

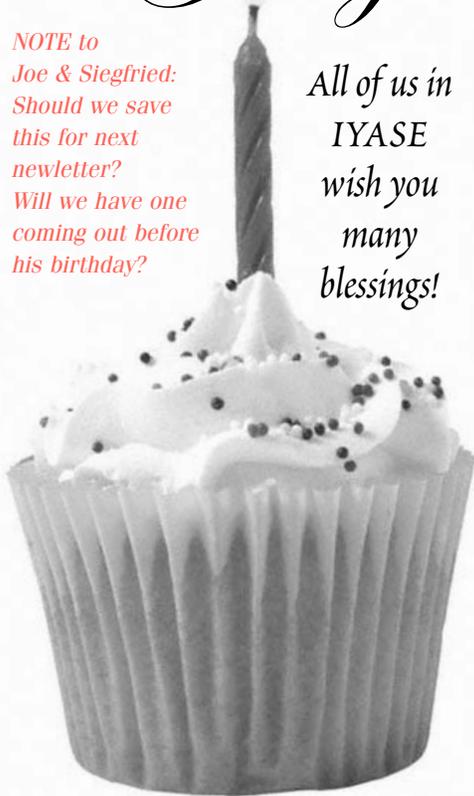


IYASE Iyengar Yoga Association: Southeast

Happy 90th Birthday Guruji

*NOTE to
Joe & Siegfried:
Should we save
this for next
newsletter?
Will we have one
coming out before
his birthday?*

*All of us in
IYASE
wish you
many
blessings!*



FUTURE ARTICLES

If you have information that you would like to be included in future IYASE newsletters, please send an E-mail to Joe Adlesic, Newsletter Chair, at: newsletter@iyase.org
(Next deadline: July 1, 2008).



PRESIDENT'S LETTER

As fall approaches, we see clear external signs of change—leaves change color, the steadiness of summer's heat starts to waver and relent to cooler nights, and the day begins to grow shorter. Nature's gift is not only in the integrity and beauty of each season. But as each season changes

and, inevitably we must let go of the beauty of that season, we are presented with something new and refreshing, something equally inspiring and beautiful in its own way. If our hearts and eyes remain open, we can be refreshed and inspired by the new season. And if we remain steady in our faith in the goodness of life through the loss of what has become familiar, or the loss of what was dear, we may even discover something in ourselves that is deeper than what is shaken by the change, something that can celebrate and honor even the change and its divine nature. Patanjali tells us in Sutra III.9 that it is in the quiescent moments between waning currents and arising currents in our minds that we have the capacity to truly become transformed. The changing of the seasons are wonderful external pointers to the changing seasons of our own inward nature, of our lives, and reminders to celebrate them in equal measure.

Many in the Iyengar yoga community already know of the sad loss of one our most beloved teachers, Mary Dunn, on September 4th. I would like to direct the reader to John Schumacher's and also Patricia Walden's reflections regarding Mary's passing. And I would like to express deep gratitude to Mary for having touched my life with her infectious joy and presence, which for me lit up any room she was in. In her honor, I can only try to emulate and cultivate in myself those qualities in Mary I looked up to, such as her generosity of spirit towards all those she mentored and taught, and the joy and unwavering commitment with which she shared her wisdom.

One of the guarantees in life of change is raising children. The moment we learn about their current needs and how to meet them, whether it is figuring out that their fussiness is due to hunger or sleepiness or that we forgot to hug them, they are onto something else for us to catch up to. Ann Thomas, a teacher at Unity Woods in Bethesda, MD, writes in this issue about her experience raising her twins, who are now 4 ½ years old and the interplay with her yoga practice.

Inside is an excellent asana column focusing on Salamba Sarvangasana by Lou Hoyt. Her focus is how Salamba Sarvangasana is the 'mother of all poses', and how it promotes balance and harmony with inner knowing and outward living. My own experience of Salamba Sarvangasana has been one of a 'home-coming' of sorts. I used to practice this pose for the minimum amount of time required only, as a counter-pose to my much preferred Salamba Sirsasana.

Continued on page 5

ASANA COLUMN

Salamba means supported, propped up, Sarva, whole and anga, limb or body. Shoulder Stand is known as the mother of all poses. Traditionally, the role of mother is to bring balance and harmony to the whole family. Salamba Sarvangasana is a pose that nurtures and supports the whole body---soothing the nerves, developing emotional stability and establishing an inner focus. This inner focus that develops with a yoga practice is a connection that can balance inner knowing with outward living. Standing poses, seated forward bends and twists are taught and practiced to prepare the student for inversions. This preparation is necessary to avoid feelings of tension and pressure in the head, neck, eyes, labored breathing, and the feeling of blood rushing into the head. Geeta Iyengar recommends the following sequence for learning shoulder stand.: Ardha Halasana, Halasana, Eka Pada Sarvangasana, and Sarvangasana. Once these poses and Sarvangasana variations are practiced, the student is ready for Salamba Sirsasana. In the individual practice, Sirsasana is practiced first, followed by Sarvangasana after or at some later time in the practice. Sarvangasana and variations can be practiced on their own, whereas Sirsasana requires the balance of Sarvangasana in the practice.

Setting up for preparatory stages and full pose. Props needed: 2-4 blankets and mat.



