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 Swami Sivananda Radha and Mr. B.K.S. Iyengar.

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

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

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



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

Towards the end of my vacation in Mexico, I had a dream. Thoughts of home and the many duties and commitments awaiting me had begun to intrude on a relaxed routine I was reluctant to end.

I had woken up early, too early to get up, and fallen asleep again. When this happens I often have tortuous dreams where I face one frustration after another. In this dream I was preparing a meal for three children but had forgotten one essential ingredient so went in search of it. After many obstacles I found it only to leave unintentionally without paying. When I realised this I decided to return and take care of this oversight, but in the nature of such dreams more obstacles stood in my way. Eventually, I made some headway and arrived at a fork in the road not knowing which road led to my destination. There is a bus stop but I don't know which bus to take.

There are three youths standing there talking and I ask them where these roads lead, but they do not know. Then I spot a man I know; moreover I know that he knows the way to where I want to go. He has a motorcycle and I wonder if he will take me because I am running very late and am concerned for these three children whom I have left alone and hungry. I am not sure he will take me, but set about trying to persuade him. Just as I begin to think I am getting somewhere, I wake

up - frustrated. I would have liked to complete that quest, but dreams rarely work that way. They merely, if you can unravel the symbolism, give you clues about making the journey. You still have to wake up and take the necessary steps!

The late Yogi Berra was an accomplished baseball player who coined many simplistic observations. One of them is: *When you come to a fork in the road, take it!* Swami Radha was fond of pointing out that if you have no particular destination in mind then it doesn't matter which fork you take. In my dream I did have a destination but was constantly thwarted in my attempts to get there.

The day before this dream I had finished reading a novel in which the main character, a Scotland Yard detective inspector, had almost lost the woman he loved because of a series of hurdles in his way. By the skin of his teeth he prevailed, but I thought the situation was contrived and the novelist's concept irritated me. I did not believe that so intelligent a character would have been so foolish as to leave himself so vulnerable so unnecessarily. There was much he could have done to avoid the cliffhanger with which the writer chose to end her novel. He encountered hindrance after hindrance as he hastened to meet and propose to the woman he loved before she boarded a train which would take her away from him forever. It was not the fact that obstacles arose which bothered me, this is the nature of life; but for such a pivotal event in his personal life he had left so much to chance. The book deserved a more polished finale.

Of course, this is the stuff of many myths as heroes and heroines, gods and goddesses tempt and wrestle with the fates.

In my dream sequence, finding myself at this fork in the road and at an impasse, I acted reasonably. First of all, I looked for someone who could point me in the right direction. When the first people I approached turned out

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to be ignorant, I looked elsewhere. Spotting someone who could guide me in the direction I wanted to go, I attempted to enlist his help. Even better, this man had a vehicle which could be used for the journey.

I was in India in December 2004 for Geeta Iyengar's sixtieth birthday course which she entitled *Yog-sadhana*. At the start of the course she spoke about her choice of subject, and how the whole of her life has been yoga sadhana.

As she told us: "When the time allows I practise. If life demands something else as a responsibility, I give myself for that." Geeta had suffered a severe injury during the preceding year which handicapped her enormously but "still the sadhana has to continue." And to emphasise the importance of perseverance in the face of obstacles she repeated these words: "*Still the sadhana has to continue.*"

For all of us, whatever difficulties, whatever unfortunate or unforeseen situations arise, if we are committed to yoga, the sadhana has to continue. At each fork in the road we have to ask ourselves: which one will bring me closer to the light?

The beauty is that if we choose the wrong fork and it takes us away from the light, we can still profit from this experience. The opportunity to learn, the opportunity to grow, the opportunity to evolve is ever-present. Certainly some choices slow us down; but, if we learn from them, the journey will not have been wasted. This winter, in the library at the Institute in Pune, I read a comment of Guruji that the term 'spiritual path' is a misnomer, because the spiritual path is everywhere.

In today's yoga world with its trivialisation of the ancient teachings, the ability to physically perform complex *asanas* has become confused with advancement in yoga. An adept may or may not be advanced, depending on their general spiritual development: their state of mind, the sensitivity of their skin, the flow of their breath, the purpose and nature of their asana practice, and above all, how it affects their sadhana. Beyond the exquisite form of an advanced *asana* performed by B.K.S. Iyengar, he is in communion with his self, his soul. *Antaratma sadhana* or the innermost spiritual quest is at the heart of each asana Guruji

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performs. Similarly Geeta, despite her current physical limitations, has maintained a level of sadhana far beyond the grasp of most yoga practitioners.

In her opening remarks at her birthday course Geeta stated: "*Sadhana* is not merely just the practice, though in English we translate it as practice. If some injury takes place you cannot help that, but still one can build up the very sadhana in this manner, knowing one's limitations. In that limitation I have tried all of my life to come to a certain level." In her youth, Geeta was blessed with a level of expertise in asana which few have attained. With this stripped away from her, humbly she continued her practice and deepened her sadhana. For the discerning and determined student of yoga, nothing will interfere with this pursuit.

We need to gravitate towards inner improvement, inner evolution, and heed Geeta's warning that practice can remain on the surface level. She urged us to follow our inner inclination to go deeper inside "to reach the very soul".

Since my return from this visit to Pune, I have been doing a great deal of reflection on my own sadhana which no doubt led to this dream. Try as I do, I have difficulty sustaining the right balance between practising, teaching, writing, travelling. In addition there are a myriad number of details to attend to in order to maintain an environment conducive to yoga sadhana. I look for somewhere that is well organised and pleasant to live in, quiet and spacious enough to practise asana and pranayama, but at the same time able to welcome my children and absorb the energy of my grandchildren whenever they are able to visit.

The *sadhana* I follow is the path of a householder. When I began my yogic journey I was a householder with three very young children. My husband was in single handed

...I read a comment of Guruji that the term 'spiritual path' is a misnomer, because the spiritual path is everywhere.

medical practice as a general practitioner and when his office was closed, I was the one who answered the telephone, took messages, searched for him in emergencies. There were no cell phones or telephone answering machines in those days, so I had to do a lot of phoning around. Because he was so busy, I did not get much physical help from him on the home front, and the rest of my family were in England. It was a difficult time. I needed yoga and yoga came looking for me in the form of Carole Miller, now a longtime colleague and friend. At that time I was teaching fitness and swimming at the Y and each week found myself in the shower room at the same time as Carole who was attending a yoga class. Liking her and finding her description of her yoga class intriguing, I decided to join.

As soon as I started attending these yoga classes and particularly when I heard Swami Radha speaking about the philosophy of yoga and its purpose, I knew this path was relevant for me. It was like a thirsty person lost in a desert coming upon an oasis with an abundant well of clean water. The trouble was that I could quench my thirst easily in class or while away on a course, but back home in the midst of everything I was

having trouble remembering the location of this well.

My struggles today are very different although, as my dream testified, I still lose my way. My children grew up, had children themselves, established their own households and entered another phase of their struggle. Yet I am still a mother who enjoys time with her children, as well as a grandmother who adores her grandchildren. I am also a wife in a long term relationship. My struggle is to embrace all of this as part of my yoga sadhana accepting that I have made a choice to make my spiritual journey in a family. My husband and children count among my greatest teachers!

Patanjali defines yoga as the cessation of the fluctuations of the mind, and explains that this is achieved by practice and renunciation. At every stage of life, to progress in a chosen discipline one has to renounce something. Some people, such as Swami Radha and Geeta, chose a path of celibacy and are known as renunciates. They renounced marriage and children to concentrate on their *sadhana*.

Swami Radha was married twice in her early life as Sylvia Hellman, marriages which did not produce children;

but once she became a committed disciple of Swami Sivananda, she renounced the status of householder and took a different path under the name of Radha. Despite this, her family problems continued, albeit in a different form. As Swami Radha, she went on to establish an ashram and many outreach centres all of which laid their problems at her feet.

