



Iyengar Yoga Association of Canada

Sri B. K. S. Iyengar  
Honourary President

**Dear Marilyn,**

Welcome to IYAC News.

There is, without a doubt, a great number of people involved in maintaining the vitality of the Iyengar tradition. Every year, people devote hundreds of hours to work on the IYAC Board. Another handful of folks organize the conferences, making sure i's are dotted, t's crossed so that those members who attend the AGM can iron out the standards by which this organization is run; as well as, deepen their learning with respect to yoga. Let's offer a big round of thanks and applause to board members and senior teachers who were committed to another successful conference.

Below, in photos and prose, we offer you a taste of the conference.

After the last newsletter went out, I received a lovely story about teaching yoga in the middle of nowhere. Hilary Philips is an Iyengar yoga teacher in Flesherton, Ontario. When I first read through her article, I imagined Flesherton to be somewhere in Northern Ontario where I'd once spent a summer tree-planting. Hilary schooled me in my failed geography (and I did grow up in Ontario), putting my awareness on the map of the country the way we bring our awareness to our kneecaps in tadasana. To quote Hilary: "Flesherton, Ontario is 140 kilometres north of Toronto, half way between Orangeville and Owen Sound, near the Beaver Valley ski resort area."

You will read about the thriving yoga community in Flesherton and how it started, as well as the humble beginnings of the Peninsula Yoga Centre in Sidney, B.C. Isn't it amazing how far Mr. Iyengar's work has spread over the globe? And the corners it still probes.

Hope you have a fabulous summer.

Namaste,

Traci Skuce  
IYAC News, editor  
[traciskuce@shaw.ca](mailto:traciskuce@shaw.ca)

PS. Don't forget to check out the details of our contest!

## **2009 IYAC Conference and AGM**



Report by Nancy

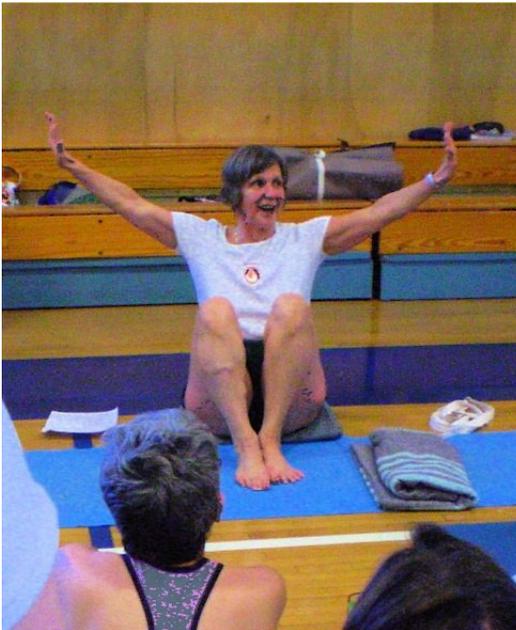


## Searing

This year the IYAC Conference and AGM were held in the charming seaside city of Halifax, Nova Scotia. For those who had the time to explore Halifax, there were plenty of interesting sites to see. However, the Conference and AGM had plenty to offer in the way of exploring our inner selves through the exceptional

teaching provided as we explored the Intermediate Curriculum.

The conference was well-organized thanks to Melissa Schoales and all of her helpers. The setting for the conference was the historical University of King's College, which is affiliated with Dalhousie University, the largest of the six seats of higher learning in the Halifax area. The lovely stone buildings situated around a quadrangle housed the dorms where we each had a private room. All asana and pranayama classes were held in the gym. The cafeteria provided great meals. And the meeting rooms held the space for the many necessary meetings.



It was a precious gift to have our senior teachers share their wealth of knowledge regarding the Intermediate Syllabus. On Thursday afternoon, Marlene Mawhinney taught a refreshing restorative workshop for all of us weary travellers, as well as the assessors and training teachers, who began their meetings on Wednesday. The next three mornings began early with Pranayama, followed by a Q & A session with Shirley Daventy French. Working from the basics, Shirley not only helped us consolidate our personal pranayama practices but gave us lots of tips on teaching pranayama to our students.

The asana sessions with our Intermediate Senior 1 teachers were good for body, mind and soul. The teachers were able to impart their significant knowledge about these syllabi while guiding us to explore for ourselves their teachings in the laboratory of our own bodies and minds. The asana classes began with hip work with Leslie Hoga on Friday afternoon, followed by Purva Pratana Sthiti, backwards extensions, with Ann Kilbertus and forward extension and twists with Linda Shevloff on Saturday. Sunday morning Marlene

Miller challenged us in balancings and inversions. Each of the teachers brought her unique perspective to the work of Mr. Iyengar.

