

October 2009

Iyengar Yoga Association of Canada Newsletter

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Dear Marilyn,

Welcome to IYAC News.

Brevity. We are taught to teach this way. With clarity and precision. We have come to realize that our newsletter should reflect this practice. In our efforts to downplay wordiness, we are keeping articles and news items short.

Still, however, we invite you to contribute photos and brief write-ups of events in your Iyengar communities, tributes to teachers or yummy little morsels.

Consider, also, the haiku:

*trikonasana
angles and spinal length, always
like coming home*

Imagine teaching your poses in haiku? What would you say in seventeen syllables? How would you say it?

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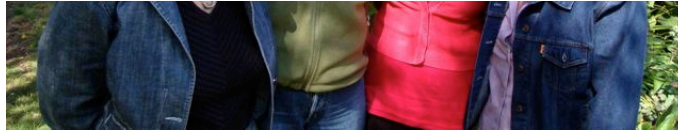
Regarding Teaching

Recently BKS Iyengar has been reviewing different policies. He wrote this directive to be sent to all teachers throughout the world. He asks that we only teach poses that we are certified to teach:

"Certified Iyengar Yoga Teachers may teach only asana-s on the syllabi up to and including the level for which the teacher has been assessed. No asana-s from a higher level syllabus is to be taught unless a teacher of that higher level is present in the classroom to guide the teacher."
B.K.S. Iyengar

Your Board At Work





Since the
Halifax AGM,

the IYAC board and executive have had conference calls and some in person meetings to keep the work of the association going.

The IYAC executive met this fall at Nancy Searing's house in Sidney B.C. From left to right Leslie Hogya, Marilyn Shepherd, Nancy Searing and Patricia Fernandes,

Save the Dates!

Next year's AGM will be held May 20-23 at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT), Calgary -- only one week after Geeta's visit to Portland, Oregon.

The IYAC conference will focus on skills of seeing, observing, correcting and adjusting. More details will be passed along as the year unfolds.

Remembering Wende Davis

On September 12, Vancouver's yoga and art communities came together to celebrate the life of Wende Davis, who taught Iyengar yoga here for more than 30 years.

It was an extraordinary gathering of close to 300 people. There were slides of Wende's life and her work as a visual artist, and tributes from friends, colleagues and students. Our thanks go to Nancy Roberts, who wrote the tribute excerpted below. Of all the eulogies read that day, it communicates best what made Wende such a beloved teacher. Photo by Carel Moiseiwitsch



By Nancy Roberts

I've been a student of Wende's for over 15 years. When I try to put into words some of what I found so remarkable in Wende's teaching, I think of the words "seriousness" and "lightness." Wende united these two qualities.

My first classes with Wende were at the old Cambrian Hall off Main St on 17th, in Vancouver. Sometimes, as I lay on my mat there, I wondered what else happened in that shabby, funky place when we weren't there. There were clues: smells of beer, faint traces of cigarettes, gumminess on the floor. Occasionally, there were even shards of broken glass. Remnants of revelry and debauchery, so far removed from our earnest endeavours. Aside from the dirt and odour, though, glitter sometimes stuck to our hands, our feet, our mats. And we were an unglittery bunch.

A few were young and lithe, but more of us were middle-aged, stiff and squishy -- happily cranky. Tired at the end of the working day, we gave all our attention to the intricate demands of Iyengar yoga, Wende's voice, gentle and insistent, leading us in this work.

Feel the skin of the thigh move back to meet the bone. OPEN the collarbones, lift the sternum and pull in the coccyx. Lengthen the back of the neck.

All those parts to find. (The kidneys? Did she just tell us to move our kidneys?) Where were these things? The coccyx in relation to the sacrum, the sacrum in relation to the sitting bones. But as we moved through our bodies to identify, to label, to discover, we started to thread our awareness from part to part - from the upper sternum to the lower, from the collar bones to the spine. *Allow the upper end of the sternum to lift toward the throat, while the lower end falls, gently toward the diaphragm and the center widens, and spreads toward the collarbones.* (A sternum can spread?).

