



Iyengar Yoga Association of Canada

Sri B. K. S. Iyengar
Honourary President

Dear Marilyn,

Spring has been slow-coming this year, though the country is beginning to green up. That is always the beautiful promise, isn't it? New beginnings.

For IYAC, another spring means another AGM. This year it's in Halifax. On the agenda this year are new motions, motions that concern you - the members.

Last spring, a motion was set forth to become greener in our yogic ways. Light on Earth, as it were. Included in this issue, we have Kelly Murphy's thoughtful proposals on how we might be able to achieve such lightness using the technologies that are now so widely available to us.

And speaking of technology, I'd like to ask you for photos and (short) articles to be included in this newsletter. Inundate me with images. Really, I don't mind. Asanas in the garden? Fabulous. Photos from a recent workshop? Teachers' meeting? Share it with the country. Going to India? Snap away.

And so, I shall wander into my garden now. Nourish the soil with compost and seaweed the way I nourish my body with asana and breath.

Happy Spring.
Namaste,

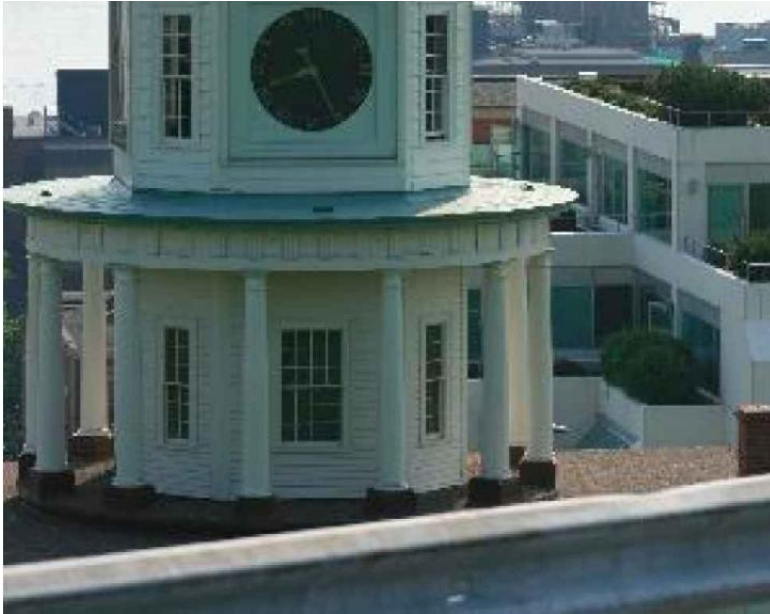
Traci Skuce
IYAC News, editor
traciskuce@shaw.ca



Regional Column: Halifax Hosts the AGM

Halifax: come for the history, sea, trees, arts, and of course, Iyengar Yoga!

Halifax is an historic city founded in 1749, and the warmth and



charm of that period is still quite visible in the older houses and buildings, including the famous clock tower (left).

Halifax is also a vital and contemporary city, presently evolving into a place with more cultural diversity. This stems partly from the fact that it's a port city.

But its numerous universities and colleges

also draw people from around the world. One of those universities, the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, is a world-renowned art school and it has helped to generate a vital local arts community.

Halifax is also home to Canada's oldest chartered university, the University of Kings College, which, by the way, is the charming location for the 2009 IYAC Conference and AGM.

Although it offers many benefits of an urban centre, in Halifax, nature is never far away. You always feel the presence of the sea, also, there are two large parks within walking distance of downtown. One, Point Pleasant Park, which is situated at the mouth of the harbour, is a 185 acre walking park; the other, the Halifax Public Gardens, is a more restrained, yet beautiful historic Victorian garden.

There is a modest but strong Iyengar community in Halifax thanks in large part to David Thomas who has maintained Vital Health Yoga Centre - an Iyengar studio (filled with every prop imaginable!) in downtown Halifax for many years.

David Thomas and Melissa Schoales are certified Iyengar yoga teachers in Halifax and Petra Rykers is a teacher in training.

Elizabeth Kingsland, Lisa Lelliott, and Leigh Milne are certified Iyengar teachers in Nova Scotia and hold classes in the south shore area.

We hope you enjoy your time at the AGM in Halifax!

