

February 2014

Iyengar Yoga Association of Canada Newsletter/Les nouvelles de l'ACYI

In This Issue

Guruji Awarded
National Honor

Celebrating
Guruji's 95th
Birthday in Pune

Raya Uma Datta to
teach at AGM

Q&A with Leslie
Hoqya

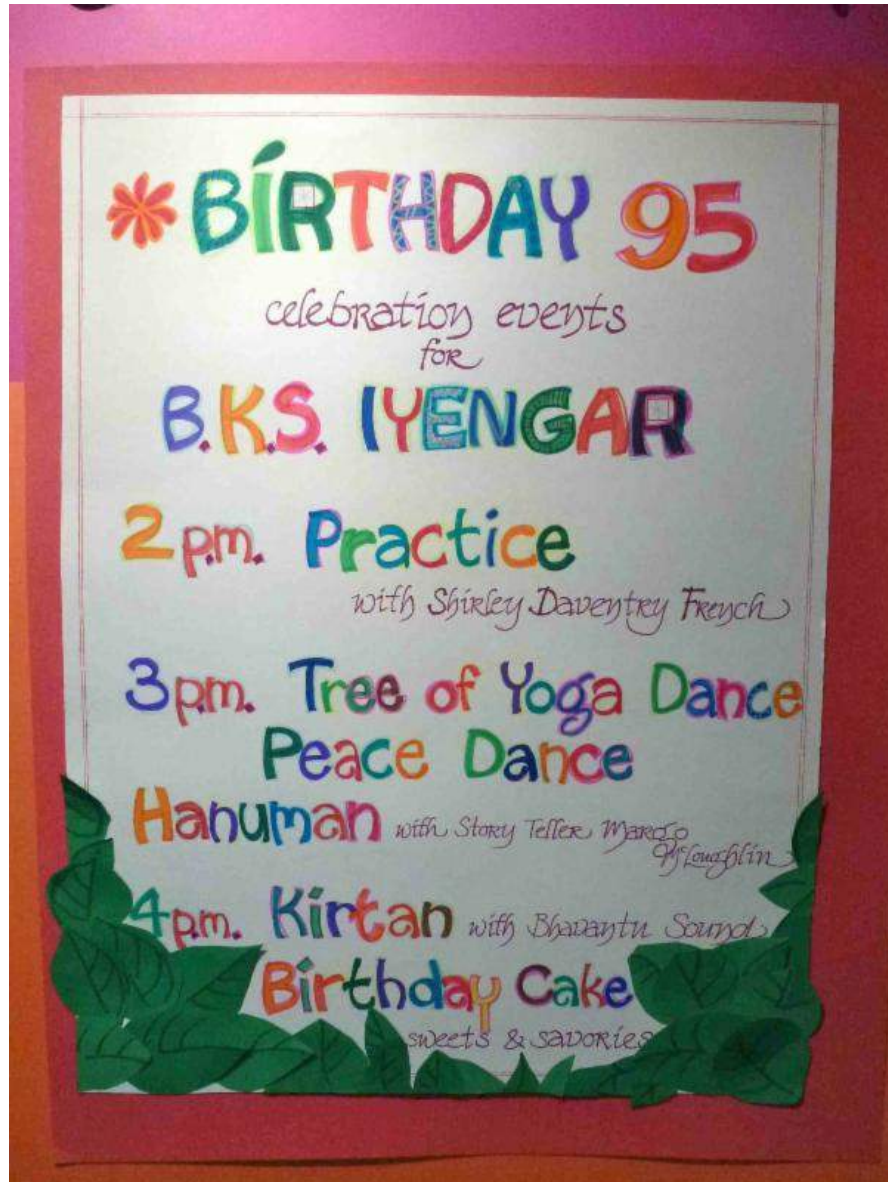
A Compendium of
Iyengar Yoga
Therapeutic
Practices

Leigh Anne Milne's
Pune blog

Assessment News

Iyengar Yoga
Comes to Kenya

Submission
Guidelines for IYAC
News/les nouvelles
de l'ACYI



Schedule for Guruji's Birthday Celebrations in Victoria

Dear Marilyn

Connecting to the Source

Over his decades of vigorous practice, innovative exploration, and refined teaching, BKS Iyengar has touched many, many lives - not just here in Canada, but around

the world. India has recognized his work yet again, with the second highest national honour for a civilian. It is not surprising that there is an international movement underway to nominate Guruji for a Nobel Prize.