Because each student has different needs and skills, the use and understanding of props benefits the practice of Sarvangasana. The student needs 2-4 blankets depending on the shape of the neck, shoulders, shoulder flexibility, and upper body strength. Blankets are used for under the shoulders and upper arms to create cervical space between the neck and the floor to reduce the feeling of pressure in the head, eyes, ears, and to create more ease of the breath. Blanket height can also help a student be more on the top of the shoulders which brings a more lifted and aligned pose and ease of breath. Place 2-4 blankets on a mat folded so that smooth folded edges are toward the head side of the pose. Pull the mat up and over the blankets to about half of the blanket length to secure the elbows and keep the upper arms and neck free of the mat. This set-up is used for the following preparations as well as the full pose.



Preparation for arms, shoulders and neck in a modified Setu Banddha that teaches the actions for Sarvangasana.

On your shoulder stand set up, place a block under the sacrum and the bottom side of the block on top of the blankets or on the mat. Extend the arms towards the bent legs and feet. Place a looped strap on the wrists that holds the arms about shoulder distance. Press out (away from each other) into the strap with the wrists, turn the palms and inner arms up towards the ceiling, press down along the length of the arms and roll the shoulder bones down. The turning of the arms from inside out and pressing of the shoulder bones down opens the chest. Pressing the arms down into the blankets moves the tips of the shoulder blades into the back so that the chest is well lifted and the weight of the pose is on the top of the shoulders. Reviewing these actions before the practice of Sarvangasana connects the student to the actions that will bring support and lift in the pose. Students with tighter shoulders or less experience will benefit by this practice first and can then move on from Setu Bandha into Sarvangasana with the fresh memory of the actions.



Feet and leg actions in preparation for Sarvangasana.

Lie down on the floor with the feet and legs up a wall and the hips on the floor. Join the inner edges of the feet, big toes, mound of the big toes and inner heels. Extend up through the inner heels and mounds of the big toes spreading the toes and balls of the feet. If the outer edges of the feet are rolling upwards, draw the outer edges down towards the floor so the inner heels, big toes and outer edges of the feet are equally lifted. While extending up evenly into each foot, keep the knees and front thighs firm and the back of the legs broad by pressing the legs and outer hips towards the wall. Keep the inner edge of the knees and toes aligned with the midline of the torso.

Sarvangasana from the wall.

Follow the set-up as described above under "Setting up for preparatory stages and full pose". Place this set-up within a foot of the wall so that you can arrange yourself as shown in photo #3 with legs up the wall and shoulders 1 to

SHOULDER BALANCE

Submitted by Lou Hoyt



2" away from the edge of the stacked blankets. From this position, bend your knees and lift up onto your shoulders by pressing the feet into the wall. Roll your arms and shoulders outward. Bend your elbows and press your hands into the back ribs. Lift onto the very top of your shoulders so that the back is vertical and the breastbone moves toward your chin (photo #4). Keep the upper arms drawn in so that the elbows align with the shoulders and the upper arms are parallel. Establish this foundation for the pose with the feet against the wall. Then, keeping the base of the pose steady and the vertical alignment of your body, take the feet away from the wall to move into the free-standing pose (see photo #5).



in fourths. An extra blanket can be opened and laid out under the head. With the chair at the wall and the folded mat in the chair seat, sit in the chair with the legs at the wall over the back of the chair. Holding onto the back of the chair, slide the shoulders to the bolster or blankets so hips rest on the chair and the feet are on the wall. If this pose is uncomfortable for your back,

place a bolster behind the buttocks/ legs. The hand and arms reach back and hold the back legs of the chair. The chest is lifted as the shoulder bones descend. Coming out, slide the hips to the bolster and the shoulders to the floor and rest here before moving the hips to the floor and rolling over to come out.

Sarvangasana away from the wall.



Place the chair at the head side of the pose and the bolster vertical to the middle of the blanket set-up at the other side. Lie down so the shoulders are 1 to 2" from the edge of the blanket, hips and feet on the bolster with knees bent. Move the chair arm distance from the blanket set up. Roll the legs up and over to the chair and be on the toes and hands on the back. Press the heels out into the outer chair back to extend the legs and lift the inner thighs/knees, lifting the side ribs and side chest. Use the hands on the back to support

the lift of the back ribs and the trapezius up away from the neck towards the ceiling. The leg action (feels like Chaturanga Dandasana) supports the lift of the torso and side chest. As practice progresses, move from Halasana to Eka Pada Sarvangasana bringing one leg up then the other to Salamba Sarvangasana.

Chair Sarvangasana – an alternative, supported version of Sarvangasana

This pose is especially beneficial when tired, recovering from being sick, feeling overwhelmed or depressed. Being inverted and supported is both soothing and invigorating, physically and emotionally. Props: a bolster, or 2-3 blankets folded to create a bolster shape , a chair and a mat folded

Benefits of practicing Sarvangasana

Mr. Iyengar calls Sarvangasana “a panacea for most common ailments”. In this pose there is stimulation and blood supply to the thyroid and parathyroid glands located in the neck. This is created by the chinlock or Jalandhara Bandha as the chest is lifted and moving up and towards the chin, contracting and stimulating this area. . These glands secrete hormones that regulate the flow of energy throughout the whole system. In this inversion, circulation is increased to the head, heart, chest, neck alleviating upper respiratory symptoms and sicknesses such as asthma, bronchitis. In Light on Yoga, Mr. Iyengar includes these healing properties with the practice of Sarvangasana: soothing of the nerves and emotional irritability, insomnia, constipation, urinary and bladder disorders, and lethargy. The abdominal region is stimulated and activated bringing vitality into the organs and systems in this area of the body. The ritual of practice is to bring change, to help us evolve, expand and grow. The inner focus and connection that develops with practice , opens us to self listening and self knowing. Practice combines the discipline of firmness, of a precise ritual, with the opening to inner exploration. All the skill, preciseness and knowing in a pose needs the balance of this inner dialogue with an open and receptive mind. This is being at home in your body and with yourself, then “ head and heart are not apart” Om mane padme om and the saying “Home is where the heart is” is your experience.