It was delightful to have Leslie, Marlene, Linda and Ann lead us in chanting the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. It was powerful to bring our individual voices together in one voice. Not only did we explore the sounds of the Sanskrit words that make up the sutras but also the English translations to help us strengthen our knowledge of the meaning of the sutras.

The actual AGM, which took place Friday morning, was preceded by a pre-AGM working session Thursday evening. The pre-AGM working session was an opportunity to discuss issues and prepare for the actual AGM. These meetings, while necessary to the functioning of IYAC are not always easy, especially when there are strong conflicting opinions. It was gratifying to note that generally there was an overwhelming sense of trusting the process and willingness to reach consensus so we could move forward and get onto our mats.



Video night at the AGM: Back row, right to left: Marilyn Shepherd, Karen MajorLynne Bowsher  
Front row: Jane Robinson, Ann Arseneau, Patricia Fernandes, Linda Shevloff, Leslie Hoga, Naomi Minwalla

The Indian banquet on Saturday evening was especially delicious. It was a wonderful opportunity to dress up, and enjoy white linen tablecloths, candles, local wines and the company of yoga friends from across Canada, Hong Kong and Bermuda. Dinner on Saturday was followed with the showing of the biographical film of Mr. Iyengar's life "Leap of Faith". This highly inspiring film depicts the story of Mr. Iyengar's courage and conviction as he faced many hurdles before succeeding in uniting his self with divine consciousness.

Goodbye to Ann Kilbertus who has served on the board for 6 years. Welcome to Karen Major our new board member and thanks to Kelly Murphy for staying on for another year.

At the 2009 AGM and conference the following agreements were made by those attending:

1. We now have easy access to the members' page of the website:

Please use the following log-in protocol:

user name: iyacmember

Password: IyenGAR\$ with a capital "I"

2. Assessment dates for 2010 and early 2011 are posted on the events page of our website, at <http://iyengaryogacanada.com/events.php>.

3. Assessment Fees:

The fee for assessment applications postmarked on or after January 1, 2010 will be \$390 plus 5% GST (\$19.50) = \$409.50

4. Professional development standards and hours are currently under review for revalidation of certificates. Please keep track of your hours as usual. A full explanation will be sent to all members as soon as possible.

## Yoga Teacher in the Middle of Nowhere



**By: Hilary Philips**

I became an Iyengar yoga teacher because I had a strong desire to move to the country and teach yoga to people who had not had the opportunity to study it before. In June 2004 my husband and I bought a former chapel with an attached house (built in 1886) in the small village of Flesherton, Grey County, Ontario.

I called the yoga space 'Good Spirit Yoga' with the hopes that the spirits of the chapel would look down favourably on my efforts. By October, I was ready to open the doors to my first yoga class. I had no idea if anyone would come!

At first things went slowly and the classes were very small -- I had one student that month and eight students by Christmas. However, as the year progressed, the students kept coming and they brought with them their near and dear ones. I had no sign and did not advertise, but I was to learn that in the rural countryside 'word of mouth' is a very powerful tool. Before long there were 10 classes a week and I was able to begin a Level 2 class.

The students were an eclectic mix of farmers and artisans, teachers and foresters, a minister, a funeral director, a violinmaker, artists, homemakers and high school students.

I was asked to teach a Grade 11 yoga class at the local high school, provide yoga to the young children who attend a summer dance camp in the village, teach classes to a small remedial girls' boarding school and give a talk to the Annual Conference of the Institute of Consciousness Research.

However, most important of all, my husband now came to three classes a week and was beginning to soften some of the stiffness he had developed due to a life time of serious bicycle racing and touring.

In May 2009 twenty students came to a six day Spring Sadhana. It takes some commitment and enthusiasm for students to get up at 5:30 and drive over 30 kilometres to attend a Sadhana. The photograph above was taken after the last day was completed.

God Bless you Mr. Iyengar, my own teacher Marlene Mawhinney, and all the extraordinary Iyengar teachers who have taught me over the years, whose inspiration and teaching has helped me to provide Iyengar yoga to rural Ontarians.