Geeta Iyengar has never married having decided at a young age that this was not the path for her in this lifetime. Daughter of one of the world's most distinguished Yoga Masters, she was clear that she wanted to devote herself to yoga, yet here again, living as she does in the compound of a Yoga Institute which attracts thousands of people from all over the world, she cannot help but be involved in the Iyengar Yoga family. Moreover, by virtue of being the oldest of six children in an orthodox Brahmin family, and a female whose mother died when she was quite young, Geeta has had to assume many responsibilities in her large biological family which would otherwise have fallen to her mother.

Guruji, on the other hand, chose to pursue his sadhana as a householder. In the tradition of his guru, Krishnamacharya, he took a wife and had children. He lived, as he still does, at the centre of his family. Yet he managed to sustain a single-minded focus and purpose on the path of yoga. As the saying goes: *talent does what it can, genius does what it must*. Guruji followed his destiny to become a paramount yoga

Scholarships & Bursaries



Member's 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 on back page 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 3 weeks prior to term.

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

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

teacher as a family man, fulfilling his duty to them as well as his duty to his Higher Self. To this day, nothing deters Gururji from his sadhana.

In Pune in December, when teaching sirsasana, Gururji said the big toes have to challenge each other like two wrestlers. In my life, my aspirations in yoga and my duties as householder often wrestle with each other. It was a wrestling match in the beginning with three young children, continued with three adolescents, and continues still to this day. I am pulled this way and that way, get frustrated, get overworked, get irritable, forget sometimes what purpose lies behind it all - but I never cease my efforts to integrate yoga into all of my life and deepen my *sadhana*.

In my early days in yoga I used to dream of a plateau which I would reach (sometime soon I hoped) where I would live a vibrant life in perfect harmony and equilibrium. I would think to myself: I'll just get this next trip to India over and things will settle down. Or I'll just get through this particular challenge and things will smooth out. I continued to hold on to this illusion, all evidence to the contrary, for a long time. Now I accept that once I overcome one challenge, another presents itself. This is the way of the Divine who, sensing that I am obviously ready to tackle another problem, puts one in my way. Be assured that life's vicissitudes will come anyway, whether you seek them or not. The difference is that if you go out to meet your challenges you will be in a better position than if you try to hide; then they will come upon you unexpectedly and in less advantageous circumstances.

In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Prince Arjuna is faced with the frightening prospect of going to battle against an army, led by his kinsman King Duryodhana, which includes many relatives and friends. Prior to this confrontation he had found himself, along with Duryodhana, in the presence of Lord Krishna who was sleeping. Krishna awoke and knowing

I have made a choice to make my spiritual journey in a family. My husband and children count among my greatest teachers!

that this war was about to take place offered both Arjuna and Duryodhana a choice between himself unarmed and an army of ten thousand warriors. He gave Arjuna the first choice, and Duryodhana was incensed because he had arrived first; but Krishna said that when he awoke his eyes had alighted first on Arjuna which is why he was going to be given first choice. Arjuna chose the unarmed Krishna, much to the relief of Duryodhana who promptly chose the ten thousand warriors which he had wanted all along.

The ensuing dialogue which takes place between Krishna and Arjuna on the battlefield, forms the timeless wisdom of the *Bhagavad Gita*. With Krishna's guidance, despite his reservations and after a prolonged period of struggle and doubt, Arjuna understands what he has to do to overcome the forces of darkness and ignorance which are threatening him. At one point Arjuna asks Krishna to show himself in his true form and Krishna appears in a burst of light equivalent to a thousand suns. At first this is too much for Arjuna, but gradually he becomes stronger and able to look more directly into this light.

It is for this reason that we maintain disciplined practices, so that we are able to come closer to the Divine or the Light or God, whatever you like to call the source to which you turn for intuitive wisdom and truth.

Dreams can be a reliable source of direction and guidance, a means of tapping into the unconscious. Like all aspects of yoga, the benefit is only available to us when we work with them regularly. At one time I consistently attempted to interpret and make sense of my dreams and received some valuable counsel, but I have neglected this

practice lately. The power of my recent dream and the strong feelings it evoked in me suggest that it's time to pay more attention. Perhaps then, the next time I am at a crossroads, I will receive clear guidance on which direction to take! ॐ

inspirations
from India



WITH ANNE KILBERTUS
& MELISSA WORTH

October 14 & 15, 2005
Friday, 6:30 - 8:30 pm
Saturday 11:00 am - 2:00 pm,
3:00-5:00 pm

(Bring a snack for Saturday
afternoon)

Members \$95+GST
Non-members \$105+GST

To register, drop in or phone:

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

Canadian Iyengar Yoga Conference

May 2-6, 2001 Vancouver, BC

with Honoured Guest and Teacher, Dr. Geeta S. Iyengar

OPENING ADDRESS – PART II

Now often it is said, “We do *asanas*, and somebody else does the *mantras*, somebody does the prayers; and they do more of the mantras and more of the prayers, and we do just *asanas*.” There again you are committing that mistake. Guruji has often said, “*Asanas* are my prayers.” It makes the meaning there. You may do chanting, you may not do chanting – that is up to you. And mind yourself, the chanting etc. cannot be forced on every individual. If you do the chanting, you may want to know the meaning. Suppose if I just said, “We’re going to do the prayers,” you would have chanted the prayers with me. But again, you want to know why those prayers are said. You want to know what is the meaning of those prayers because why should you otherwise chant? The question comes, “Why should you do the *puja*?” Next question you may ask is, “What is the effect of the *puja*?” This is the human mind which asks so many questions, and for that the answers have been given. For the prayers also they say, “Why do you do?” That is why I said for any auspicious work, if it has to go in a proper way, we offer the prayers. We are asking that Lord make our path absolutely obstacleless, problemless, because we are doing auspicious work. And he’s the one who makes the path clear. So this is what whole psychology is there. We know that we may be having an auspicious beginning, and something breaks and just we cannot do it. We pray for that reason;



that, no, let it go on that path, on auspicious path. This silences our mind to go further on the path. And that is how, in spite of having problems, you see that you don’t miss your practice. So what is that mind that tells you that you should not miss your practice? Again it is a yogic mind. The prayers that you offered – it’s a yogic mind. The question that you asked – “What does it mean?” – he is also a yogic mind. So in this manner we should know the practice of *asana* and *pranayama* basically.

Coming to the last point, I tell you now that how in a daily life when you are doing this, as I already have explained how the discipline begins, but you should know also the second part of way that how this mind is built up because path of *bhoga* is something which is clear, you can see, and path of yoga cannot be seen very clearly. If the plane is moving on the sky, it hasn’t got the direction to show you the path as you find the road path, but it has got its subtle instrument

to show its path. That’s why every time the pilot has the guidance there to know in which direction he’s moving. He is not directionless in that big sky; you don’t find the plane going and just lost somewhere. But the path of yoga is of that kind – it is quite a big path, but there is a piloting done properly. That is why when Guruji says your *asana* and *pranayama* have to be done in such a manner, it’s like a river having two banks. So *yama* and *niyama* are two banks and your *asana* and *pranayama* have to be going in such a way that these two banks will be protecting your *asana* and *pranayama* – *yama* and *niyama* – because all that you practice. It has a compound wall to protect it. The compound wall: *ahimsa, satya, asteya, brahmacharya, aparigraha*, and the compound wall: *sauca, santosa, tapas, svadhyaya, Isvara pranidhana*, because in that path it knows. That’s why even with a small issue (*pramana*), if you come to the class and you offer your prayers to Lord Patanjali, in the beginning you feel the starting itself of something good. There is something inside telling you that yes, the mind shows it’s sparkling light inside. If it is not there, you don’t; you just say “*om*.” Moment you say that you know that you have made a starting over there. And that is how you are building a compound wall of *yama* and *niyama* there. As a *sauca*, food, you are finding the compound wall of *sauca*. They are food to the digestion, up to the constipation. So that you don’t get constipated, everything has to be