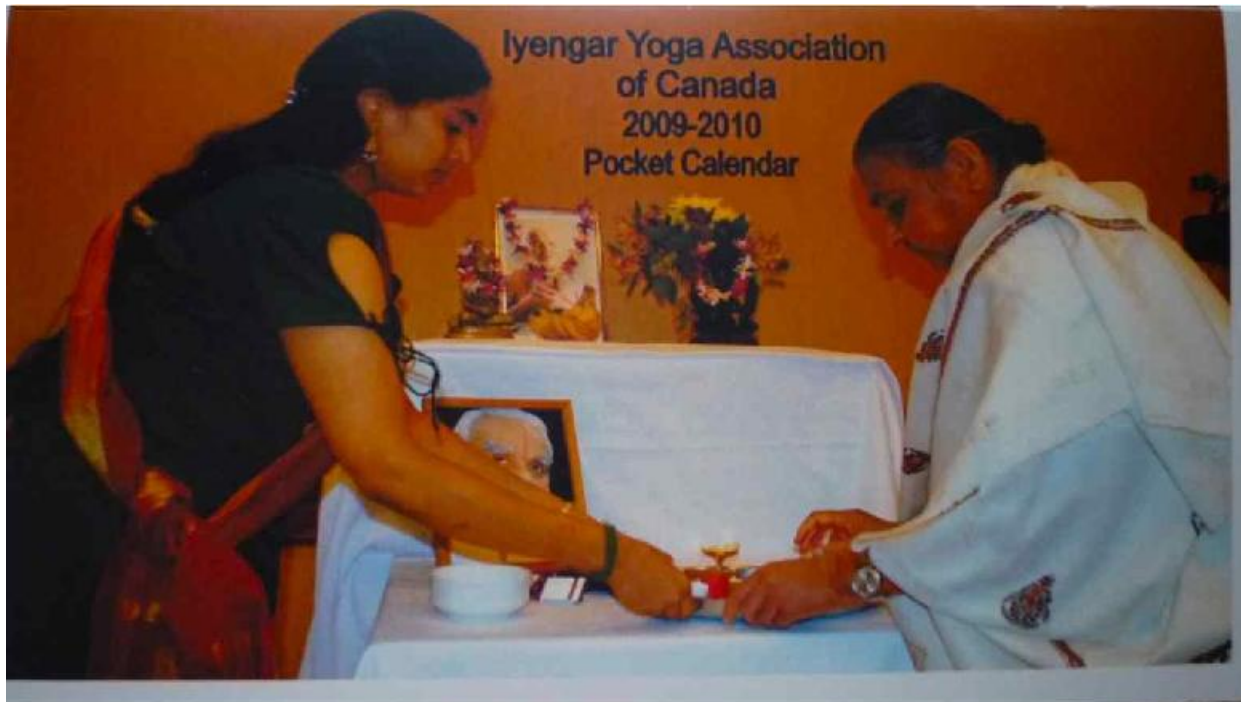
Thanks to Melissa Schoales for putting together this little profile of this lovely Maritime city.

Invitation to Members for Topics and Motions for the 2009 AGM

All members are invited to submit topics or motions for discussion at the 2009 Annual General Meeting. Please send an email to Lynne Bowsher at lynne.bowsher@primus.ca by April 30 so that there is sufficient time to prepare and include it on the agenda. Lynne is Board liaison for the AGM.

Want to see what's already up for discussion?
Proposed motions for the AGM can be found at the IYAC website, at <http://www.iyengaryogacanada.com/teachers/snb441991.php>.

Not attending the conference? You can still make your wishes known. Download a proxy form for each motion you'd like to vote on from the IYAC website, at http://www.iyengaryogacanada.com/association_conference.php and send it to the conference with your representative.



The Front Cover of the New IYAC Pocket Calendar

It's new and available at the AGM. Scroll down to find out how to get your copy.

Message from the President

Dear Members:

It is time to turn our attention to our upcoming conference in Halifax 21-24 of May. A few years ago, Linda Shevloff, Ann Kilbertus, Marlene Miller and I became Int. Senior I teachers. It was decided that we teach the asana classes in Halifax, focusing on the intermediate junior syllabus.

Val Paape's committee helped refine the topic for the classes.

Two of our most senior teachers will also be teaching. Shirley Daventry French will teach early morning sessions on pranayama with time for questions. Marlene

teach early morning sessions on pranayama with time for questions. Mariene Mawhinney will lead us through a restorative practice after our travels on Thursday afternoon of our arrival day.

There is, of course, the formal work of the AGM. The first evening affords us the time to go over motions before the formal AGM on Friday.

Motions will focus on a variety of topics, including "greener" assessments, disseminating more information in French and reducing bureaucracy around certificate renewals.

We are hoping to have the time to show the new film, Leap of Faith, which was premiered in Pune for Guruji's 90th birthday. It is an inspirational and moving film about his life.

We hope to see you in Halifax!

Leslie Hogya
President
Iyengar Yoga Association of Canada

(Don't forget there are bursaries available for all members. Email Lisa Townsen, at orenda@mts.net, for more information, or check out this link to conference information on the IYAC website: http://www.iyengaryogacanada.com/association_conference.php.)