Those of us who have not yet been to Pune are grateful to those of you who make the journey and return to share your teachings - keeping us unified, and connected to the source.

Former IYAC/l'ACYI President, Leslie Hoga, (Victoria, British Columbia), recently returned from Pune (her 10th visit). Leslie was at RIMYI for Guruji's 95th birthday celebrations. She shares the experience with us, and is also featured in our Q & A.

Leigh Anne Milne, (Chester, Nova Scotia), former IYAC Newsletter Editor, recently arrived in India (her 5th visit). For a taste of Pune, scroll down and check out an excerpt from Leigh's blog.

Marlene Mawhinney, (Toronto, Ontario), a frequent visitor to Pune, has just completed a Compendium of Iyengar Yoga Practices; a comprehensive resource for teachers qualified to work with special health challenges.

Lastly, we are delighted that Libby Yager, (Winnipeg, Manitoba), has shared her insights from her work with teenage girls of the Maasai Mara, Kenya, reminding us not only of the importance of service, or karma yoga, but how we all can learn from one another.

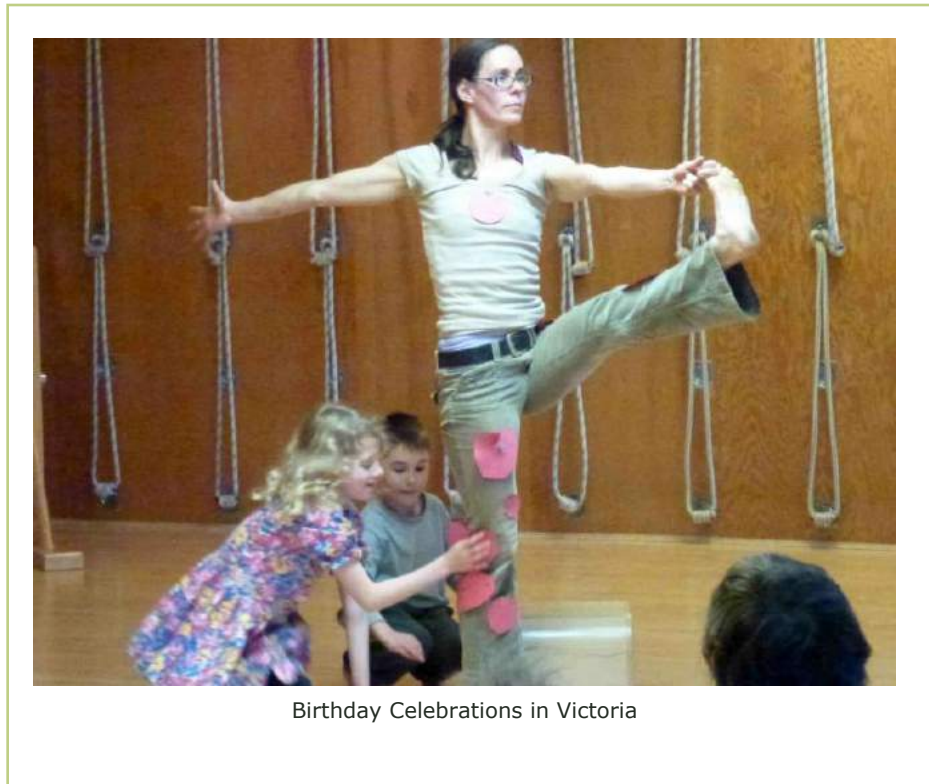
In today's world of airline travel and internet proliferation, borders and boundaries are increasingly irrelevant. Yoga means union. Whether we live in Toronto, or on the Massai Mara in Kenya, we are all connected.