clear for your better practice. It's not just for the health's sake. Remember that, it's not just for the health's sake that you see that your bowel movement is clear. You see that your practice will be better if there is a proper bowel movement, and if you are constipated it bothers your practice. You know that it is now coming as it should come. If you have to see that it should come the way you want it, you need a sensitivity with you over there. If you know proper *trikonasana*, proper *ardha chandrasana*, proper *adhomukha svanasana*, and if you have the feeling that it should come in this manner, then only you can relate to it that when you have now digested your food, well it is bothering you. That is sensitivity, and that comes through your *abhyasa*. If you have no sensitivity, then you won't feel anything. That's why quite a few people, in the beginning, they have taken full meals. Say in the morning they have taken full meals, and then they want to come at 3:00 or 4:00pm to your classes – the food comes up; they are not bothered at that time; they will say, "Something came up, I am feeling sick." That will be the reaction of the beginner, but you cannot say as a practitioner, "I am feeling sick" because you have the experience when you are not sick, how you do, and when you are sick, how you do. And you have differentiated those two things – that yes, when you are not feeling sick, that means when your digestion is absolutely okay, your doing process, you're remaining in the pose, you're staying in the pose, it's much better. That has given you sensitivity, and that sensitivity gives you *viveka* – conscience is ignited. He says, "Yes, if I eat this wrong food, my practice suffers; if I take the right food, my practice does not suffer." So for me, yogic path in daily



routine is that (apart from doing the *asana* and *pranayama* in a proper way, that is next part of it which comes under *anhyasa*).

We have to have in our minds all these things, the whole background and everything because we have to proceed from our body which I said is the one which is gross – our big soul available for us to see. The body is a big soul of the inner subtle soul which expresses. You can never say that when the body is suffering that my soul is perfect – nobody says that. It is only verbally people talk about that. If your body is suffering, you know that something inside is also suffering. This is what Patanjali says: that your practice begins from the physical aspect, from the body, and from there you proceed further towards your mind. From mind you control your senses of perception. When you are dealing with your physical body, you are dealing with your physiological body. You are dealing with all the five elements because your very organs of

action are formed with the five elements: *prthvi*, *ap*, *tej*, *vayu*, and *akasa*. In each *asana*, when you are having your mind over there, the breath reaches somewhere. "Your dorsal opens in *trikonasana*" means your respiratory system has responded to the breath. If your spine is not open and your chest is not open, it hasn't responded to the breath properly. The chemistry goes wrong there, and something inside tells you, "I did not open my chest properly." You say that, "Yes, something is caught over there, still freedom is not coming." And this is how the physical body works there because mind is telling from inside – you did not open here and you opened there, you did not expand here and you expanded there, you lengthened here and you did not lengthen there... Mind is all the time speaking there to your body.

Similarly, the senses of perception – if you have to open your chest, unless your eyes, ears, everything is controlled, your mind's attention will not go. Mind is tricky, mind is so tricky, senses of perception take the mind somewhere out to go, it is quick to follow that. That is how sometimes you are in *trikonasana*, you are thinking of something else because mind has been pulled, gravitated out towards the external world, but here mind is gravitated towards the internal world through your practice. This gravitation of the mind which has occurred to see what *trikonasana*, to see what *parsva konasana*, is the mind which is a yogic mind required by each and every aspirant... And that is the mind which you have to form. It is not just that *trikonasana* should be perfect for the sake of your knee, perfect for the sake of your spine, perfect for your thigh muscles, no, that has not been said. I don't think Gururji has ever explained in

that manner – that you stretch your root of the thighs, the thigh will be perfect. The moment you stretch that thigh in a particular manner, he has already shown the mind that path, to go inside, and that is the way of understanding it. From the mind, then it comes to the “I” awareness, “I” consciousness. Your mind will not reach your foot unless your “I” consciousness reaches over there. If I say, “Yes, your foot is still dead,” the second question: “Is my foot still dead?” You want to put that responsibility on the others because somebody will be doing next to you or behind you. Then you think, “Oh, that is so dull – the next one who is next to me or the other one who is behind me, but that’s not me”. If you want to check clearly whether it is your foot which is still dead, then your “I” consciousness will go to that foot to see your foot. Then you may not question me: “Is it my foot or her foot or his foot?” because it is not your business whether it is her foot or his foot. It is your business to see your foot. And that is how the consciousness reaches first over there to see whether you have done it or not. It will reach first to see whether you are doing it or not. This is the way the instrument that is given to us to use, we have to utilize it to have our yogic mind get cooked and prepared properly.

So have no doubt in your mind when you practice *asana* and *pranayama* that because your mind, by thinking that is a short time, two hours of practice you may do, or three hours of practice, then the rest of the time, what have you to do? If you think in that manner, then your practice is somewhere wrong because you want to practice for two or three hours, then go and sit in a cinema theatre everyday. The mind doesn’t allow you to do that. That is the yogic mind, and that is the pure mind which doesn’t allow you to do something which should not be done. This was the question: again I repeat here to say because from Las Vegas I went to San Diego – all were in the airport to receive me and then

they asked me, “Oh you went to Las Vegas, what did you see there? Oh you went to Las Vegas?” That was the question, so I said, “Yes, whatever I have to see, I saw that, and what I should not see, I shouldn’t see that.” There are some things beautiful to see. So is it not something to see what happens? So this is what one has to understand: that the yogic mind will be of that type which doesn’t get distracted as often as we feel, but it should be prepared in that manner. That is why regular practice is required to prepare this mind. Don’t think that by saying bhajans and prayers also the mind is prepared. Many a time it happens that people just come together to have *satsanga*; they think that they are having *satsanga*, but the mind will be somewhere else. But here in the very practice, you are being sharpened to see that you are reaching there inside. So it depends upon your mind. You may go to *satsanga*, you may go to sing the *bhajans*, or you may come to practice yoga, whatever; it is your mind you have to deal with and see that it takes you on the disciplined path, on a proper path. If you have got the total idea in your mind, you will be doing that. It is not something that in daily life you have to do something different. Routine – the very routine that you have got to do, whatever, whether it is your office or whether it is your job or whether it is your housekeeping work, it’s the children that you have to look after, whatever it may be, if your mind is there, you find that there is more purity and more sanctity in that work. That is what the yogic path says.

Patanjali says this, that karma should be there and then from *karma-suddhi* comes *sasmita-suddhi*. So there is not something different to do for *karma-suddhi*. It is not that in your house the purification of the water takes place in a different way and in my house the purification of the water takes place in a different way. When we have to purify the water it is the same method; it is the same procedure, and all of us purify the

water in the same manner. This is the way we have to understand the *karma-suddhi* – it has to be done whether you are in this country or some other country, it doesn’t make any difference. It is our mind which has to be pure, which should be free from all these *klesas*, as I said – *avidya*, *asmita*, *raga*, *dvesa*, *abhinivesah*. We have to search that mind which is interfering and bothering us. We should be able to analyze. And that is why Patanjali says, “*Ahimsapratisthayam*” – have that mind which analyzes immediately whether I am proceeding towards the non-violence or violence. Even if it is a small work. Am I hurting someone for no reason? And that is what yoga is teaching you and the more you begin to practice your *asana* and *pranayama*, these things do occur because your nerves are getting purified. Again you may question that how does it happen? It happens because the food that we eat, through that, the nerves, the cells, everything is formed. Through the nerves and the cells which are formed through this food, the mind is formed. If the mind is pure there, the mind has to give its *sattva* to its nerves to have the feedback so that they go in the proper way; they think in the proper way; they work in the proper way; they maintain the balance. That is how whole, total human being is thought of in a yogic process in order to bring the change in oneself.