Colleen Gallagher is certified at the Junior Intermediate III level. She lives and teaches in Delray Beach, Florida. ■

SUTRA COLUMN

The Sufi asks, "If not now when?"

"This is my moment!" sings the poet

Patanjali says, "*atha*", Now.

Spiritual practices, poets and the wise enjoin us to be and act in the moment.

The first word of the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali is now.

I/1 *atha yoganusasanam*

Now, begins an exposition of the sacred art of yoga. Now is the insistent and incessant message of the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali.

Long commentaries have been written about the significance of this word. It is called auspicious, an indicator that something important is about to be said, and that the student is ready. B. K. S. Iyengar in his commentary suggests that, "now can be seen in the context of a progression from Patanjali's previous works, his treatises on grammar and on *ayurveda*."

I believe sutra I/1 is related to every other sutra. Each sutra is a further explanation of yoga but more than that each sutra is to be experienced now. So often we feel we will do our practice later but now we need to attend to other things. Later does not exist, it is an imagined thing. A student asked Manouso Manos how to establish a daily practice. His answer was to daily begin with one *asana*. He went on to explain that often one *asana* leads to another and the practice unfolds, but if no other *asana* comes the one *asana* is the practice for the day. This builds a positive feeling and removes the obstacles that bar us from fulfilling our commitment to daily practice. In Guruji Iyengar's explanation of *sutra* I/12 he says, "The discarding of ideas and actions which obstruct progress in *sadhana* (practice) is *vairagya* (detachment).

YS. I/12 *abhyasa vairagyabhyam tannirodhah*

Practice and detachment are the means to still the movements of consciousness.

By establishing a daily practice we find that doing other things comes after allowing time for our *sadhana*. As the two parts of the yin-yang symbol describe each other the two aspects of *sutra* I/12 define each other. *Abhyasa* begins *vairagya* as *vairagya* establishes *abhyasa*. They define and they also refine one another.

Guruji has offered us insight into the word now as the beginning of a progression. Following that insight I infer that now is the beginning of the process of *parinama* (transformation) and the method is *astangayoga* (the 8

limbs of yoga). With the beginning of the first *asana* we begin the transformation of our body and mind. This is the more subtle teaching within Manouso's practical advice. The *parinama* of consciousness begins now, in that moment when the practice begins.

Patanjali explains that practice is long, uninterrupted and alert.

YS. I/14

sa tu dirghakala nairantarya satkara asevitah drdhabhumih

Transformation begins immediately but the sequence from now to the final moment of transformation involves time, effort and awareness. "The experience of the past supports the present, and progress in the present builds a sound foundation for the future. One uses the past as a guide to develop discriminative power, alertness and awareness which smooth the path for Self Realization." (B.K.S. Iyengar Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, page 243)

The first aspects of *astanga yoga yama, niyama, asana, pranayama* and *pratyahara* are the external means to learn how to discipline the body-mind. *Pratyahara* is the bridge from the external to the internal. The *yamas* and *niyamas* are the acts and non-acts that embody *abhyasa* and *vairagya*; *asana* is the external postures that express the inner being; *pranayama* is the exercises that tame the *prana*. *Pratyahara* is the bridge from *bahiranga sadhana* (external quest) to *antaratma sadhana* (inner quest). It is the result of the other components of *astangayoga*, and the fruition of *sutra* I/15 and I/16.

YS. I/15

drista anusravika visaya vitrsnasya vasikasamjna vairagyam

Renunciation is the practice of detachment from desires.

YS. I/16 *tatparum purusa khayatih gunavathisam*

The ultimate renunciation is when one transcends the qualities of nature and perceives the soul. This idea is also expressed in the Bhagavad Gita, *sloka* II/58&59.

"He who draws away the senses from the objects of sense on every side as a tortoise draws in his limbs (into the shell), his intelligence is firmly set (in wisdom). The objects of sense turn away from the embodied soul who abstains from feeding on them but the taste for them remains. Even the taste turns away when the Supreme is seen.

It is with some mastery of each of the component parts of *astangayoga* that the final steps of *dharana* (concentration), *dhyana* (meditation) and *samadhi* (absorption) can be

THE MOMENT IS NOW

Submitted By Karin O'Bannon

taken. We learn to unite with *satya* (truth). We go within the *asana* (posture). We become one with the *prana*, (life force). We absorb the *indriyas* (senses) within the mind. This progressive release of obstacles and limitations of the *citta* (consciousness) allows the *citta* to recede into *cit* (Universal Consciousness or Bhraman).

YS. I/3 *tada drastuh svarupe 'vasthanam*

Then the Seer resides in his own true splendor.

This can only be realized from within. Through regular sequential practice the refinement of consciousness takes place. Then we experience the Seer rather than comprehend this as a concept from without.