Karyn Woodland and Eve Johnson

Can't see the photos? Check that your email program is able to view remote images. In Mac's Mail Program, for e.g., go to "Preferences," then to "Viewing," and tick the box beside "Display remote images in HTML messages."



Krisna Zawaduk performs *puja* in Kelowna in honor of Guruji's 95th birthday.



Birthday Celebrations in Victoria

Guruji Awarded National Honour

BKS Iyengar is the most recent recipient of the Padma Vibhushan Award to recognize "exceptional and distinguished service to the nation of India."

The award was announced on India's 65th Republic Day celebrations, January 26th. The formal ceremony will be held in Delhi in March, when Guruji will receive the medallion and a citation from the President of India.

The award is the second highest civil honour anyone can receive in India. Recipients are recognized for their work in various fields, including: public affairs and civil service; art, education and literature; science and engineering. But this is the first time the award has been given to a Yoga Master.

BKS Iyengar is already the recipient of the Padma Shri and the Padma Bhushan Awards.



95 poses in 95 minutes in Kelowna, in honour of Guruji's Birthday

Celebrating Guruji's 95th Birthday in Pune

By Leslie Hogya

Before I left for India, an email came telling us there would only be low-key birthday celebrations for Mr. Iyengar's 95th birthday. There had been sadness in the family in recent months, so no major event was planned.

When I was at RIMYI, an announcement was made that all the students from the Institute were being invited to come to a large venue for a birthday dinner and celebrations. We were to list our names in a book, and, as the days went by, I

checked the numbers. They kept growing; 400, then 650, and on up.

Then, a big surprise! On Friday, (December 6th), Geeta announced that the foreigners were invited to observe a pranayama intensive she was giving starting on Monday, leading up to the birthday weekend. The course would be taught in the main hall during the usual practice time, to the local and other Indian teachers. Those of us from other countries would be watching via video feed upstairs in the smaller studio.

On Wednesday morning, all the visiting teachers, and regular students were told to come to the regular 9:30 am class. Geeta managed to teach over 200 of us pranayama, sitting on one blanket, and sharing a mat! The course ended Friday at noon. What a gift to us!



Guruji Speaking to students at RIMYI

Friday evening and Saturday morning the Institute itself was closed so there could be private events for the birthday with just the family.



Leslie and Horst Binski from Germany at Guruji's 95th Birthday Celebrations in Pune

On Saturday evening, over a thousand people began to gather at Govinda Gardens. Guruji, and everyone in the family, arrived for welcoming talks and chanting.

Stephanie Tencer from Toronto was among visiting teachers who were invited speak to Guruji. This was a refreshing opportunity to hear from the younger generation of teachers from around the world; everywhere from Brazil to Siberia. (You can read Stephanie's reflections on her trip to Pune at her blog, [Yoga Bound.](#))



Stephanie Tencer speaking to Guruji at Govinda Gardens

Guruji spoke briefly, and, as a group, we paid our respects to him. Then dinner was served in stations throughout the venue. People from all over India, and the world, mingled and talked. It was a wonderful evening!

Sunday, after the birthday, Geeta invited us to the Institute where she gave a talk on the Bhagavad Gita, which she has been doing monthly. Chapter 12 was the topic for this day. She said to do yoga asana with sacred mind; have religiosity in practice.

So, a week of pranayama, a celebratory dinner, a talk on 'The Gita' - a very full week indeed! I felt very grateful to be there to participate and offer my respects to Guruji.

Raya Uma Datta to teach at the Halifax AGM, May 15 to 18, 2014

Early Bird Registration for The IYAC/ACYI AGM and Conference in Halifax is now open for Members only.

March 8th is the deadline to register at the special Members' price of \$340.00 (plus tax).

This fee includes:

* All asana and pranayama classes from Thursday afternoon to Sunday noon to be taught by Raya Uma Datta

* A reception Thursday evening

* A light breakfast and lunch Friday, Saturday and Sunday

To register, log into the IYAC/ACYI website using your member ID and password and go to:



Raya Uma Datta

<http://www.iyengaryogacanada.com/products/agm2014eb>

After March 8th registration will open up to both non-members and Members at a price of \$390.00.