That much, if you understand there, will bring clarity in your practice and that is how the yogic mind we have to have. We have to cook our mind with the *asana* and *pranayama* to have the yogic mind. All the ingredients in that, all these aspects of *yama* and *niyama* are the ingredients. We have to put them into that mind to see that with the *asana* and *pranayama*, when we cook it, this mind will be a delicious mind. If that much you understand, I will say that yes, you have learned the very depth of the practice, the very *sadhana* it has got. And that is why regular practice is required at the stage of *abhyasa*. Patanjali said, you

have to just trust, just keep on practicing repeatedly. The more you just keep on practicing repeatedly, that means everyday, on the base of *anusthana*, not just at midnight getting up and starting your *trikonasana* because in midnight your mind is not prepared, your mind has got something else to do at that time. There comes the picture of *anusthana* very clear. There should be a spiritual platform for it. You should know why you are doing your *asana* and *pranayama*. Not just at midnight getting up and thinking, "Oh Geeta said that the more you practice, your mind will be getting cooked to become a yogic mind." The next day you may fall asleep, you may be tired, you may get dizzy, dehydrated, anything can happen. Because it is structured in the discipline, *anusasanam*, your *anusthana* has to be structured in the frame of discipline, *anusasanam*. If you have to follow that discipline, the whole daily life, the whole life has to be

programmed. Your computer also doesn't answer you if it is not properly programmed. You can't imagine how much program inside is required for you, if this has to give you, or monitor your whole life, this is more sharp, sharper than your computer. If you haven't already properly fed that, it says, "No, I don't know anything." If you haven't properly programmed it, it won't come in front of you to say, "No, I don't know anything." It is blank. And that is how the whole practice has to be. So try to understand that, and see that these kinds of doubts will not remain in your mind when you have practice in yourself. And I hope this much introduction will allow us to proceed further in our practice. Thank you very much. Thank you. ॐ

Many thanks to Cathy Valentine from Saltspring Island for transcribing this address.

Coming
November 4-6, 2005

Chris Saudek

A Junior Intermediate
Workshop
for Level 3 and 4

Chris is a devoted student of the Iyengars, certified at the Senior Intermediate level and has a background in physical therapy. She is a precise and disciplined, caring and innovative teacher.

Look for more information in the July August 2005 issue.

The 21st Annual Retreat at the Saltspring Centre

June 3-5, 2005
With Shirley Daventry French

Shirley is a senior student of B.K.S. Iyengar and has studied at the Ramamani Memorial Institute in Pune many times, most recently in December 2004.



Members Price
\$340 shared accommodation in the house
\$300 to camp,
\$265 for commuters

Non-members:
add \$35 to price above.

All prices include GST.

To register, drop in or phone:
202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C. V8V 3K3
250 386-YOGA(9642)

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

Yoga In Action In Bellur

by Louie Ettling

LOUIE IS A CERTIFIED IYENGAR TEACHER. SHE DIRECTS THE YOGA SPACE IN VANCOUVER (WWW.THEYOGASPACE.CA). SHE RECENTLY RETURNED FROM A MONTH IN INDIA.

Bellur Krishnamachar Sundararaja was born on December 14, 1918. Bellur indicates the village where Mr. Iyengar was born, in the Indian state of Karnataka. This past December Mr. Iyengar invited local and international students to join him in travelling to Bellur to attend the inauguration of the world's first temple dedicated to Patanjali. My decision to accept this invitation was a blessed one.

December turned out to be a very exciting month to be in India. My journey started in Pune at the Iyengar Institute. Public classes six days a week paved the way for the international intensive that was held in honor of Geeta's 60th birthday. Shortly afterward began B.K.S. Iyengar's own 86th birthday celebration which was then followed by the pilgrimage to Bellur for the inauguration.

Those of us who were going to the inauguration were first introduced to Bellur at Guruji's birthday party. Rajvi Mehta, a dedicated student from Mumbai gave an informative slide presentation on Bellur, Guruji's birthplace. The slideshow described Bellur as a small village forty kilometres from Bangalore, Karnataka. This community has suffered from a lack of health and educational facilities; alcohol and other substance abuse has also been a serious problem. Rajvi explained that the Bellur Krishnamachar Seshamma Smaraka



Children of Bellur and their families now have clean water and education.

Nidhi Trust had been created by Guruji, the Iyengar family and students. The Trust has been overseeing and coordinating development projects in Bellur. The slide presentation introduced us to leaders of the Bellur community. The female principal of the school particularly stood out for me because of the strength of character in her face and because she had played a key role in implementing projects in Bellur. We learned that up until late 2003 kids and even educated adults from Bellur had not even known about Guruji, even though he had built one primary and middle school in 1967. The next slide was an image of kids jumping into *Trikonasana* in the dirt as soon as Guruji's students approached the village. With their yoga enthusiasm they were not only telling visitors we know who you are, but they were also saying we know what yoga is. Rajvi's impressive slide show left me

even more enthusiastic about the upcoming trip.

More than fifty of us arrived for the Bellur Inauguration. I flew from Pune, which took a bit over an hour. Others spent a day traveling by train. Rajvi Mehta and helpers picked us up and took us by bus to Bellur. We drove past villages, farms and many small industries such as nurseries and cement factories. Those of us who were not staring out of windows in contemplation, talked about what brought us together from Italy, France, USA, Denmark, Canada, India and elsewhere.

In Bellur there was an informal tea with Guruji and people from the local welcoming committee. Then we were taken to an outdoor event where Guruji was honored. We were put on a large stage behind Guruji. Garlands were presented to Guruji and the dignitaries who sat with him. Many speeches were

made, almost all in Kannada, the local language (that's why Guruji sometimes jokes with Canadians, saying "I speak Canada"). Right in front of the stage was a group of lively buzzing kids who were often asked to settle down. It was obvious to us that Guruji was extremely revered by the local people. What a privilege to get a glimpse of Guruji's own world, the world of his childhood, of his language.

Guruji spoke no English on this occasion. This pleased me, as it put the focus where it was meant to be, the village of Bellur and its people. For those of us who see all human development as part of a global whole, the reality of Bellur is not belonging to another world. Our common language is the language of yoga in the larger sense of the word which means, after all, "to unite/to bind together". We have become connected to the village of Bellur through the development work that our teacher, B.K.S. Iyengar, has committed himself to.

That evening we were kindly put up in a hotel about half an hour's drive away from Bellur. The village itself does not

even have a shop, let alone its own hotel. It was wonderful that the local community looked after us during a time when they obviously had so much on their plate.

On the plate indeed - the next day, the actual day of the inauguration- we were served a delicious traditional breakfast under the tent at the temple. After the Pooja, which lasted almost seven hours, we were served vast helpings of wonderful food again and the famous Indian chai became even more famous as we drank. The Iyengar family had fed the entire village on other such special occasions and on this day locals were once again invited to eat. The Iyengar's generosity has become legendary around Bellur.

During the long Pooja there was much visual stimulation for those of us not familiar with such auspicious events. Right in front, near the Patanjali sculpture, was a white marble bust of Guruji's late wife, Ramamani Iyengar. This bust was decorated carefully. Appointed Hindu men were holding a thin cloth-like screen in front while they draped a beautiful sari around her. The sari fell

realistically and gracefully a few feet toward the floor.

We were honored to be part of ancient traditions. There was much chanting and incense as we witnessed an enactment of the marriage of Rama and Sita. Again, the holy men were decorating the statues. With many nimble fingers they were beautifying each and every inch of the symbolic scene with care. They spent what seemed to be an hour doing just that. We were in awe of Guruji, who remained right at the front with those leading the Pooja, focused, calm and fully present, hour after hour.

