

September 2013

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

In This Issue

[Q & A with Margot
Kitchen](#)

[Vancouver's BKS Iyengar
Yoga Association Spreads
the Word](#)

[Shining Compassion:
Satoko Oqura.](#)

[Yoga and Respiratory
Disease](#)

[Assessment News](#)

[Submission Guidelines
for IYAC News/les
nouvelles de l'ACYI](#)



BKS Iyengar at the Grand Canyon: *It is through your body that you realize you are a spark of divinity.*

Dear Marilyn

I hope that summer has left you relaxed, refreshed, re-energized, and ready to embrace a new season of yoga!

One of my intentions, when I assumed the role of editing this newsletter, was to include in every issue a little of the 'wisdom of our elders.' Prior issues featured Shirley Daventry French (Victoria), and Marlene Mawhinney (Toronto). [If you missed them, go to the IYAC website to read back issues: <http://www.iyengaryogacanada.com/newsletter>].

We are fortunate again to have another Q & A with a pioneer of Iyengar Yoga in Canada - Margot Kitchen (Calgary). After someone told me they do not read beyond what appears on their screen, I decided these Q & A's should appear on page 1!

As you scroll down, you will also find a report from Sarah Godfrey on the Iyengar exhibit at the annual Vancouver Yoga Conference, as well as a link to some exciting research undertaken by Judith Mirus (Edmonton).

Iyengar enthusiasts from across Canada gathered at the 2013 Annual Conference in Victoria - a wonderful opportunity for shared learning and community building. Lauren Cox and crew did a beautiful job on logistics, and all our well-trained senior teachers skilfully shared their expertise.

Welcome to our new Board, and President Drew Perry (Winnipeg); and much, much gratitude to Lynne Bowsher (Winfield, BC), our Past President, along with the 'retiring' talented and hard working Board

Members. Thank you all for your inspiring service and commitment to Iyengar Yoga. [For a list of our new Board, go to: <http://www.iyengaryogacanada.com/board-directors>].

Next year the Annual General Meeting and Conference will be held in Halifax from May 22-25, 2014. Mark your calendar!

Meanwhile, pour yourself a cup of tea, sit back, and ... scroll down!

Namasté,
[Karyn Woodland](#)

A note to our readers: if you can't see the photographs in this newsletter, please check that your email program is able to view remote images. In Mac's Mail program, for example, go into "Preferences," then into "Viewing," and then place a tick in the box beside "Display remote images in HTML messages."

Q & A with Margot Kitchen, Senior Iyengar Teacher in Calgary



Please tell us a little about your yoga background:

My husband was a banker and in the early years of our marriage, we moved every 18 months to three years. The stress of moving caused neck and back spasms. As a young mother I suffered post-partum depression and the medical answer was Valium. I knew there had to be a better answer than medication.

In Montreal three friends and I decided to try a yoga class at the local high school. It was conducted by a small Indian man who said we should be vegetarian, celibate, and completely change our lives - our collective response was to laugh and think "get a life!!"

The other gals left yoga but something made me stay. I experimented with several traditions and each had something to teach me. In 1975 I attended an Iyengar workshop in Calgary with Glen Moyer. I had found

my yoga home.

We then moved back to Toronto and I attended classes with Barbara Lansberg and Alan Morinis (both had been to Pune).

Esther Myers asked me to assist at her studio, and, in 1985, along with Esther, Shirley Daventry French, and several teachers who are now senior certified, I went to Pune for the first time.



Canadian Teachers in Pune, 1985. (See any familiar faces?)

By this time we were living (and I was teaching) in Calgary. Felicity Green became a huge influence in my life. I studied with her at Yasodhara Ashram and organized teacher training retreats for her for several years.

I was studying to take certification in the U.S. as we didn't yet have certification in Canada. However, when Guruji asked that Canada 'come in line with the rest of the world,' I was one of the early teachers 'grandfathered.'

Once I thoroughly committed to Iyengar Yoga, the depth of my practice and teaching changed and I stopped skating across the surface of experience.

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

Where to begin? I have many!

In 1987 I was in a rickshaw accident in India. It never occurred to me to fly home. Instead, Lois Steinberg introduced me to Dr. Naik, who took me under his wing. I went to class every day with my knees all bandaged and my hand in splints and Guruji would work with me. The wounds would open, the bandages would be bloody, I would cry and the audience on the stairs grew.

That accident gave me the opportunity to begin a relationship with Guruji that I might not otherwise have had. At one point I was standing

before him with tears streaming down my face and I said, "I'm sorry Sir, it's the pain."