We were inspired by Raya's teaching at the Toronto AGM in 2012 and are delighted to have the opportunity to study with him again.

The conference will take place at the Four Points by Sheraton Hotel in the heart of downtown Halifax.

The hotel is just one block from the waterfront and within walking distance of Citadel Hill and the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, as well as shopping and a variety of restaurants.

For more information about the hotel, please go to

<http://www.fourpointshalifax.com/>

A limited block of guest rooms has been reserved at the hotel for those attending the conference. These rooms will be held until April 14, 2014.

Traditional rooms contain either one king or two queen beds, but other types of rooms are available. Please contact the hotel directly at 1-866-444-9494 to reserve.

A list of B & B's close to the venue will be coming soon.

Please mark your calendars. We hope you will plan to attend this Conference and experience Raya's teaching.

Drew Perry
President, IYAC/ACYI

Q & A with Leslie Hogya

Leslie Hogya is a Senior Certified Iyengar Teacher living in Victoria, BC. Along with Shirley French, Leslie was instrumental in the establishment of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria. She is a long-time IYAC supporter, and has served on the Board in various capacities, including President. Leslie has studied with the Iyengar family on numerous occasions, most recently in Pune in January of this year (her 10th trip to India).



Leslie Hogya

1. Please tell us a little about your yoga background.

I began doing yoga in the early '70s, first from a book. I had never been much attracted to athletic pursuits. My idea of physical education was taking ballroom dancing! But I started having some back pain, and thought yoga sounded like a gentle way to get some stretching.

My husband and I moved to Victoria and one of the first people I met was Carole Miller. She was taking yoga at the local YMCA and I went with her and signed up. They had babysitting which worked out well for me at the time. Our teacher, Jessica Tucker, taught what was just called yoga, which was very gentle and slow-paced.

A few years later, Jessica asked me to teach a class. I was a school teacher, and I guess that paved the way for being a yoga teacher! As time went by, I took a training course Jessica organized.

Right after I finished my teacher's course, the ink still wet on the paper, Shirley French brought Norma Hodge to Victoria for monthly Iyengar classes. This was my first introduction to Mr. Iyengar's method, even though we looked at Light on

Yoga for inspiration. The method was dynamic, and I found I couldn't teach in the way I had been trained to do.

2. Do you have a favourite story, or anecdote, about BKS Iyengar?

In 1984 we went to the first International Yoga Convention in San Francisco, and afterwards, Guruji visited Victoria. It was very exciting to have him here, and many were inspired by his presence. A year later, I went to a Canadian Intensive in Pune that Shirley organized. Only nine of us were allowed to go from Victoria, and I was thrilled to be included; I was also worried because I had been dealing with a neck injury. One day, Mr. Iyengar helped me lift into a backbend and I let out a yell - really of release, not pain. I saw such compassion in his eyes. He knows by a touch, and a look, what one is capable of.



Leslie in *Sarvangasana* to free an injured shoulder.

Another memorable time occurred when I was in the library in Pune. Mr. Iyengar conducts interviews and discusses issues with students who seek his counsel out in the open. (There are no secret meetings!) Projects may be going on around the work tables while these interviews are taking place. In 2004 Stephanie Quirk enlisted my help to organize large photos from Light on Yoga and put them into archival sleeves. I was to cut and tape the labels under each photo.

This project ended up generating a lot of discussion with Guruji. We asked how long it took to take all the photos for Light On Yoga.

"Three years," was the reply. The photographer would take a picture and print it and come back each day with proofs. In this way Mr. Iyengar saw the results of the photographer's work. He started to observe the angle of the lights, and the way shadows were created. He learned to use blue lights, and how to position himself, so it was the pose projected not his personality. Look again at these remarkable photos! Everything had to be done with old fashioned developing

techniques.



Leslie with Guruji in the library at RIMYI

**3. What is some of the best advice you have received from BKS Iyengar:
- for your teaching?**

He has not given me personal advice, but from all the readings and listening I have done in talks, I would say "teach from your practice" is one of his constant themes.

- for your personal practice?