A couple of times I left to walk outside the temple. I visited the school and the yoga hall which Guruji had added as a top floor to the school in 2003. This Yogacharini Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Hall measures 1700 square feet and is used as would be a community centre in Canada for yoga, social gatherings and other events. The yoga hall is fully equipped with belts, ropes and blankets. Classes which started with only a few students are now full with two hundred students studying with

SUMMER SADHANAS

"Sadhana" is a Sanskrit term which means dedicated practice or quest.

This summer we offer a 21 day and a 5 day Sadhana.

Come to a 20 day Sadhana. Practicing every morning for 20 days will help you to develop, and deepen your home practice. Linda Benn, Wies Pukesh and Robin Cantor will lead the sadhana, and each week will build on the week before.

Time: 6:30-7:45 am

July 4-8 with Linda Benn

July 9-15 with Wies Pukesh

July 16-23 with Robin Cantor

Fees: \$260.00 + GST for VYC members
\$290.00 + GST for non-members

The 5 day Sadhana is the perfect opportunity to further develop and deepen your practice.

Time: 6:30-8 am

September 5-9 with Robin Cantor

Fees: \$80.00 + GST for VYC members
\$90.00 + GST for non-members

To register, drop in or phone:

202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, BC, V8V 3K3
250 386-YOGA (9642)

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



the yoga teachers who travel from Bangalore.

A group of small kids stroll with me during my walk, asking me "You, where from? Your name? My name Sindhu, Pandu, Ram....." they say, almost in unison. They want to show me the new water tank. I had heard about it. Availability of clean water has been a problem in Bellur. On October 31, 2004 the Trust officially handed the water tank to the villagers. The kids seemed particularly proud of their water tank. "Guruji, water" they repeat. This tank with a capacity of 50,000 gallons now serves the village needs.

I was touched by the enthusiasm and open-heartedness of the children who are all attending "Guruji's school". Soon a second school will be built - a high school for girls. Parents were fearful of sending their daughters to other villages once they finish the highest grade they can currently complete in Bellur. Since returning from Pune I read that the foundation for the girls' school was laid on January 27, 2005.

On our way back to Bangalore late

that afternoon we had time to make one quick stop just outside Bellur. We were told that the field we were standing in was part of the sixteen acres of land that Guruji's Trust had bought for further developments. A medical clinic and technical college are in the plans.

On the return trip to Bangalore, the Bellur visit simmered in me. Some of us know that our lives in the west are connected with, affected by and affecting lives elsewhere. Often we don't know how to express this sense of inter-connectedness in a practical way.

B.K.S. Iyengar shows us what is possible. He is a man of his deed, as we know from his asana practice, but he is also a man of his word. In 1998, during his eightieth birthday celebrations, he stated the purpose of his future, "My only desire now is to take yoga to the Indian villages" - he did just that.

I am filled with a positive sense of what is not only possible through yoga but part of an integrated life practice. There is work for many of us to do in our villages of birth. And we also have the option of contributing to developments in

India through the projects in Bellur.

For contributions or updates on Bellur projects please visit the website: www.bksiyengar.com. ॐ

Can you help?

Are you able to provide a private bedroom and a breakfast for a yogi during either one or both of the Teacher Training Intensives? If so, please fill out a form at the front desk or contact Robin Cantor at robincantor@telus.net (382-4111)

Or, if you are out of town during this period, yoga students housesit for you. The billet and breakfast rate is \$30 per day.



Student Intensive

Practice (abhyasa) is the art of learning that which has to be learned through the cultivation of disciplined action.

Practice is a generative force of transformation or progress in yoga.

— B.K.S. Iyengar

With Lauren Cox and Ty Chandler
August 29- September 2, 9 am-12 pm

Learn how to establish and deepen your practice

Prerequisite: Level 2 Iyengar Yoga experience

Lauren and Ty are certified Iyengar yoga teachers who bring enthusiasm, dedication and humor to this five-day intensive. There will be two hours of asana including yoga kuranta, a timed practice, an introduction to pranayama and philosophical and spiritual discussions.

Fees: \$235.00 + GST for VYC members
\$260.00 + GST for non-members

To register, drop in or phone:
202-919 Fort Street, Victoria, BC, V8V 3K3
250 386-YOGA (9642)

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

Annual General Meeting

The Victoria Yoga Centre Society's Annual General Meeting was held on February 5th, 2005. A complete set of committee reports can be viewed in the library at the centre. Here are just a few highlights.



2005 VYC Board of Directors

From back row left to right: Jim Riddell, Amanda Mills, Bruce Cox, Rosemary Barritt, Lori Wanamaker, Byron Smith, Laure Newnham, Finka Toevs, Melissa Worth, Leslie Hogya, Silvia Vilches. Absent: Wendy Boyer

President's Report

by **Rosemary Barritt**

February 2004 was the start of my second term* as President of the Victoria Yoga Centre. I was fortunate to have a great group of people on the Board of Directors along with me, and together we have worked through various issues and have ended the year accomplishing what we set out to do.

One of the first things on our list was to set up a new bookkeeping system. Lori Wanamaker joined the board a year ago and as our treasurer she has spent many hours going over the accounts and by year's end with her expertise and guidance we are all better aligned with the accounting process. Thank you Lori, we are very fortunate to have you as one of our board members and thanks also to Drew Yallop and Byron Smith, who volunteered their time to help Lori.

The Victoria Yoga Centre is known world wide for its newsletter and we have a very dedicated group of people who volunteer throughout the year to produce it. Our members will now be familiar with the larger format of the

newsletter and everyone I have spoken to feels it is a change for the better, many thanks to all involved. One of our editors and yoga teachers, Gwynneth Powell, moved to North Vancouver in December. She is commuting back and forth for the next few months to teach at the centre but, by June, the mainland will be home for her and her partner Paul. For the last few years she has been a vital link between the newsletter committee and the board of directors and in the position of board liaison has kept us all up to date with newsletter concerns. We will miss you Gwynneth and wish you all the best for the future.

In 2004 all businesses in B.C. were required to adopt a privacy policy and appoint a privacy officer. Lynn Langford, who joined the board last year took this job on and with her knowledge of the law I feel we have an appropriate policy for our organization and we have attached the position of privacy officer to that of President. Lynn will not be standing for re-election but has offered to point us in the right direction where legal matters are concerned, thank you Lynn for your help over the past year.

When you phone the centre, or come to the front desk in person, you are greeted by one of our office staff. They

are: Leslie, Britta, Monica, Karen and Hillary, they are the best staff any business could hope to have. They are helpful, kind, courteous and friendly and we are very lucky that they choose to make the Yoga Centre their workplace. Leslie, our manager, is a wonderful role model for the staff and she volunteers many hours to make sure that the centre runs well. Leslie is off to Mexico soon to join Shirley Daventry French. Shirley is our senior teacher at the centre and she will be teaching an Iyengar Yoga workshop in Puerto Vallarta for two weeks. Thank you Leslie, for all that you have accomplished over the past year and enjoy the sunshine in Mexico.

A long time member of our board, Linda Benn, is stepping down this year. I feel that "Thank you" does not adequately express our appreciation for all that you have done while on the board of the Victoria Yoga Centre and all that I know you will continue to do in your various roles. Your dedication to yoga and our centre is an inspiration to all of us.

I would like to thank Corrine Lowen for her work over the past two years on the roles and responsibilities document for board members, and more recently on board development; to Ted Mather,

another long standing board member and to Joan Douglas who has been secretary for the past year, they will be stepping down from the board this year but I know they will be involved in the life of the yoga centre in one way or another.

The names mentioned so far in this report are only a few of the people who volunteer their time to make the centre function; there are so many others who do jobs both big and small. Thanks to every one of you, your help and support has made the Victoria Yoga Centre what it is today.. ॐ

**editor's note: this was Rosemary's final term as president. The VYC thanks Rosemary for her dedicated commitment over the past 2 years she served as President.*

Finance Report

It has been my pleasure to serve as the Treasurer for the Victoria Yoga Centre for this past year.