**The Little Yoga Centre That Could**



L to R: Nancy Searing, Linda Larson, Marlene Miller, Glenda Hingley, Jayne Jonas

## By: Glenda Hingley

Far, far back in the mists of time, in the early 1980's, Marlene Miller, shaking off the prairie dust of Calgary, rode into Sidney, BC, and started teaching Iyengar Yoga classes.

This was before the days of sticky mats and yoga DVD's and well past the first flush of yoga fever of the 1960's. With little more than a bag of yoga belts and the sagacity to spread the word of Iyengar Yoga, Marlene held classes where and when she could. Thus, a tiny "bija" (a seed) was planted on the Saanich Peninsula.

The years rolled by and over time Marlene built a group of strong, dedicated students, willing to follow her to school gyms, community centres and anywhere they could unroll their mats and experience her teaching. She even found teacher apprentices -- Nancy Searing and Glenda Hingley -- so more classes could be offered.

But the turn of the 21st century brought change and revolt! No longer were students content to study and practice hither and thither. No more would they deal with smelly, carpeted floors, unheated rooms or inadequate props. They wanted a home for yoga. They wanted a place to settle down, a place that would always be clean, warm, and welcoming, a place where they could put down stakes and put up a rope wall, a true centre for Iyengar Yoga on the peninsula.

So this group of students and teachers, Marlene, Nancy and Glenda, did what they knew they had to do - gathering their courage and fortitude, feeling like the legendary, mighty warrior Virabhadra himself - they formed a non-profit society and they had meetings. Lots and LOTS of meetings! Planning was done, space was found, finances were arranged. This "bija" was starting to sprout.

A floor was laid, blankets were sent from India, bolsters were assembled and chairs were disassembled. Each stage of preparation was handled with a good, old-fashioned barn-raising attitude, a lot of humour and many, many volunteer hands. Karma yoga in action. The tilling, watering and weeding of that tiny yoga sapling.

Then they watched and waited.

They had built their home for yoga, but would the students come? Yes they did! And they brought friends, family, co-workers and total strangers with them. The classes grew, the teacher roster expanded to include Marlene, Nancy, Glenda, Rosemary, Berwitt (for a while)



nancy, Glenda, Rosemary Barrill (for a while), Jayne Jonas and Linda Larson. The Peninsula Yoga Centre, which had been just a tiny seed not so long ago, grew into a thriving, healthy, strong and vibrant tree of yoga - thanks to the continuing, dedicated work of all of the teachers and all of the students.

So this is our story. We have always envisioned the Peninsula Yoga Centre as a community - a place where we can come together to study, practice and learn about Iyengar yoga and to learn about our Selves. And with the help of each of us, our energy and willing spirits, that is exactly what it has become.



## Call-out for a P.R. Person

We all know that the Iyengar tradition trains teachers and teaches to the highest standards and that Mr. Iyengar's influence on the world of yoga is profound, but Joe Public doesn't seem to know that and it is time they did!!!

Can you help us?

Do you know someone who can?

We are looking for enthusiastic, dedicated people to join the new IYAC Public Relations/Marketing/Promotions Committee.

Please contact: Nancy Searing at [nancysearing@shaw.ca](mailto:nancysearing@shaw.ca)

## DVDs from the Yasodhara Ashram

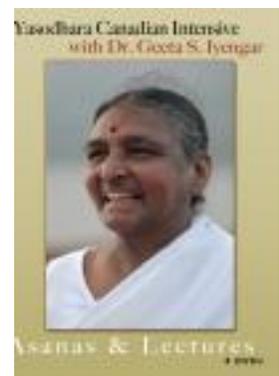
Available now! These DVD's are recordings of Geetaji's visit to the Yasodhara ashram last April.

To order the four-disc asana set, \$68.95, vclick on this link:

<https://www.createspace.com/262165>

To order the two disc pranayama set, \$33.95, click on this link:

<https://www.createspace.com/261589>



## Letters of Thanks for Scholarships





Louie Ettlting, centre, with Ann Kilbertus and Linda Shevloff, RIMYI, February, 2009

Dear IYAC Scholarship Committee,

Although practice, ultimately, takes place in the quiet of one's home and within daily life and personal relationships, learning from and with others helps me to stay inspired and focused. However, such learning costs time, energy and money, of course. Most of us need to find a careful balance between what we might like to do with regards to our yoga professional development studies and what is practically possible. When IYAC members started talking about using more funds to support studies in Pune, an initiative first taken by Sheri Berkowitz at an AGM a couple of years ago, I was encouraged.