The last veil of the mind is time. When this is lifted by *samyama* (*dharana*, *dhyana*, *samadhi* or integration) on time and its passage the yogi attains *vivekaja jnana* (exalted

intelligence), freeing the mind from the limitations of time and space. Now, we know the moment in time is timeless; it is real and eternal. Movement of time is *prakriti*; it is time bound, ever changing and transient. The moment is *purusa* real and eternal.

YS. III/53 *ksana tatkramayoh samyamat vivekananda jnanam*

By *samyama* on moment and on the continuous flow of moments, the yogi gains exalted knowledge, free from the limitations of time and space.

In the *Tao Teh Ching* it is said, "but in the mystical moment you see it, hear it and grasp it, the Unseen, Unheard and Unreachable presents itself as the indefinable essence.

Karin O'Bannon is a long time and devoted student of Iyengar Yoga. She now resides in Shreveport LA where she continues to teach yoga. ■

PRESIDENT'S LETTER — *Continued from page 1*

I continued in this way until an injury prevented me from practicing either Sirsasana or Sarvangasana. Eventually, by giving in to the circumstances of my injury, I came to recognize the much needed nurturing aspect of Salamba Sarvangasana. I felt I had arrived home— this pose seems to nurture an innate capacity to surrender to the present moment with joy and faith (which balances an innate capacity for focus and courage that we can touch with Salamba Sirsasana).

In the last issue of our newsletter, we did an interview with outgoing IYNAUS Certification Chairperson Joan White about her experience serving as Certification Chairperson for the past several years. The current interview is with IYASE member Kathleen Pringle, the new IYNAUS Certification Coordinator, about this newly created position of Coordinator and her experience serving the past year.

Our sutra column is written by Karin O'Bannon, who will also be teaching the IYASE sponsored annual Intermediate Junior Teacher Training intensive this coming November. Karin highlights for us Patanjali's (and other spiritual teachers) teaching on the importance of our relationship with time, and especially the importance of Now (*atha*), the only moment in time when we can be present, the only moment in time when we can change, and the only moment in time when we can experience what is timeless.

Board elections are coming up in October, with three board positions to be replaced. This is the last chance to send in nominations, or contact me directly. We are especially interested in assistance from those who have technical skills (such as computer skills), bookkeeping and accounting skills, those who enjoy working with people, and who have a willingness to serve our yoga community. It is a rewarding service that does require some time commitment, and it is an opportunity to serve a larger cause. Please see the "IYASE Call for Board Candidates" later in this issue for a form to send us names of those you would like to represent you.

Guruji's 90th birthday is coming up soon, as the whole Iyengar yoga community is well aware of and surely excited about. The Iyengar Yoga Association of the Southeast is proud to have a small role in sharing in the awesome legacy of spiritual knowledge and wisdom that Mr. Iyengar has brought to being in the world during his many years of devotion and giving to his community of practitioners and teachers. And we wish to celebrate his birthday by individually and collectively reaffirming our own commitment to faithfully disseminating his teachings, his passion and his devotion to the art of yoga. Namaste, Siegfried. ■

STUDIO SPOTLIGHT

The Iyengar Yoga Association: Southeast, made up of twelve states and the District of Columbia, includes many long-standing teachers and studios with vibrant communities of Iyengar yoga practitioners. This newsletter features two of our regions most experienced teachers along with information about how they got started and their current offerings.

One Center Yoga: ASHEVILLE, NC



HEY, CINDY -
*What's your favorite restaurant in Asheville?
for vegetarian selections -
Laughing Seed*

Read any great non-yoga books lately?
"Jayber Crow" by Wendell Berry



I remember coming into our house in Winston-Salem, NC, with a friend when I was a kid. I saw my mother sitting on the floor in our living room with her tongue stuck out and her eyes rolled up toward the ceiling. She was roaring. Totally embarrassed, I quickly herded my friend past that room and into my room where we giggled for the rest of the afternoon. That was my first experience of yoga and I hoped it would be the last!

Fast forward 20 years to 1984. My friend, Angie, calls me to see if I want to attend a free yoga class after we run. "Sure", I say. "Then let's go to Gatsby's and have a beer." That particular evening I felt so good after class that I signed up on the spot for 3 more months of classes. I don't remember the beer.

About 6 months later, I taught my first class when my teacher, Lillah Schwartz, went to the Iyengar yoga convention in San Francisco. Yikes! I only thought I knew downward facing dog pose! After that enlightening experience, I didn't teach again until several years later when I started teaching one class a week. By that time I was attending 2 weekly classes and had taken a teacher training course with Bobbi Goldin in Miami.

In my spare time, I worked full time as the pharmacy director for Buncombe County Health Center in Asheville, NC. As time went along, I became more interested in yoga and I put up signs in the pharmacy. Breathe. Stand up straight. I'm not sure how well received those reminders were to others but they helped me. They helped me so much that I eventually left the health department, did part-time pharmacy work, and started teaching more classes. I was a wandering yogini and I taught at several studios around town. In 1990 I became Intro certified in the Iyengar system and soon thereafter I, along with a partner, opened Mountain Yoga.

I took my first trip to India in 1995. When I returned to the States 8 weeks later, I discovered that my business partner had had some difficult times and Mountain Yoga was in a rough financial place. I closed the studio and once again was a wandering yoga teacher. That was a tough summer. Before leaving for India I had committed to going up for Intermediate Junior assessment and in September I failed the assessment.