This serious work required devout attention. But as we found those threads, we were pulled into our own bodies. Sometimes we could laugh briefly, chat lightly for the five to 10 minutes of partner work but then it was back to the individual /collective consciousness of breath and spine and skeleton.

The brown wooden floor savasana: *open the backs of the knees and the hamstrings and let them sink into the floor.* Wende took us there: floating on our backs, on our mats. The grey and the soft, the paunchy and the stiff, the tired and the lovely - all of us freed, let loose into our inner selves.

We carry Wende now in our bodies whenever we fill our lungs down to the bottom, lift our sternums, or draw the navel gently toward the spine. But for me there are other lessons from Wende that I am still trying to work out, still trying to understand. And these are just as precise and just as demanding as revolved triangle or elbow balance. Something about how she taught - seriousness and lightness - paying serious attention and letting go. To do serious work without taking yourself too seriously. To fill yourself with the buoyancy of breath while grounding through the pull of gravity. To be here on earth. And to be present.

Namaste Wende.

To read Wende's Obituary, by Globe and Mail writer Noreen Shanahan, [click here.](#)

Pune Protocol

Newly Issued Guidelines from RIYMI





It is requested that all teachers share the following to prepare students to attend classes at Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute in Pune, India.

Please know that attending classes at this Institute is a privilege and not a right.

All classes are taught in English. Knowing the Sanskrit names of all asana-s is required. Students should have a working vocabulary in English, and should have listened to many of the available CD's of classes to familiarize themselves with Prashantji's and Geetaji's pronunciations and use of terms. In the class, those from a non-English speaking country, please be in a group so you can help your fellow nationals.

Before entering the Institute building shoes must be removed and placed in the metal racks provided for this purpose. This area is protected and there is a guard to watch that your shoes don't disappear. Therefore do not put your shoes in a bag and take them into the institute.

The ground floor is where the following business is conducted:

- 1) Class fees paid for general classes and observing classes. Class tuition may be paid in:
 - a) Cashier's checks (bank checks),
 - b) travelers checks, or
 - c) Cash/Rupees, Dollars or Euros
- 2) When buying books, CD's, DVD's from Chandru, or CD's from Parvez (Prashant's class recordings): Chandru can accept credit cards. Parvez requires cash.
- 3) Additional purchases: blankets, belts, various foam pads, various blocks and T-shirts.

Classes:

Please bathe prior to classes.

Students need to know how to safely use the wall ropes and ceiling ropes for Sirsasana.

The advanced classes and practice hours are offered on the first floor. Intermediate and beginner classes meet on the second floor. Your class schedule will be given to you at the time you pay your tuition. Chandru and/or Pandu will guide with determination of class schedule. Classes are assigned based on whether you are first time student or have attended multiple times.

During classes there are quite a few routine behaviors that students are expected to know, but many first time students may not be aware. Below is a list of these:

1) Props for asana class: The prop room is at the opposite end of the hall from where one enters. Prepare for the invocation by providing yourself with a sticky mat and appropriate blanket to sit.

2) Props for pranayama class: get a thick mat (one stack is found at each end of the hall), a bolster, a pranayama pillow and generally one blanket.

Find a place and position yourself in vertical rows, radiating from the center of the room in front of the raised platform where the teacher will begin class.

Props when requested can be passed out of the prop room to the students. This applies to chairs, belts, blocks, bolsters and blankets. Blankets are not to be fully opened and not to be used to cover yourself.

A request to "alternate yourself" means that the person on the center vertical line in front of the raised platform lies with head towards the platform and the persons going outwards to the left and right of the center person, their head is in the opposite direction continuing to the end of each line. This allows the hands to be placed between your neighbor's forearm and torso for savasana without restriction for your hands and arms.