I was in Pune in December [2013], and asked for help in dealing with a severe shoulder injury. Guruji worked with me, and wanted me to push, and lift further and higher to gain freedom. As I reflect, in humbleness, I must continue to explore what he was showing me, to try and grasp the gift of his time. I must continue to challenge myself and go beyond my limitations.



Leslie (assisted by Pixie Lillas of Australia) in a high version of *Urdhva Mukha Svanasana* which Guruji gave her to work on.

4. What advice would you give junior teachers?

Practice, practice, practice! Go to Pune.

5. Do you have any recommendations;

- for those preparing for Assessment?

Study the syllabus, beyond the one for which you are preparing. To stop at that level of practice is limiting. I am surprised when people say they have only been practicing the poses on their syllabus. Open Light on Yoga, try a pose you have never done. Explore and delve into the pose. Consider which poses you know that would be 'stepping stones' to this new pose. If you practice poses from across the various levels, you will see how they all build understanding.

- for those travelling to the Ramamani Institute in Pune?

Go with an open mind. Go early to orient yourself to the culture, and time difference. Don't do a lot of running around. Practice. Go to class. Go to observe some upstairs classes. You are there for yoga. Stay quiet.

6. What is your vision for the future of Iyengar yoga in Canada?

I hope the younger generation will take the vibrancy, and the vitality of Iyengar Yoga into their practice and classes.

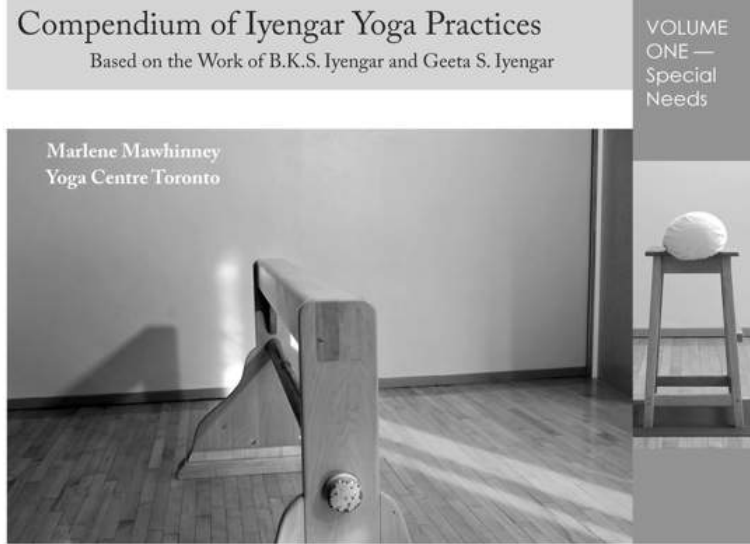
. . . What does BKS stand for? One of the things Guruji said in December was, "It stands for Beauty, Knowledge and Serenity."

So in the future, we can develop the beauty, knowledge and serenity of Iyengar Yoga.



Leslie teaching in Hong Kong.

A new guide to therapeutic yoga practices in Iyengar Yoga, by Marlene Mawhinney

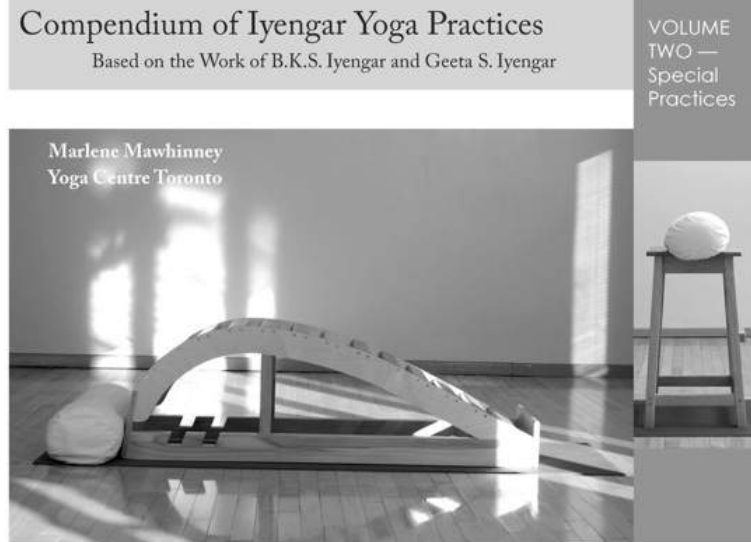


Contributed by Cindy Campbell

In this two-volume set of over 600 pages packed with instructional photographs, Senior Iyengar Yoga teacher Marlene Mawhinney offers 19 planned practices for people with health challenges, with depictions of the classical asanas modified for use in various conditions, many with stages of practice.