Still in love with Iyengar Yoga, I attended the Women's Intensive with Geeta Iyengar in 1997. What a treat that was! I was with wonderful women from all over the world and we were studying with Geeta! Naturally, B.K.S. Iyengar was quite present in the class and shared his extensive knowledge as well. I continue to feel great gratitude for that time, and every time, in Pune. After my 2nd stint as a wandering yogini, I settled into teaching classes in the downstairs apartment at the house where I lived. Still, I continued to practice pharmacy part-time. The



next few years were full. I married Randy Richards in 2003 after our 13 year courtship. I co-authored a book, *Yoga Your Way*, which was published in 2004. In 2005 I opened One Center Yoga. And in 2006 I went up for Intermediate Junior I assessment and I passed. Whew.

One Center Yoga is located on the 3rd floor of a new building in downtown Asheville. The main studio of 1000 square feet has large windows on 2 sides with wonderful views of the mountains. The smaller studio has windows on one side and also has a fabulous view. Because Asheville is a tourist destination, we have quite a few drop-in students and they all ooh and aah over the bamboo floors and rope wall. We are happy with our new home at 120 Coxe Ave!

One Center Yoga is home to a dozen other teachers as well as to other styles of yoga although most classes are in the Iyengar style. We offer a total of 23 weekly classes in Iyengar Yoga as well as other forms of yoga.. We also offer classes in Mindfulness Meditation and Nia. Each month we host a yoga discussion group and currently we are studying Pada I of the Yoga Sutras. All the yoga instructors at One Center Yoga are well trained and are either certified or working toward that goal. We have hosted Iyengar teachers such as Jan Campbell, John Schumacher, Simon Marrocco, Roger Cole and Elise Browning Miller. We have Chris Saudek and Rebecca Lerner scheduled for workshops in 2009 and Dean Lerner is slated to join us in 2010. The future looks big - although we remain present to the moment at hand, of course!

One Center Yoga joins with other yoga centers and individuals in Asheville to promote yoga of all traditions. Together we have developed a strong yoga community and we promote events for and with each other. Internationally known yoga instructors of many traditions come to Asheville and all are well received. I am delighted to live and teach in a town that supports individuals of all traditions. And I still love Iyengar Yoga. ■

2008 WORKSHOPS

Oct. 31 - Nov. 2 **IYASE Intermediate Teacher Training with Karin O'Bannon**

Stillwater Yoga Studio, *Atlanta, GA*
teachertraining@iyase.org

Nov. 14 - 15 **Rebecca Lerner**

Inner Life Yoga Studio, LLC, *Morgantown, WV*
(304) 296-1744 or sbleher@msn.com

Nov. 21 - 23 **Dean Lerner**

East Boca Yoga, *Boca Raton, FL*
(561) 544.0777 or info@ebocayoga.com

If you have additional workshops that you would like included in future IYASE newsletters, please submit them through our online workshop submission form on www.iyase.org

**IYASE Sponsored
Intermediate Junior
Teacher Training
2008**

**Karin O'Bannon
Atlanta
Oct 31 - Nov 2**

**~ Save The Date ~
March 27-29 2009**

**IYASE Sponsored
Introductory
Teacher Training**

**Lou Hoyt & Judi Rice
Memphis, TN**

LIGHT ON MOTHERHOOD

— Submitted By Ann Teresa Thomas, M.A.



In B.K.S. Iyengar's most recent work, *Light on Life*, he tells of his decision as a young man to walk the path of yoga "as an ordinary householder with all the trials and tribulations of life," rather than renounce the world as a sannyasin. Like him, most of us have done the same. We are living and practicing our yoga in the modern world as students, teachers,

workers, spouses, mothers and fathers.

As a yoga practitioner, teacher and mother of 4 1/2-year-old twins, I am among you. It's my personal challenge each day to live a yogic way of life with integrity and equanimity while being a wife, a mother, running a household, and operating a small private yoga business out of our home. I often fall far from the mark. The klesas, or afflictions, rear their ugly head at every turn. Or I transgress in practicing yama and niyama.

Even as I sat down at my computer to type my "important thoughts on yoga," the twins clamored for my attention. "Mommy, type 'Spiderman!'" my son Christopher insisted. "Mommy, I'll be the mommy, and you be the babysitter," directed my daughter Clare, as she handed me her babydoll.

I wanted to scold them, or worse, for yet again interrupting my plans, and my "important," yogic work. I was humbled as I witnessed my own mental response violate ahimsa. My pride and attachment to the project at hand could have easily escalated into human chaos, foible and shame.

Instead, I took a breath and surrendered to this precious moment with my children. I Googled "Spiderman" and viewed all sorts of neat images of the superhero with my son on my lap. Simultaneously, I babysat my daughter's babydoll while she went imaginary shopping. A sense of clarity and focus filled my mind, while warmth and love filled my heart. Yes, this is what over twenty years of practice had been preparing me for. This was a glimmer of "light on motherhood."

I began practicing yoga in the mid-80's and gave birth to my twins, in 2004. When I reflected on life prior to their arrival, it seemed easy to devote hours to uninterrupted practice on the mat, in classes or in workshops; or to the

study of philosophy and theology in graduate school. Even those things that were the most difficult to accomplish, now seemed much easier by comparison: to pass assessment; hoist 6', 200 lb. men up into adho mukha vrksasana; or even travel to India and study under the fiery gaze of the Iyengars. It seemed a cinch to adjust my practice during pregnancy, labor and delivery.