Setting up the mats for Sarvangasana - this means that pairs of students go to the thick mat stacks and take 3 or 4 mats and place them parallel to the front of the room. Generally 4 rows are placed, all parallel and in a straight line. The first row is placed 3 feet from the front of the stage and then each successive row is placed with about 3 feet between the rows. The piled mats provide the base for Sarvangasana. More height may be added under your shoulders only, if required (sticky mat and blanket). You may also be asked to "alternate yourself" for Sarvangasana as described above, especially for doing Sarvangasana variations. Do not assume that the set-up for each class is exactly the same. Listen carefully to each teacher and assist each other so the class can proceed smoothly.

Women on their cycle should know what is contraindicated to be practiced during menses. Listen carefully for what the teachers request menstruating women to do and follow that. Those not well should let the teacher know and follow their instructions. If you have a fever, bed rest is best. Stay home.

Observing Classes

One must request permission to observe all general classes or medical classes. There is a fee to do so.

If you are given permission to help in medical class, you must first read the patient's card. If you are not familiar with abbreviations used, ask local assistants. Follow the card sequence. Ask for help.

When observing, do not use props and be aware of how you are impacting the students taking the class. This is of the utmost importance.

If you are sitting at the back of the room near the windows act responsibly/move to give space for those attending class.

If you are sitting in the stairwell you must move to allow students to get in and out of the second floor class room. The stairwell is circular, therefore be sure to give the broader part of the staircase for these students to ascend and descend.

Talking in general in the asana room is kept to a minimum - volume / quantum. Keep your conversation to yoga related issues. Be silent in the practice sessions and before class while waiting for the teacher to begin.

While waiting to enter the hall for class, stay to the left side of the stairwell so those leaving a class can descend.

Be on time. Dress appropriately (sleeveless & low cut shirts are not). Keep shirts tucked in.

To help the teachers:

After the invocation any blankets, bolsters, not required for immediate use should be placed so that the teachers may walk around the room and adjust the students without the worry of tripping over the props. At the end of class all props are to be put away and the entire hall cleared before anyone leaves. Put away more props than you took out. This will insure that the clean up is quick and easy.



New Public Relations Committee

At the last AGM, a Public Relations Committee for IYAC was formed, born from the necessity for growth and care of Iyengar Yoga in Canada.

Our first job was to define the purpose of our committee. That done - next - how to go about making it happen? Not so easy, we are all busy with our daily lives which include our teaching, children, jobs, etc. etc. So how do we do this?

That question remains on the table.

There is, however, one plan we are promoting:

B.K.S. Iyengar is the most celebrated living yogi in the world. We need the world to know about this amazingly influential man and his accomplishments.

On December 14, 2009, we invite you to celebrate BKS Iyengar's birthday by **chanting 91 Oms**. Imagine the power of a chanting nation!

This offers up a great opportunity to seek local publicity that would bring attention to Iyengar Yoga. Contact your local papers, send out e-newsletters to students and friends - spread the word! All publicity

benefits us in the global Iyengar community.

- Jayne Jonas, Chair, Public Relations Committee

Speaking of PR. . . .

A smashing beautiful brochure will be sent to Regional Reps very soon. It will also be posted on the members only page of the IYAC website.

It is intended to spread the word to the general public about Iyengar yoga. And it can be personalized by teachers to include their own contact information. It will also be available in French.

Hard copies will be available from Regional Reps, by request, if your own printer does not do an adequate job.

Red Lentil Soup for Your Yogic Soul

I love when the weather cools and I can make soup for lunch. Here is a recipe I use for the workshops we host in the Comox Valley. Simple and satisfying, it nourishes and comforts the body after a morning of asanas. If you have a recipe you'd like to share, send it to traciskuce@gmail.com

1tbsp. oil, ghee or butter
 2 tbsp. grated ginger
 pinch of hing (asafoetida) *optional
 ¾ tsp. turmeric
 ¼ tsp. cardamom
 2 carrots, finely chopped
 2 celery sticks, finely chopped
 1 c. red lentils (rinsed and picked over)
 6 c. stock or water
 ½ tsp. salt (plus more to taste)
 1 tbsp. lemon juice

Heat oil/ghee/butter over medium heat. Add carrots, celery, ginger, salt and hing (if using). Stir until celery is translucent. Then add turmeric, cardamom and lentils. Stir thirty seconds, then add stock or water, lower heat and simmer twenty to twenty-five minutes. Give it a stir to see that all the lentils are cooked. Before serving, add lemon juice and any additional salt. If you like a garnish, chopped cilantro does nicely. So does a swirl of yogurt or a swish of hemp oil.