Attending classes at the RIYMI at least four times is a prerequisite for some aspects of the ongoing work required in Canada and elsewhere. All costs in India have gone up strikingly; therefore I was very happy to learn, toward the end of 2008, that I was a recipient of a thousand-dollar bursary for my recent Pune trip. Nowadays this amount would cover the month's yoga studies, as well as accommodation - a solid contribution.

Thank you very much IYAC membership, for giving the go-ahead to these scholarships and thank you to the small group of volunteers on the scholarship committee who have donated time to make sure a good idea materialized. I sincerely hope that this support will continue in service of a direct and ongoing broadening Canadian connection with the Iyengar family.

Sincerely,  
Louie Ettlting





Nancy Searing and friend at the Patanjali Temple in Bellur

Dear IYAC Scholarship Committee,

With gratitude I offer my thanks for the \$1,000 scholarship I received to assist me in my studies in Pune, during December 2008. Having the extra money not only eased the financial strain incurred to make this trip, but insured that I was able cover the cost of my tuition and comfortable accommodation for a month.

It is never easy to go to India, and knowing that my accommodations were secure and comfortable allowed me to focus on my practice without worrying about my basic needs. I appreciate all the support I have received from IYAC as I go through the teacher training and certification process.

December in Pune was a month rich not only in the teachings I received from Geeta, Prashant and other teachers at the institute, but in the community of Indian friends and Iyengar teachers from all over the world. Nor can I fail to mention the honour of having the opportunity to participate in Gurujii's 90th birthday celebrations. While the classes offered in December were few, due to the celebrations, the teaching was all-encompassing and focused on preparing teachers to teach. As I practice what I learned I realize I received the gift of clear, precise and practical instruction. It appeared that Geeta was preparing for her inevitable retirement and was passing what she knows to the teachers. It was a great time to be there.

The 90th birthday celebrations were incredible. We began with observing the priests bless Gurujii and partaking in meals that the Iyengar family provided for hundreds of well-wishers. Over the next few days we had the pleasure of enjoying many wonderful performances and displays including: Indian classical dance, a flute recital, the recitation of Kahlil Gibran's *The Prophet*, a children's yoga demonstration, an art exhibit depicting Gurujii's life and works and the screening of the film *Leap of Faith*. A few days later a large group of us travelled to Bangalore where we travelled for 4 days in 9 buses to visit Gurujii's birth village and see all of the development work he has supported there. As part of the trip we also visited many historical sites. This was a wonderful time to forge friendships with Iyengar Yogi's from all over the world.

After settling into the rhythm of the classes, the practice, and participating in all of the celebratory events both in Pune and southern India in December, I was prepared to settle in and focus on studying at RIMYI for the month of January 2009. However, my time ended early in Pune.

I returned home at the beginning of January because my mother had been

hospitalized. I was moved by the power of kindness when all those around me expressed their concern and offered support. I was particularly touched by the consideration of the secretary at RIMYI who refunded my January fees and the compassion Geeta extended when I told her I had to leave and she said "god bless you." I did feel blessed.

I am grateful for the opportunity to go to RIMYI to study and appreciate the support of IYAC through the receipt of this scholarship. Thank You.

Sincerely,  
Nancy Searing

## **Tell Us Your Best Yoga Story, Win an IYAC T-shirt**

For levity and fun, write us an account, in 100 words or less, of the strangest place you ever taught a yoga class, the most interesting place you ever practiced your asanas, or the most bizarre yoga-related tale you can tell.

A photo would be great too, but we're really looking for words, and yes, we will be counting!

The top two stories will win an IYAC t-shirt and will definitely be seen in the next issue of IYAC News. Honourable mentions will also be published.

Deadline is July 30th.

Submit to: [traciskuce@shaw.ca](mailto:traciskuce@shaw.ca) with IYAC contestant in the subject line.

Good luck and have fun!

## **Deadlines for Upcoming Issues of IYAC News**

We want to hear from you! Photos and/or short stories of your yoga life. Send them to [traciskuce@shaw.ca](mailto:traciskuce@shaw.ca) with IYAC News submission on the subject line.

Deadlines are as follows:

Aug 7

Oct 10

Nov 21

Feb 7

March 24

June 5

## **We're Never More Than a Click Away**

Visit the members only link to the IYAC website. Connect to the shop, view committee reports. download applications. Many things to see and read!

<http://iyengaryogacanada.com/teachers/snb441991.php>

**[Forward email](#)**



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