After I gave birth, I was naturally overwhelmed with love and joy. I was also overwhelmed with exhaustion and the incessant demands of caring for newborn twins. With them came a commitment of time, energy and responsibility beyond anything I had ever experienced b.c. (before children). Any illusion I had of feeling competent or "in control" was shattered. My addiction to my self and my way of doing things, including my practice, was no longer an option. Two tiny beings were now in my charge and they were the priority.

As a new mother, I found it extremely difficult to literally not be able to do my practice at times, let alone workshops or retreats. But, like practicing a challenging forward bend where progress is made in the letting go, I surrendered. I stayed home and tended to the mothering tasks at hand.

I breastfed my children for years, even while doing asanas. I changed thousands of diapers, then potty trained. I read stories, made them up too. I prayed and meditated with my children as they drifted off to sleep each night. I sang songs, played silly games, danced with delight, and tolerated far more noise, movement, disorder and commotion than I ever thought possible, even more than in Pune.

In practicing satya, or truthfulness, I found much of mothering instinctive, but also faced the fact that there was much about parenting that I knew nothing about.

I attended parenting classes instead of yoga workshops, and went to therapy to address my unresolved issues that were surfacing in the day to day interactions with my children. I also found time again to practice asana, pranayama and meditation and they sustained me. While I relished quiet, solitary practice, some of the most enlightening moments have been when the children interrupted me. Their improvisational dances continue to be priceless, as are their little directives when they each take turns being the yoga teacher. My life and practice are one.

It's now 2 a.m. and my children are sleeping peacefully, curled into each other like they were in my womb. I savor

the sweet sound of their breathing as much as I do the pause between my own in and out breath. I use this quiet time to practice asana (using my son's stuffed gecko as a prop under my ankle in padmasana). I meditate, and try to collect my thoughts to complete this article.

I reflect on my personal inventory for the day (svadhyaya, or self-knowledge), using yama, niyama and the klesas as my frame of reference. I assuredly had human moments when I lapsed into pride or attachment, had my own little temper tantrum, or just needed a hug. Yet tapas (sustained practice) prevailed. I persevered and did the next right thing.



Ultimately, the precept I have found most sustaining as a mother has been ishvara pranidhana, devotion to the Lord. In the Christian faith tradition that I practice, I call upon the grace of God and The Blessed Mother each day to give me strength when I am weak, patience when I have none, and to love my children when my inner resources seem depleted. I surrender and I pray, "Thy will, not mine be done." As Iyengar states in LOL, "And what will God tell you to do... He will tell you to carry on in the world, but never to forget Him." (p. 264)



Quoting Socrates, Iyengar calls each of us to 'know thyself,' using the traditions of yoga as the source of our inquiry. Just as he used his body as the laboratory for asana practice, on the eve of his 90th birthday he is an inspiring model of how to traverse one's course in life with the philosophy, traditions and practices of yoga as the navigational framework. His promise is authentic. The path is far from easy, but if we follow it with dedication and shrada (faith), we will come to know the Self, and a freedom beyond human comprehension.

I am in awe and overcome with gratitude as I watch my children thrive and grow. As my sadhana continues, I am honored to be their mother with its joys, "trials and tribulations." I am also acutely aware of the suffering in the world they are growing up in. Mother Earth is in crisis. War and violence rage on. Millions of children are sick, hungry, orphaned or abused. Within almost every heart is a small or large ache, longing for peace and healing.

As we walk the path of yoga together, we also have a calling to serve our Universal family. I am grateful for your companionship, help and inspiration along the way. In turn, I offer you mine. Peace to us, one and all, and may the fruits of our efforts help relieve suffering for all beings and spread peace and healing in the world. ■

INTERVIEW OF CERTIFICATION COORDINATOR, KATHLEEN PRINGLE — Submitted By Nancy Mau



In the last issue, we published an interesting interview with outgoing IYNAUS Certification Committee Chairperson, Joan White, about her role as Chair of the Certification Committee and about the certification process in general.

IYNAUS recently created a new position of Certification Coordinator. So, we invited Kathleen Pringle, the current IYNAUS Certification Coordinator to tell us about the new position and to share some of the history with us as well as her personal experience as coordinator this year.

Kathleen Pringle is the Director of Stillwater Yoga Studio in Atlanta, Georgia. She has been teaching Iyengar Yoga for over twenty years, has served as a board member for both IYASE and IYNAUS and has been an Assessor for numerous IYNAUS certification assessments.

Nancy Mau: The Certification Coordinator is a new position for IYNAUS; yet, the Certification Committee still has a chairperson. Can you tell us what a Certification Coordinator is and how is it different from the Certification Committee Chair?

Kathleen Pringle: To answer that question requires some background information.

Historically, the Certification Chair was a board member of IYNAUS. Teachers who could serve in that position were recruited by the IYNAUS Nomination committee. In fact, when I served on the IYNAUS Board as Membership Chair, I was also in charge of Nominations. I recruited Joan White to serve on the board. She was then elected and assumed the position of Certification Chair for her four year term on the board.