Volume 1 - Special Needs addresses musculoskeletal problems of the joints and spine, as well as suggested practices for healthy maintenance for prenatal, fertility support, and menopause. (Including practices for: back care, knee problems, hip replacement, menopause, prenatal, and shoulder problems.)

Volume 2 - Special Practices addresses systemic illnesses with the goal of promoting a return to healthy living. (Including practices for: Alzheimer's, asthma, high blood pressure, cancer while under treatment, cardiac, chronic fatigue, depression, fertility, fibromyalgia, headache, HIV+/AIDS, and Parkinson's.)



On how the Compendium came to be, Marlene explains, "Dr. Gregory Robinson, a long-time student and Yoga Centre Toronto (YCT) Board member, first suggested the idea of putting together a guide for teachers of the practices I was using in the therapeutic classes. With the blessing of the YCT Board, a three-year journey began.

"It was a tremendous opportunity for me to re-examine each practice and to be very specific about presenting the proper applications of the props. The photographs needed to illustrate the ideal set-up, but the text needed to inform the teacher that the practices have to fit the student, not that the students must fit the props.

"It's also about understanding the nature of the student - taking a close look at the psychology of the illness, not just the presenting symptoms. I can't stress enough that as a teacher, you must work with these practices yourself to understand them, before introducing the work to students. For all of these reasons it is essential that, if this manual is used as a teaching tool, certification must be at Senior Intermediate 1 or higher."

HIP REPLACEMENT PRACTICE — Stage 1

Standing



Abdominal and lumbar



140

In February 2013, Marlene took a draft copy of the Compendium to Pune for Mr. Iyengar to review. He examined every photo and every instruction. He asked for very few changes - a testament to Marlene's devotion to the Iyengar system of teaching!

Marlene sums up her feelings about the three-year project and the final result: "Throughout the process of working on this manual I was filled with wonder and thrilled anew with the magic and the brilliance of B.K.S. Iyengar."

About the Author

Marlene Mawhinney has been teaching yoga for over 40 years. She is the President and Senior Teacher at Yoga Centre Toronto.



Marlene Mawhinney

Photographer for the Compendium is Brenda Ledsham, an Intro 2 teacher at YCT.

Compendium of Iyengar Yoga Practices, Volumes 1 & 2. Based upon the work of B.K.S. Iyengar and Geeta S. Iyengar.

By Marlene Mawhinney, Sr. Int. 3.

Published by Yoga Centre Toronto, 2013. 669pp. Launch price \$143.96 (plus GST) plus shipping costs.