Serves 4.

Oops

Our deepest apologies for omitting Athena George from our list of successful certification candidates in the last newsletter.

Congratulations Athena for completing your Intro I & II certification in June.

We also stated incorrectly that Saskia Gould lives on Saturna Island, not Bowen Island, which is her home.

New Regional Rep

We are very happy to welcome Nicola Tiburzi of the Sunshine Coast in BC as the new RR for BC Mainland.

Val Speidel has served IYAC as regional rep very well and we extend our sincere thanks for her service to IYAC.

Nicola will introduce herself to the members, both Val and Nicola will likely receive the next message to send out to the members and then Nicola will be flying solo for the remainder of her term with us.

As a side note, Val's management of her exit and Nicola's introduction to the RR post is a classy example of how to solicit a new rep and manage her introduction to IYAC. Seamless- and as easy as possible to say "so long and heartfelt thanks" to one and "welcome" to the other.

Assessment with a Friend - Do Try This at Home

By Michele Gunderson

In June, I flew to Winnipeg with my friend Sharoni to be assessed for Introductory I/II. In all our hours of study and practice together, we sometimes felt like we'd learned more in the weeks approaching assessment than in all our previous years of practice.

Assessment was a fabulous experience. I felt embraced by the loving community in Winnipeg, from the students who scurried to follow instructions to the volunteers who prepared gluten-free cookies, fresh veggies and rice, luscious strawberries, and decadent squares of dark chocolate for us.

Our assessors and assessors-in-training were amazing: knowing how nervous we all were, each one took care to make the journey as smooth as possible for us all.

This experience has taught me to pay greater attention to the details of practice than ever before - that tremendous openings come from the smallest of places.

Before the intensity of preparing for assessment, I never could have guessed the extent to which opening up my tight ankles would open up my whole practice - and my life as well.

Thank you so much to Margot Kitchen, my senior teacher, and to all who continue to make this extraordinary experience of assessment possible.

I'm thrilled to have made the journey, and I look forward to the next step.

*Michele (left) and Sharoni in Calgary, just before assessment.
Photo by Rob Walker*



Yoga Stories

A few months back, we asked you to submit your strange and funny yoga stories in no more than 100 words. There were two respondents to that contest. Thanks Glenda and Cindy for taking the time to send these lovely stories in!

Glenda Hingley, Sidney, B.C.

I work in an early childhood centre, usually with one year olds, but we recently added a yoga class for 4 and 5 year olds. They are energetic, busy and not at all concerned with alignment!

I had been advised by yoga friends to teach using Sanskrit terms and the children amazed me by repeating the words and even remembering a few of them.

After the second week, one of the moms (a former student) told me that her 4 year old had decided that her daddy's favourite asana was "beer-abhadrasana."

Cindy Campbell, Toronto, ON

Having just finished my first year of teacher training and looking for a class of my own, I eagerly accepted an opportunity to teach at a community centre.

I was more than a little shaken to walk into a room of 45 women, many in traditional dress, no equipment, minimal English, but lots of smiles. Thank goodness for "come and watch"!

I have a wonderful memory of teaching Supta Padangusthasana I - a rainbow of scarves for belts, legs up in the air exposing long johns under burkhas, and a lot of laughter substituting for words.

2010 Membership Renewal is on the Horizon

2010 IYAC Membership application will again be able to be done online. We urge ALL MEMBERS to use this online option to minimize error and increase efficiency. The online site is secure and only takes minutes to use.

All 2009 IYAC members will be sent information about your 2010 membership application, including your ID#, in late December 2009 or early January 2010, so stay tuned!

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