From a financial perspective, the fiscal year ending October 31, 2004 has been both difficult and rewarding. It has been a year in which the Board faced significant financial challenges and made solid progress towards building a strong system of financial accountability that will address these challenges in the future.

For the year ending October 31, 2004, our revenue was 7% less than our budget expectation. This variance results from a decline in the number of students attending classes as well as the implementation of a 5% discount for members. For the same period, our expenditures exceeded our budget by \$17,013 or 4.0%. The primary drivers of the variance were:

- 3% increase in teachers' fees; and,
- Recognition of depreciation on capital assets of \$12,000.

Despite significant adjustments made during the years, these variances resulted in a net loss of \$36,404.

While the Victoria Yoga Centre has modest cash reserves, this is not a trend that we can afford to continue. The Board has adopted several processes and policies to maintain a balanced budget and to improve our overall financial accountability:

1. The Board adopted a provisional budget at the October 2004 Board meeting. As a result, the Centre is operating with a financial plan in place for the entire fiscal year. This budget is directly linked to class schedules and historical participation rates.
2. Reports on class profitability are scrutinized during the class scheduling process. Each term decisions are made to maximize class profitability and studio usage.
3. The Board has established a finance committee that meets during the budget building process to rigorously review budgeted expenditures and revenues.

On a go forward basis, I believe that the Victoria Yoga Center has a solid financial plan for ensuring its continuing fiscal health of the Victoria Yoga Centre. The provisional budget is balanced and we are on target with our projections of revenues and expenditures.

In closing, I want to thank all of the members of the Board for their support and commitment in making difficult financial decisions over the course of the past year. As well, I want to thank Drew Yallop for his dedication and flexibility in accommodating our many requests as we revamped our financial management system and Byron Smith for assisting in our yearend financial review. ॐ

VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY Statement of Revenue and Expenditures

November 2003 through October 2004

Accrual Basis

Ordinary Income/Expense	
Total Income	\$ 381,470
Total Cost of Goods Sold	21,008
Gross Profit	360,462
Total Expense	404,429
Net Ordinary Income	(43,967)
Other Income/Expense	
Total Other Income	7,644
Total Other Expense	(20)
Net Other Income	7,664
Net Income	\$ (36,303)

VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY Balance Sheet

As of October 31, 2004

Accrual Basis

ASSETS

Current Assets	
Chequing/Savings	\$ 40,485
Accounts Receivable	831
Other Current Assets	28,519
Total Current Assets	69,835
Fixed Assets	59,932
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 129,767

LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Liabilities

Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	\$ (3,695)
Credit Cards	1,164
Other Current Liabilities	40,075
Total Current Liabilities	37,544
Total Liabilities	37,544
Equity	92,224
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	\$ 129,768

"I'm Not Ready..."

words from your new President

by Silvia Vilches

When I was first asked, by the now Past President Rosemary Barritt, if I would like to consider standing as nominee for President this year, my first thoughts were "I'm not ready, I'm not a true yogi, I don't even practice regularly enough and I can't bend!" Very fortunately, as these things happen, I picked up a 1986 Ascent magazine from the "re-use, recycle pile" by the front door of the Yoga Centre, and found that the lead article by Swami Rhada was called "I'm not ready!" She described her journey, as a young white woman pursuing a yoga path in the 1950's, her insecurity as she was selected by her Swami to continue in studies, and her fear that she was not ready when she was inducted as a Swami herself.

However, she recounted a dream that helped. In her dream she was the driver of a bus. Although she didn't know exactly where she was going or what she was doing, people seemed quite comfortable to be on the bus. So, she drove on. She had to stop many times for more people to get on the bus, and at one point, when she looked back, the bus had become a train, to accommodate all the people! She continued to drive, though, focusing on the road ahead. After all, she thought, it was not really her problem if people wanted to get on the bus/train! There is more to her story, but this, she explained, was the meaning; that even if she felt she was not ready, she should not concern herself, because the road was ahead, and her task was to dedicate herself to the journey. People would get on the train if they wanted to!

I have done a lot of community service work over many years, but I have

always avoided the position of "Chair" or "President". After asking some careful questions about the workload, I had to honestly admit that I had the experience from previous non-profit board work, and since I was committed, and others were supportive, there was no reason I could not take this task on. And, as my teachers have said, extending advice given by Mr. Iyengar, "Stretch any amount!" There is no time like the present to try that new pose!

I believe that an organization is like a body, it is complex, and one has to attend with intelligence to the signals it sends. Each part must communicate with the other. There must be sensitivity, but also discipline, in order for the whole to function. The subtle body is as important as the physical body. And practice, practice, practice, leads to astonishing results. The Victoria Yoga Centre has a long history of extremely dedicated supporters and founders, and we now have 613 members! We have a strong body, and I believe it will be a pleasure to serve as President.

On to more serious business. I believe the year ahead will be marked by energy and enthusiasm. In the Chinese calendar, it is the Year of the Rooster, a year marked by energy and change. There is a desire to identify ourselves publicly as a Centre dedicated to the teachings of yoga as developed by Mr. Iyengar, and carried on by his daughter, Geeta, and son, Prashant. This discussion also seems to be stimulating thought and energy toward clarifying our purpose. We are one of a very few non-profit Yoga centres. This means that we are able to provide community services like our special needs classes, bursaries for low-

income students, support to teachers in training (as teachers are all the time!) and many other good works. However, we have been quiet about this in the public realm. Perhaps it is time, in this era of "yoga for sale", to talk about the entire path of yoga, of dedication, service, and ethical action.

I look forward to supporting the centre: thank you for your vote of confidence, and many kind words. ॐ

Announcement!

Members of the Victoria
Yoga Centre recently voted
unanimously to change our name
to

**the Iyengar Yoga Centre
of Victoria.**

The name change will officially
take place as soon as all legal
requirements are met. We are
grateful to B.K.S. Iyengar for
allowing us to use his name
for our centre.

*"If you want to learn
you must learn
to teach yourself."*

— Prashant Iyengar

Workshop review

“Heart of Yoga” with Shirley Daventry French

By Gary Wong

It's been several weeks since I attended Shirley's “Heart of Yoga” weekend seminar. The seminar was a combination of theory and practical, and I learned much of both. The poses, and their sequences were challenging but the seminar was focused on more than just the physicality of yoga. There is the great misconception these days that yoga is all about physically challenging poses, but Shirley made it clear that *Astanga Yoga*, and specifically our Iyengar school of *Astanga Yoga*, is not just about the *asanas*, their physical alignment and the use of props, although all three can be important in our “quest”.

By “quest”, Shirley was talking about quest in the context of our own practice. During her last visit to Pune, the Iyengar Family reviewed the *sadhana* (i.e. dedicated practice of yoga) and how it can be viewed in three ways:

<i>Bahiranga Sadhana</i>	“External” Quest, which I took to be a predominantly physical practice.
<i>Antaranga Sadhana</i>	“Moving Inward” Quest, which I understood to be a practice focusing on body and mind
<i>Antaratma Sadhana</i>	“Innermost” Quest, which I grasped to be a practice concentrating on self, or soul

These three aspects can be viewed as stages in our study of yoga, but Shirley explained that it is not a strictly linear or sequential 1-2-3 progression. As she discussed this further, I made the mental note that I myself was firmly in the *Bahiranga Sadhana* stage; I have an affinity for the standing poses and a tendency to view *asanas* in a biomechanical fashion. However, I did become aware of the other two stages, both at the seminar and in the subsequent weeks. I'll get to this later on, but I'd like to return to the three stages and make one last remark; that the three stages can be linked to the Eight Limbs of yoga.