After Joan's term on the IYNAUS board expired, it was decided that she would continue on in the position of Certification Chair. This change in policy was done with the blessings of Guruji, and is still being developed.

When Joan retired, it was necessary to have someone take over the job she had been doing. Because of the change of policy it was no longer necessary for the Certification Chair to be a board member of IYNAUS. But that also meant that we needed to find a new way to elect someone to this position. It was decided that the assessors themselves would elect the new Chair. The assessors were asked to submit names of candidates for this position and an election was held at the last Convention in Los Vegas. I was elected at that time to serve a 4 year term. However, to acknowledge that this person was not required to be a board member of IYNAUS, the title was changed to Certification Coordinator.

As in the past, there is also a Certification Committee. Currently serving are Marla Apt, Kristin Chirhart, Dean Lerner and Rita Manos. I am very grateful that they agreed to help me with this position.

And, because it is important to maintain good communication with the IYNAUS board, the position of Certification Liaison was created. This IYNAUS board member has the job of being the contact person between our committee and the IYNAUS board. So if questions come up from other IYNAUS committees the Liaison will be the person who will contact me. In addition I send my Certification Committee reports to them prior to the IYNAUS board meetings so that they can review it to see if there are any questions before it is presented to the IYNAUS board. They then report back board comments or questions. Our committee will also present questions and requests to the Board via this person.

Nancy: Certification is such an exciting topic - on so many levels. I know you have been particularly busy since you've become the coordinator. How many people have applied this year?

Kathleen: 177 candidates applied this year. This year we offered assessments for Teacher in Training, Introductory, and Intermediate Junior I, II and III.

Nancy: I have been hearing that not everyone has been assigned their first choice of venue and that some applicants, although qualified, will have to wait for next year, is that due to lack of venues and assessors?

Kathleen: This year we were able to give 80% of all Teachers in Training and Introductory candidates their first choice. I'm very pleased that the percentage was that high. It would be wonderful to be able to give everyone his or her first choice, but that is not possible. However we were able to make sure that everyone who had a special request for specific venues (based on special need) was granted that request.

We did have more candidates than could be accommodated in the Intermediate Junior 1 and 2 assessments. Those candidates will be given priority for the assessments next year. They are currently on a wait list.

One of the changes our committee implemented this year was to assign assessors to venues before offering venues to the candidates. That way we knew that we would have assessors for all the venues that were selected. And the assessors knew many months earlier which dates they would be needed.

To pick venues and levels requires us to estimate how many candidates we think may apply and to which levels. Then we select venues that are appropriate. We need to take into consideration both geographic need, ease of travel and that the venues have appropriate students for each level. We very much need and appreciate the teachers and communities who offer to host assessments. They donate their studios for the weekend, provide students, obtain housing for the assessors, and assist the candidates in their stay.

Nancy: What has been the biggest challenge for you as Coordinator with assessment applications?

First, I want to make sure that special needs are taken care of. These include retakes, candidates whose venues were cancelled, or health or personal issues that require specific venues. Then I check all the applications to see that everything is completed correctly. If not, I must either contact the applicants to obtain what I need or reject the applications outright. Because I don't want to reject the applications I spent a lot of time this year calling or emailing people about missing checks or getting the info I needed to complete the applications. This was in addition to the emails asking how to fill out the forms etc. Because most applications come in all at once (and need to be sorted as soon as possible) it would be great if these other things didn't take up so much of my time. (So please read the manual!)

Nancy: How are the assessors chosen and venues assigned each year?

Kathleen: Once the venues have been selected the assessors are asked to choose three venues. Like the candidate applications, I first sort each assessor into their first choice. (Making sure that the assessors who ask for a venue meet the qualifications for that venue.) Then I see how it looks. Maybe six pick a particular city as their first choice and no one picks another date as a first choice. So I keep shuffling until it all fits. This year we needed three assessors to do more than one assessment.

Nancy: How has the certification process changed over the years? One of your duties as Coordinator is to update the

manual. Can you talk about what has changed and how are those changes effected? Does the Coordinator meet with the Iyengars or the IYNAUS committee?

Kathleen: The Certification Committee updates both the Certification Manual and the Assessor's manual each year as needed. Most of those changes are to clarify the questions that have come up at the assessments, or to reflect policy changes our committee has made. Any changes that are made to the syllabi come from Guruji. Those changes are then sent to every Iyengar Association around the world. In our manuals we may explain what the changes are if questions arise in the community.

Nancy: What would you say to people considering applying for assessment in the near future? Do you have any words of wisdom in terms of planning and preparation?

Kathleen: Congratulations on taking on this wonderful journey of self discovery and learning! Teaching is a great art and service. I would also like to encourage them to please make use of the resources available to help guide them. The manuals are a great help, but most of all find a good teacher who can mentor you along in the process and do your best to follow their advice. As to preparation, my recommendation is the same as what most candidates themselves suggest to others: practice, practice, practice! ■

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IN REMEMBRANCE: MARY DUNN

Letters from John Schumacher and Patricia Walden



Dear Friends,

As you know, Mary Dunn has been dealing with cancer for many months. In the early hours of this morning, Mary died. She had been maintaining a blog during the whole process and that blog is still up at <http://www.marydunn.blogspot.com/>. It contains her last message to all of us.