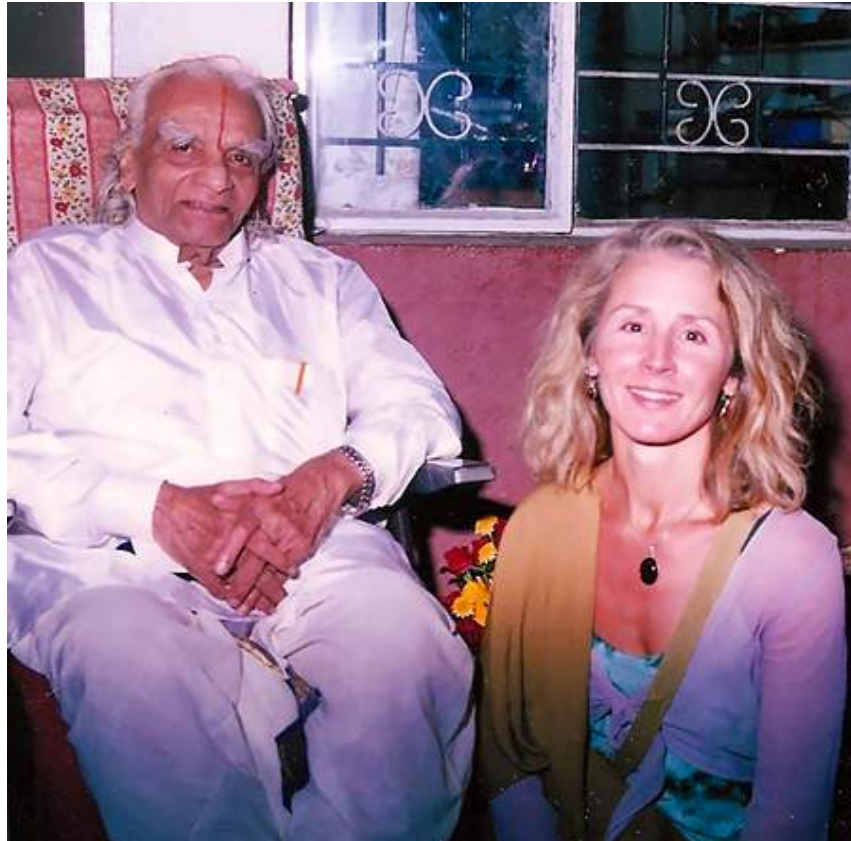
To order, please email yoga@yogacentretoronto.ca

Discounts for multiple orders from studios may apply.

Cindy Campbell is a Junior Intermediate I teacher at several studios in Toronto. She is a partner in iCommunicate, a communications firm that specializes in Ontario health and social services communications.

Atha Yoganussasanam: Now the Yoga Journey Begins (Anew)

Former IYAC News Editor Leigh Anne Milne (Chester, Nova Scotia), recently departed on her fifth trip to India. She plans to stay in touch via her blog on her new website. Below is an excerpt from her blog, The View From My Mat:
<http://www.thesadhanacentre.com/>



Leigh and Guruji at RIMYI in 2003

My first visit to RIMYI was in December 2002/January 2003.

I had planned for it and dreamed of it for years. Waiting until my daughter was old enough, my practice strong enough, until my multi-disciplinary clinic could run without me and my massage therapy patients were well looked after... ducks all in a row.

Visiting the Iyengar Institute for the first time was both a terrifyingly exciting and profoundly sobering experience. I was so grateful to finally be here.

The first day of class Prashant Iyengar walked the 100 plus students in attendance around the main hall to observe photos of Gururaj Iyengar from Light

on Yoga. These pictures create a border that wraps around the room like a classical frieze. He wished for us to observe the meditative facial expression, the inward focus. This lesson set the standard for me in practice and I have never forgotten it.



Leigh and bovine buddy in Pune

Every time I visit RIMYI I learn something profound about myself.

The first time I found meditation in practice; on my second visit I learned to get over myself - that was a big one. The third trip changed my feet.

The fourth trip, was a profound spiritual journey and, 10 years after the first trip, forced me to accept my changing body. Assisting in the medical classes has made me a better teacher and has been immensely helpful in my massage therapy practice.

As with all opportunity one must go there an empty vessel. You cannot give to an already full cup therefore the journey must NOW begin anew.

Assessment News: Announcing the Successful Candidates!

The following candidates passed their Intro / II Assessment in London, Ontario on November 3.

Congratulations to the successful candidates.

Adia Kapoor	Victoria BC
Jane Smiley	Toronto ON
Nesta Falladown	Wilberforce ON
Sharon Citron Himel	Toronto ON
Karin Young	Kitchener ON
Waruni Maya Wensvoort	Uxbridge ON

Johanna Godliman

Victoria BC

With thanks to Fay Gascho.

Iyengar Yoga comes to the Kisaruni School in Kenya

Libby Yager, a family therapist, (and a long-time student of Sandra Stuart in Winnipeg), travels twice a year to Kenya to volunteer at Kisaruni High School, an all-girls private school in the Maasai Mara, run by Free the Children (FTC). Libby collaborates with the students and staff to implement a mentorship project for the students. As part of this project, Libby practices yoga with the girls and facilitators.