He had the most compassionate look in his eyes as he said, "I know." And then he returned to being firm; "But do you want to live your life with stiff knees?!"

I had dowels behind my knees, squatting in front of the trestle, and Guruji would stand on my back and move up and down. Today (at 72) I do not have stiff knees!!

In a practice session a few years ago Guruji happened to be setting up for *Sirsasana* at the same time as I was setting up. I thought to myself, "Let me see if I can stay as long as Guruji."

We were facing each other and he knew exactly what I was thinking! Of course I came down long before he did, and when I looked up he was grinning and even upside down his eyebrows were twitching!! He has a great sense of fun.

Another time, Guruji challenged us to beat his record of eating Jalebis [a popular sweet in India] - 175! I think Zubin got to 75 and then Guruji laughed and said, "Backbends tomorrow!"

What is some of the best advice you have received from BKS Iyengar:

- for your teaching?

To teach by example. In *Tree of Yoga*, Guruji says: "Yoga gives firmness of body, clarity of intelligence, cleanness of heart. That is peace, and by looking at that peace, others will learn. Cultivate that supreme strength of peace, joy and delight. Then others, seeing the joy in you, will say, "I want to enjoy too." You are a true helper of society when the pupil comes to you, instead of you going to him. Then it is a pure teaching and a pure message."

- for your personal practice?

Guruji was helping me with *Padmasana* and I thought I got into it reasonably well - he looked at me and said, "Ssshhh don't force!! You force!"

Of course he was referring not only to my *Padmasana*! Throughout my interactions with Guruji this has come up more than once. (I'm a slow learner!)

When I was released from hospital last year, one of my colleagues, Cynthia, had this saying of Guruji's framed: "The decision to relax rather than to grip even in the face of impatience or fear is a conscious and brave choice."

It's in my yoga room as a constant reminder .



What advice would you give junior teachers?

Practice, practice, practice! For yourself first, and then for your students. You cannot teach what you do not know and practice. When you attend intensives or workshops, take time to assimilate the information before passing it along to students. So often I see teachers 'parroting' what they've learned in a workshop before they really understand what they've experienced.

One of the most important aspects of practice is to include *Pranayama* and *Savasana*. These two are often passed over when time is short.

As I age and face more challenges, *Pranayama* has become an unbelievably important tool.

Do you have any recommendations:

- for those preparing for Assessment?

Do the work and experience the postures so you know them thoroughly

in your own body and can see clearly how to help your students. You can't pass an assessment by 'cramming.' When you know the work, physically, mentally and emotionally, then trust that the knowledge will be there for assessment. Treat the assessment process as a learning rather than a pass/fail situation. Regardless of the outcome, the learning is invaluable. Many teachers who have not been successful the first time, have come back stronger than ever.

- for those travelling to the Ramamani Institute in Pune?

As much as possible, go without expectations - with an open mind and heart and trust that what you experience will be what you need. Often the lessons have nothing to do with the yoga on the mat.

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

I hope that Iyengar Yoga will become part of the curriculum in schools. Our young people have so much stress and the world is moving so quickly that the tools of yoga are necessary. In Calgary it's now a credit course in at least two High Schools that I know of.



Iyengar Yoga is proving to be invaluable in dealing with medical issues.

The supported postures are very important, but so are the 'back of the book' postures that young people have more access to - we don't want to lose those postures and what they have to teach us.

Those of us who have been around a long time need to continue to teach these postures.

The AGM in Saskatoon a few years ago had the theme of vibrancy - this is what we need to teach, and help students experience - *Virya* (unflagging enthusiasm or the essence of vitality).

Vancouver's BKS Iyengar Yoga Association Spreads the Word

In October 2010 and November 2011, the Vancouver BKS Iyengar Yoga Association sponsored a booth at the Vancouver Yoga Conference. We were very fortunate to receive funding from the IYAC Certification Mark to help out with many of the expenses incurred for both events.

The purpose for exhibiting at the Conference was to raise the profile of Iyengar Yoga in this vast and expanding 'yoga market'. Although Iyengar Yoga has been formally established in Vancouver and nearby regions (now for 37 years), it's still relatively unknown to many, so these were good opportunities to 'spread the word.'

We produced some items for the booth:

- * an ad (designed by Val Speidel) for the Conference booklet
- * a colorful brochure/handout (designed by Marla Britton)
- * a banner, which was displayed above our exhibit
- * 3 large (dry-mounted) photographs

Gerie Primerano taught a condensed *asana* class on the main 'yoga floor' to approximately 75 people (sans props!)