Mary was a major force in the Iyengar Yoga community world-wide, but especially here in the US where she was the prime mover in forming the San Diego and New York associations. as well playing a significant part in the San Francisco and Ann Arbor communities. Many of you had the opportunity to study with Mary here at Unity Woods or at one of the conventions or one of her many workshops throughout the country. She was one of the finest teachers I have ever studied or worked with. Of course she understood the asanas very deeply, not just in terms of technical excellence, but, more important, in their potential to awaken us to the inner dance of our own life and consciousness. And Mary, who loved to talk and was so good at it, was able to express the subtlety, grandeur, and humor of that dance with wonderful articulateness and unbridled enthusiasm. She was a true yoga teacher and embodied the teaching in her life.

I met Mary on my very first trip to Pune in 1981. Our paths crossed many times over the years. She was a very special person. I, like so many of us, am very fortunate to have had Mary in my life. I will miss her.

Shanti, John

The Last Excerpt from Mary's Blog
September 3, 2008

"My outer world is shrinking as my strength goes down. But as I look into my window sills laden with flowers and beyond into nature's sculpture of the barks of timeless oaks, I am again in an inner world that expands and satisfies. Nature from which we come and to which we return, holds out her arms. I am content with this beginning and resolution."

My dear ones:

Most have you have heard by now that our beloved Mary Dunn – friend, teacher, mother, sister, devoted yoga practitioner, and inspiration to so many -- died peacefully in her sleep on Thursday, September 4. With her were her two daughters, Louise and Elizabeth, as well as James Murphy.

On the morning that I heard about Mary's death, I was with Gloria Goldberg, Rita Manos, and Stephanie Quirk in San Diego. We called Guruji and Geeta in Pune to tell them the news. As I spoke with them about Mary, I asked Guruji and Geeta if they had any suggestions for prayers or chants that we could recite with our students as we go through this difficult time.

Guruji and Geeta both said that we should read slokas 10, 11, 13, and 22-30 from the 2nd chapter of the Bhagavad Gita. In this chapter, Arjuna asks for guidance from Lord Krishna as he contemplates the many deaths that will surely take place as he goes into battle:

10. As they stood between the two armies, Sri Krishna smiled and replied to Arjuna, who had sunk into despair.
11. Sri Krishna said, You speak sincerely, but your sorrow has no cause. The wise grieve neither for the living nor for the dead.
13. As the same person inhabits the body through childhood, youth, and old age, so too at the time of death he attains another body. The wise are not deluded by these changes.
22. As a man abandons worn-out clothes and acquires new ones, so when the body is worn out a new one is acquired by the Self, who lives within.
23. The Self cannot be pierced by weapons or burned by fire; water cannot wet it, nor can the wind dry it.
24. The Self cannot be pierced or burned, made wet or dry. It is everlasting and infinite, standing on the motionless foundations of eternity.
25. The Self is unmanifested, beyond all thought, beyond all change. Knowing this, you should not grieve.
26. Oh mighty Arjuna, even if you believe the Self to be subject to birth and death, you should not grieve.
27. Death is inevitable for the living; birth is inevitable for the dead. Since these are unavoidable, you should not sorrow.
28. Every creature is unmanifested at first and then attains manifestation. When its end has come, it once again becomes unmanifested. What is there to lament in this?
29. The glory of the Self is beheld by a few, and a few describe it; a few listen, but many without understanding.
30. The Self of all beings, living within the body, is eternal and cannot be harmed. Therefore, do not grieve.

Some of you remember the prayer (Ksama Prarthana) that Geetaji taught us in Las Vegas last year. I asked her if this would be an appropriate prayer for us to chant at this time, and she said that it absolutely would be.

Ksama Prarthana

*kayena vaca manasendriyairva
buddhyatmana va prakrteh svabhavat
karomi yadyatsakalam parasmai
narayanayeti samarpayami*

*Whatever I have performed with my body, speech,
mind, limbs, intellect
or my inner self – either intentionally or
unintentionally, I dedicate
to the Supreme Lord (Narayana).*

Guruji said that Mary is “a clean and clear person, and she now has freedom. We have lost a dear, good friend. She is noble.” He also said that because of the life that Mary has lead, her soul has the imprint of yoga, which she will no doubt carry into the next life.

In her last days among us, Mary was able to face death without fear and without attachment. In his commentary on Sutra I.15 of Patanjali’s Yoga Sutra, Guruji writes:

“When non-attachment and detachment are learned there is no craving for objects seen or unseen, words heard or unheard. Then the Seer remains unmoved by temptations. This is the sign of mastery in the art of renunciation.”

Mary is a shining example to all of us of what it means to be a true yoga sadhaka.

Please keep Mary’s family, and also her dear friend James, in your thoughts and prayers.

At Mary’s request, in lieu of flowers, donations to support the Iyengar Yoga Association of Greater New York may be sent to: IYAGNY, 150 W. 22nd Street, 11th floor, New York, NY 10011

With prayers for divine blessings, Patricia

P.S. Mary once told me that after class in the evenings, she liked to eat two spoonfuls of strawberry Haagen Dasz ice cream before bed. This would be a fitting way to toast Mary, and to remember her joyous spirit. ■



C/O Lori Lipton, 4201 Wilson Blvd, #110-601, Arlington, VA 22203-1859

WWW.IYASE.ORG

Our website, www.iyase.org, contains valuable info about our members. Certified teachers are listed by state. There are links to the National Association and Mr. Iyengar's website. If you have any requests or suggestions, send them to: web@iyase.org.



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