<i>Bahiranga Sadhana</i>	<i>Yama</i>	(universal moral commandments)
	<i>Niyama</i>	(self purification by discipline)
	<i>Asana</i>	(posture)
<i>Antaranga Sadhana</i>	<i>Pranayama</i>	(rhythmic control of the breath)
	<i>Pratyahara</i>	(sense withdrawal)
<i>Antaratma Sadhana</i>	<i>Dharana</i>	(concentration)
	<i>Dhyana</i>	(meditation)
	<i>Samadhi</i>	(profound deep state of meditation & awareness)



There is more to this concept of *Astanga Yoga* stages and limbs. You will find a clearer, deeper, and better explanation in authoritative sources (i.e. *Light on Yoga*), and so I'll turn my attention back to Shirley's seminar.

Now, I had started off this article by saying that ‘... the seminar was focused on more than just the physicality...’, and how our study is ‘... not just about physical alignment’. If you took this to mean that Shirley neglected the physical aspects of the *asanas* during the seminar, then you would be very much mistaken.

Friday night's *asanas* began with *Tadasana*, and moved into *Supta Tadasana* and *Adho Mukha Vrksasana*. Shirley stressed a ‘...soft abdomen...’, and in fact, demonstrated this on one student. While lying on her back, this student was talked through to a softer abdomen than she had before. Shirley pointed out ‘... see, even her eyes have changed...’ and this was obvious even to my untrained eye. Throughout the rest of the evening's *asanas*, Shirley reminded us to keep a ‘soft abdomen’. Whether it was *Sirsasana*, *Sarvangasana*, or *Setu Bandha Sarvangasana*, we were conscious of our ‘soft’ or perhaps ‘less-than-soft’ abdomen.

Saturday morning's seminar began with a short review of Friday's material, and then we were off through a variety of sitting and lying poses. One person asked about the correct shoulder-blade action, and Shirley used touch to help her adjust the shoulder blades; I could see the difference in breadth of the shoulder-blades and how they moved away from the skin's surface and into the body. Throughout the day, *asanas* were taught in-depth, with pauses to answer questions and to demonstrate how that answer revealed itself in our bodies.

One concept that I picked up on that day was the '-ing' aspect of the instructions. Shirley repeatedly used active verbs in the progressive tense, such as '... arms lengthening...', '... shoulder-blades cutting in...', '...front groins softening...', '...tailbone plugging in...' I learned that these actions are not ones you can do once and then just hold, that there's an unbroken intent. This made the *asanas* even more challenging for me.

This challenge was heightened by the repetition... of each pose... several times... on each side. The length of time also seemed to be longer than how I hold them in my own practice. Of course, it may have just been that Shirley's verbal instructions coerced me into a better asana, and there were indeed many verbal instructions. But, Shirley was sure to include after each final repetition, the directive to '... and now, do not dwell on what you've accomplished or have yet to accomplish in this pose, just be in this pose....'.

Near the end of Saturday's session, Shirley repeated that '... after a few minutes in this pose, we STOP adjusting and just wait, and enjoy...' At the time, we were in *Supta Virasana* (a pose I do not associate with 'enjoyment'), but I was surprised to find that part of me initially unwilling to yield, can release and settle, if I just... wait.

The final morning's seminar started as the day before, with a review and short discussion on

Bahiranga, *Antaratma*, and *Antaranga Sadhana*. We moved into some preparatory poses before *Urdva Dhanurasana*, then some twists, and then *Sirsasana*. During *Sirsasana*, I came down before the rest of the class, and while looking around the room, I noticed something interesting.

Those still in headstand were rock-solid on their forearms, and some were rock-solid from their forearms right on up the torso, the legs, and even their feet (and toes) were completely unwavering. A few had that solid foundation, an unwavering body, and a peaceful facial expression with eyes that were crystal clear; some lips even had a slight smile on them.

After this, we continued on to *Sarvangasana*, *Pashimottanasana*, and finished with *Savasana*. It was a relatively quiet *Savasana*, with a minimum of instructions from Shirley. When *Savasana* ended, I found that for the first time ever, I did not spring up to be one of the first out of the pose. In fact, I had to make a conscious 'adjustment' to even be able to come out of the pose.



That was the end of the seminar, but not the end of my learning.

By going through my notes, and working them into my practice, I have a different awareness in the *asanas*. After a few minutes in a pose, I now STOP adjusting and wait. Before coming out of the pose, I'll check to see if I'm coming out because it's time to come out, or because my limbs are saying '... I'm tired...'. If the latter, I'll wait a bit more.

Then, before coming out of this one pose, I'll check to see if I'm coming out because it's time to come out, or because my breath is becoming shallow or hard. If the latter, I'll quieten my breath and wait a little more.

Then, before coming out of this same pose, I'll check to see if I'm coming out because it's time to come out, or because my mind is saying '... I'm bored...'. If the latter, I'll refocus my attention and wait a few more breaths.

Then, when I do acknowledge that it's time to come out, I'm ready to come out. But by now there is a certain familiarity in the pose that invites me to stay, and so I stay just a little bit longer. ॐ

GARY IS A KEEN STUDENT AND PRACTITIONER. HE IS IN LEVEL 3.

Working with Guruji

by John Evans

John Evans was asked by the Astadala Yogamala Fund group to write an article for IYN to give a flavour of his experience of working with Guruji. The following article was first published in Iyengar Yoga News, Spring 2004, No. 5, a publication of the Iyengar Yoga Association of the United Kingdom. It is with their kind permission that we reprint this article here.

I have just come back from two weeks in Pune after an absence of three years. What took me was the usual, a book to be worked on with Guruji, with Geeta and Prashant helping and advising. I had worried the city would have changed beyond recognition and it is true that bits of it were unrecognisable. Sadly there are fewer birds, though the mewling kites still soar over Shivajinagar, and the chances of waking to the rumble of a bullock cart's wheels are nil, but once one turns off the Ganeshkind road into the tree lined model colony and enters the old familiar institute, nothing essential seems to have changed.

Yet you have only to walk downstairs to the narrow semi-basement library to find that, except as according to Prashant, in Savasana, time does not stand still. In days past at three o'clock the library would be empty, save for Guruji dealing with his correspondence, a mouse-quiet librarian and a typewriter on loan from a museum. Now it is difficult to find a free chair. Sprightly students using yogic powers (or just youth) to appear awake even during the siesta hours sit in front of flashing screens, palm tops, lap tops, heavy PCs, printers, all jungled together with electronic entrails. The muffled talk is largely of failure to download, loss of compatibility and other arcane maladies of the information society.

The only constant is Guruji, still, pen in hand, immersed in his papers, but alert as a dragon guarding its treasure, and I remember the old ways of manuscript correction. First Guruji



would hand me a sheaf of blue typescript with edges curling up. I would correct it for spelling and grammar, strike out repetitions and overworked images, and mark the passages which, being incomprehensible to me, might be so also to others.

Then back to Guruji: "This is not clear," I might say, or "This is contradictory." He never, ever, replied, "Well, it is clear to me," or defended his text. His attitude was simply to accept that it was not right and to set about changing it. To that end he would re-explain, re-express as often and as long as necessary and expect me to get on with it. He never looked back, never argued. All his attachment was to the subject, yoga, and none to his text. He describes himself as a practical man. That means dealing with things as they are. So he takes a raw paragraph from where it is, just as he brings along our Trikonasana from where it is. Patanjali says that mastery of asana will leave us unshaken by dualities. To any author a big red line through paragraph after paragraph is a shaking experience. Not to Guruji - he is unmoved.

Do perseverance, absence of pride and authorial egotism make him easy to work with? Of course, for the only problem that remains is the original one of how to express the subject and all energy is directed to that end. How much easier Guruji's life as a teacher would be if only his students brought that same clean, optimistic humility to learning yoga.