We wanted the feel of the booth and the brochure to be inviting, yet informative. Volunteer students and teachers staffed the booth.

Over the course of both Conferences we collected dozens of names and email addresses (with their permission) from people who said they would be interested in further information on Iyengar yoga and events.



In 2011 we held a contest for a \$75 gift certificate donated by Halfmoon Yoga Props. With help from Eve Johnson, we touched base with everyone on the list, announcing the winner, and also sent a second email telling them a bit more about Iyengar yoga.

Remaining brochures were distributed amongst the local studios and teachers. The brochure contained good information about Iyengar Yoga and listed all the certified teachers with a link to their teaching locations. It also made reference to IYAC.

When all was said and done, we did accomplish our mission and our

presence at the events was worthwhile. Our volunteers were enthusiastic and engaged many attendees in conversations. It also brought a sense of community to those involved.

We declined, however, to participate in the 2012 Conference. We decided that the returns in terms of new people were not noticeable enough to make it worth us spending the time/funds to do it again at this time.

Namasté,
Sarah Godfrey

[Ed's Note: Future issues will include further reports on the use of Certification Mark subsidies.]

Shining Compassion: Satoko Ogura

Born: October 18, 1967 in Japan
Died: July 2, 2013 at home in Victoria

Satoko was a member of the Iyengar yoga community in Victoria.

She was a young woman with a young family who had worked diligently on her teacher training over the last number of years.

At the Buddhist ceremony in memory of her life, the Priest presented her Buddha name: Shining Compassion. This was Satoko.

Many of us gathered at the ceremony, during which Britta Poisson gave a beautiful tribute to her ending with a Rumi quote:

"Every moment is made glorious by the light of love."



Satoko Ogura playing the drum

Sad News from Pune

Guruji's son-in-law and Sunita's husband, Parathasarthy passed away on August 17, 2013 in Pune. We extend our condolences to Guruji and his family.

Yoga and Respiratory Disease

Edmonton Senior Teacher Judith Mirus took part in a pilot research project conducted in association with the University Hospital, on the effects of yoga on people with respiratory illness.

The article, titled: "An assessment of the effects of Iyengar yoga practice on the health-related quality of life of patients with chronic respiratory diseases," was published in the *Canadian Respiratory Journal*, March/April 2013 (Vol 20: No.2).

You can read an abstract of the study on the PubMed.gov website at www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23616973.

The bottom line: after 12 weeks, the 25 patients (median age 60), had lower levels of anxiety and fatigue, and improved ability to move. Patients journals reported, "improvement in breathing capacity, mobility, energy, sleep and included positive feedback such as: "increased tidal volume with slowing expiration", "I have an overall feeling of wellbeing" and "excellent amount of energy".

For further information, contact: jj.mirus@gmail.com

Assessment News: Announcing the Successful Candidates!

Intermediate Junior III

April 26-28 * TORONTO
Cynthia Palahniuk
Suzanne Fitzpatrick
Krisna Zawaduk
Nadia Horodinsky
Jocelyn Hollmann

Introductory / II

April 26-28 * VANCOUVER
Missi Hegyes
Terri Damiani
Roberta Vommaro
Shirley Turner
Suzan Wood
Siobhan Sloane-Seale
Meghan Goodman
Mark Pezarro
Luci Yamamoto

Introductory / II

June 21-23 * OTTAWA
Anne Marie Stewart
Christopher Sutherland
Doris Demers
Davina Parkinson

Introductory / I

June 8-9 * CALGARY
Moirra Nicholson
Ruth Martin
Nives Vilicic
Barbara Lee
Dana Cook
Patty Henderson
Colette Fitzpatrick
Tracy Silberer
Jo Ann Telfer

Introductory / I

June 15 * VICTORIA
Tracy Harvey
Jane McFarlane
Suzanne Tremblay

Introductory / I

June 21 * VANCOUVER
Brandon Overland
Karina Paradis
Natasha Toushaw

Introductory / I

July 5 * VICTORIA
Brandy Baybutt

Introductory / I

July 14 * SASKATOON
Dave Palibroda
Sandie Irvine

(With thanks to Lisa Towson and Fay Gascho)

IYAC News/les nouvelle de l'ACYI Submission Guidelines

We welcome IYAC news, updates, articles, workshop reviews, interviews, recipes, and RIMYI practice sequences.

Submission deadline for the November issue is October 25.

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.

* Photos submitted in 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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