Schoolgirls in Dandasana on the Masai Mara.

There are about 150 of us practicing yoga at the Kisaruni All-Girls Secondary School in the Maasai Mara. Energy fills the room. But the girls are modest. They are wearing their school uniforms and we all laugh when we lie on the floor and pull our knees into our chests. I forget that this would be a difficult pose wearing a skirt!

As I teach the girls yoga and ask them to pay attention to their breath, there is a hush that comes over all of us. We stand up straight and tall, hands by our sides and notice our breath moving in and out of our bodies.

Mountain pose is a favourite. We stand, "strong like a mountain," and are filled with our own strength and the strength of our families, our mamas, and their mamas before them.

These girls are changing their lives and their destinies. They have education and

knowledge, different than their mamas. Still they stand with pride in their families; they honour the lessons passed on to them by their parents and grandparents, aunts and uncles. They respect and love their families, and show humility and gratitude toward them.

As we move into a forward bend we imagine taking in the teachings of our environment. We honour the soil and ground, which we hope will prove to be a place where grains and vegetables can grow. Again we notice our breath. As we bring our bodies to attention again, I look around the room. There is a knowing and a connection between the girls and again a stillness in the room.

We are creating a sacred space of learning. I talk about how the brain is nourished by our thoughts. Life may sometimes present us with circumstances beyond our control, but we are in charge of our minds.



A sea of red skirts in *Trikonasana*.

Another breath and we move into triangle pose. I ask the girls to spread out so they have space to stretch their arms and legs. But they do not move very far apart. It is quite a picture; 150 girls all in *Trikonasana*, red skirts beautifully flared, while they lightly touch each other with their fingers.

We turn our bodies to one side, point our arms towards the wall, bend one leg into *Virabhadrasana*. I shout, "Stand like a Maasai warrior!" They giggle.

We come back to mountain pose and I ask the girls to simply breathe. Breathe in their strength, take in the energy of their friends and their teachers, and feel the solid ground under their feet, the foundation of their families and communities.

We talk about developing good study habits by making the mind clear and fresh. We talk about how important it is to prepare the mind for learning, just as we prepare the soil for growing a garden. Each time we sit down to study, or write a test, we must prepare our mind.

We lie in *Savasana* - 150 young women all lying together on the floor. There is

laughter and we just let it happen. We laugh and laugh, but slowly the room becomes still.

I ask the students to really notice the sensations in their body; the safety in the room; the support and comfort of their friends and teachers. I ask them to feel their bodies on the ground and to imagine that the ground is like the foundation of their families.

I think of my yoga class in Winnipeg, and my teacher, Sandra. I feel so lucky to have her teachings and to attend her classes. I feel grateful to have the foundation of my family supporting me in my life and in my travels to Kenya. I feel grateful to be in the presence of wisdom, of the Kisaruni girls, facilitators and FTC staff.

I "take in" this gratitude - and joy - as I gaze upon all these beautiful young women of Kisaruni School in the Maasai Mara. As we lie quietly in *Savasana*, I know - anything is possible!

"Thank you all, again and again, for giving me this time with each of you...for sharing in yoga practice. *Asante Sana Sana* [thank you in Swahili] for showing me what hope feels like!"

For further information on this Free the Children project see:

<http://reports.freethechildren.com/community/allgirlssecondary/>

IYAC News/les nouvelle de l'ACYI Submission Guidelines

We welcome feedback, IYAC news, updates, articles, workshop reviews, interviews, recipes, and RIMYI practice sequences, (in either of our official languages).

Submission deadline for the May issue is April 15.

SEND TO: kwoodland@telus.net

- * Please keep submissions to 500 words or less.
- * Single space between lines and single space after periods.
- * Please include your name, and a brief bio.
- * We welcome photos (jpeg format).
- * Please identify subjects of photos.

This newsletter is published in January, April, September and November. We currently do not have a classified section.

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