People have some funny ideas about the "Spiritual Path", partly because of the language we use. What we call the spiritual path takes place in the realm of Nature. After all, how can you move towards something which, like Divinity, is already by definition, everywhere? A better image might be that if we tidy and clean our house thoroughly enough, we might one day notice that Divinity has been sitting in it all along.

Even if a man were to see God, it would still be impossible for him to describe God to others and remain an honest man. All he

can do is teach others to see, and that, I think, is what the Iyengars try to do, to impart through yoga the technology of seeing, of hearing, of scent, of taste and of sensitive feeling. They show others how to discover. They never say what the discovery will be.

A scientist sets out to conquer nature through knowledge – external nature, external knowledge. By these means he may split the atom and achieve external power. A yogi sets out to explore the nature of his own nature, to penetrate the atom of being. He does not gain dominion over wide lands and restless seas, but over his own recalcitrant flesh and febrile mind. This is not the power to destroy, but power to heal, the power of compassionate truth. This, to my mind, is what Gururji has. He radiates benevolent intelligence. The presence of truth can make us feel naked, but the compassion takes all our shame away.

There are those who like to evaluate, compare, even judge their gurus, as if they were top cricketers or great artists. This is

obviously nonsense. When I first met Gururji twenty five years ago, I was aware that I was standing at the foot of a rather large mountain. How high, who could tell? The summit was out of sight. Has he changed in the last quarter century? Of course; beyond doubt the mountain is even more immense, and no, I still cannot see the top. The only observation I would make is that, strangely enough, the larger this mountain grows, the more sunny and clement the weather around it becomes.

Dr. D.T. Suzuki, the Japanese savant, was once asked what the difference was, in daily life, between an ordinary man and one who has reached the ultimate freedom. He replied that whereas the ordinary man walks with his feet two metres above the ground, the enlightened man walks with his feet touching the earth. Perhaps we should bear this in mind when we hear Gururji say, "I am a practical man". We may not be able to see the summit of Mount Iyengar but at least we can appreciate the base planted so firmly on the ground. ॐ

B.K.S. Iyengar is coming to North America!

B.K.S. Iyengar will deliver the opening keynote address at the Yoga Journal Conference in Estes Park, Colorado September 26 - October 2, 2005.

Gururji will be present in the morning classes taught by senior Iyengar Yoga teachers during the Iyengar Yoga Intensive September 26 - 29. He will also lead a closing Q&A on Thursday morning, September 29.

Certified Iyengar Yoga teachers may register for the Iyengar Intensive, September 26 - 29 or for the

entire conference, September 26 - October 2 during the first two weeks of registration beginning on March 28, 2005.

All Iyengar Yoga students with at least two years experience may register for the Iyengar Intensive or for the entire conference on April 11.

The conference brochure and registration information is available at:

www.yogajournal.com/yjevents/estespark.cfm

Thank you!

• Jean Ives for helping at the front desk. • Katrina Chappel for helping to keep the kitchen clean. • Everyone who participated in our special day of chanting in January to raise money for the victims of the tsunami. Approximately \$350 was donated to the Red Cross.

• Hilary McPhail, Bob Maher, Greg Sly & Jasmine, Patti Kallio, Betty MacNaughton, Joan Douglas, Ty Chandler, Silvia Vilches, Finka Toevs, Laure Newnham, Karin Holtkamp, Vicki Robichaud, Lynn Langford, Charles Campbell and Jim & Sue Riddell for representing our centre at The Victoria Health Fair earlier this year. Everyone took turns sitting at our table over the weekend and answered questions that the public had about yoga and our centre.

VICTORIA *yoga centre* Calendar

MAY

- 7 Seeing & Correcting with Shirley Daventry French
- 13-14 Inspirations from India with Leslie Hogya
- 26-30 Iyengar Yoga Association of Canada AGM – Fredericton

JUNE

- 3-5 Saltspring Retreat with Shirley Daventry French
- 11 Teachers' Meeting
- 17-19 Introductory I/II Assessment in Courtney-Comox

JULY

- 4-31 Term 6
- 4-24 21 Day Sadhana: with Linda Benn, Wies Pukesh, Robin Cantor
- 11-16 Teacher Training Intensive – Introductory Levels with Linda Benn, Leslie Hogya, Ann Kilbertus

AUGUST

- 2-31 Term 7
- 15-19 Teacher Training Intensive – Junior Intermediate Levels with Shirley Daventry French
- 29- Sept 2 Student Intensive: with Lauren Cox, Ty Chandler

SEPTEMBER

- 5-9 5 Day Sadhana: with Robin Cantor
- 6-11 Registration Week
- 12 Term 1 begins
- 17 Teachers' Meeting
- 23-25 Weekend Workshop with Felicity Green
CANCELLED due to B.K.S. Iyengar tour
- 26 B.K.S. Iyengar – Estes Park, Colorado

OCTOBER

- 14-15 Inspirations from India with Ann Kilbertus, Melissa Worth
- 22 Teachers' Meeting
- 21-23 Introductory I/II Assessment in London, ON
- 21-23 Introductory I/II Assessment in Winnipeg, MB
- 31 Term 2 Begins

NOVEMBER

- 4-6 Weekend Workshop with Chris Saudek
Junior Intermediate Workshop for levels 3 & 4
- 26 Teachers' Meeting

DECEMBER

- 2 Sutra Workshop with Shirley Daventry French
- 3-4 Going Deeper with Shirley Daventry French
- 9-11 Junior Intermediate I Assessment in Montreal
- 19-23 5 Day Sadhana with Corrine Lowen
- 21-22 Winter Solstice Workshop with Ty Chandler

JANUARY 2006

- 21 Teachers' Meeting
- 27-30 Heart of Yoga with Shirley Daventry French

FEBRUARY 2006

- 4 VYC AGM
- 12 Inspirations from India with Linda Benn
- 25 Teachers' Meeting

Check our website www.victoriayogacentre.bc.ca to find out about the current class schedule.

Summer Sizzler

For maximum flexibility and versatility this summer, purchase one of the Victoria Yoga Centre's Summer Sizzler Passes. GET details at the reception desk.

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or
mix it up!



Radha Yoga Centre

CELEBRATING SARASWATI

Sunday May 15, 1:00 to 4:00 pm
Fee: \$20.00

Saraswati, Goddess of wisdom and learning, is a special symbol for us because our teachings come through the lineage of the Saraswati Order of Yoga. Saraswati's realm is entered through the inspiration and insight of the heart, enabling us to bring refinement to our daily lives.

Come find and celebrate Saraswati in all of us. The afternoon will be filled with Mantra, poetry, song and dance.

THE ROSE CEREMONY

Saturday June 11, 7:30 - 9:00 pm
& Sunday June 12, 10 - 11 am

This beautiful ritual is a means to remember our personal commitment to an ideal. Move beyond the opposites in your life, beyond good/bad, accept/reject, let go of your grudges and resentments. Enter the love and joy of Divine Mother's grace.

All are welcome Call for details.
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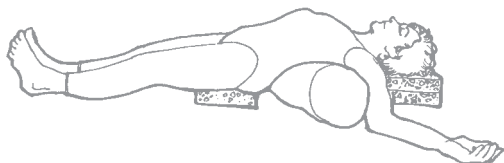
This is a reminder that the
Victoria Yoga Centre membership
expired on December 31, 2004.

The membership subscription fee is
\$40 + GST, effective June 1, 2005,
(Canadian residents add 7% GST)
and is renewable each January.

Membership benefits include:

- 5% discount on all classes
- free practice times at the VYC
- 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 membership subscription form (at right), and send to the Victoria Yoga Centre.



VICTORIA
yoga centre
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:

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202-919 Fort Street, Victoria BC V8V 3K3**

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