Gabriella Models the New BKS Iyengar Association T-shirt

From March 13 through 17, Gabriella Giubilaro brought her clarity, good humor and depth of knowledge to Vancouver, to teach an intensive workshop sponsored by the BKS Iyengar Association. On the first day we gave her one of our new organic cotton tees, with a vibrant Om, silk-screened in purple, wrapped by the words ". . . is where the heart is, Iyengar Yoga Vancouver." We think she liked it - she wore it on two of the workshop's five days.



IYAC Membership Services: How Can We Serve You Better?

By Kelly Murphy
Board Liaison with regional reps

I want to broaden the conversation several of us have been having within IYAC regarding an improvement in member services as well as movement toward a "greener" organization.

Currently IYAC serves 390 members. We provide a training and assessment function, an annual general meeting and professional development conference. Additionally we have a library, a Directory of members and a pathway to obtaining a Certification Mark for certified members. Recently, we have added this newsletter and scholarship fund to support members wishing to attend the Annual Conference. Following Mr Iyengar's wishes, IYAC board members and the CIYTA members before us have been focused on assessment processes for more than a decade. Now the process is well in hand along with the management of membership, documentation and professional development.

A Turning Point

Since last year's AGM, due to the downturn in the economy, I have been approached by members about the pressure to scale back expenses. In BC, I know of four people who have had to drop their IYAC membership.

Also, at last years' AGM a resolution was adopted to explore the feasibility of offering regional assessments at the Introductory level I so that the impact of travel on climate change can be reduced.

How can these two threads be developed into IYAC initiatives so that services to members are expanded without increasing fees and our organization takes steps to reduce global climate change?

The following are some suggestions to spark discussion:

1. That IYAC support initiatives for professional development by videotaping workshops held by Iyengar certified teachers (with their permission) and make them available to those who cannot attend.
2. That IYAC support teacher members who are willing to travel to outlying areas and offer classes and workshops. As well that IYAC support teachers willing to offer classes in such venues as women's shelters, penal institutions, hospices and multicultural centres.
3. That IYAC provide for a payment of fees program that allows for those needing to pay monthly.
4. That regional reps be granted a small stipend for gathering members in their areas.

Others in our organization have also been thinking about expanded membership services as well.

The Professional Development Advisory Group: which includes Val Paape, Ann Kilbertus, Val Speidel, Teddy Hyndman, Lisa Lelliott and Susanne McAdam have drafted a paper called Ideas to Consider and in section six of that longer discussion paper, called Membership Services, they call for:

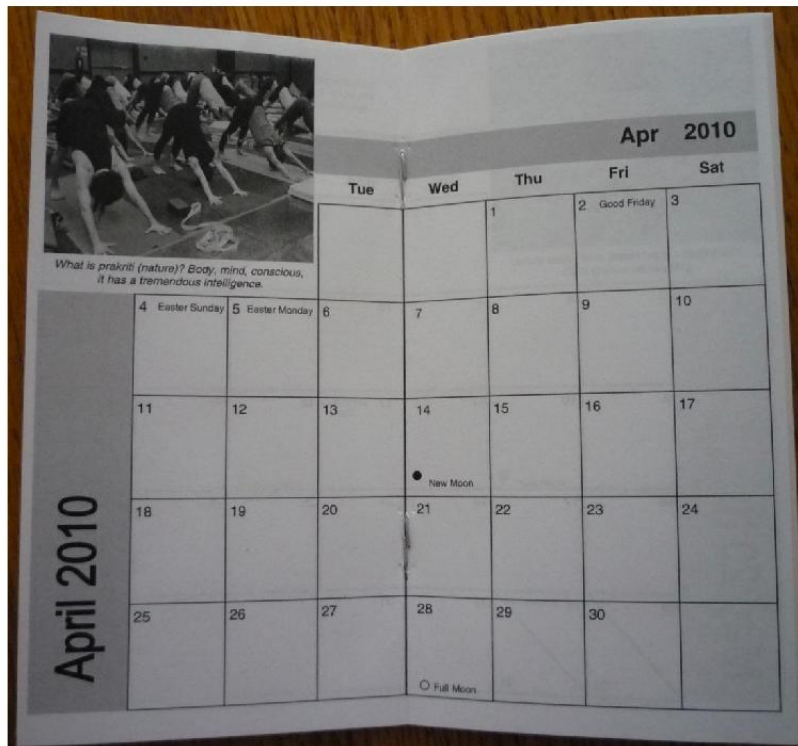
1. Providing expanded insurance options for dental health and long term disability benefits for full members.
2. Improving commercial insurance policy for studios which reflect actual business needs.
3. Having a BLOG site on the website to encourage dialogue between members.
4. Increased honoraria for Board and regional reps to reflect the actual costs of meeting

meeting.

5. A forum for knowledge/experience sharing in creating and operating yoga centres.
6. A forum for members to present issues that they may have with any aspect of IYAC membership.

When you read this, please give some thought to how IYAC can extend itself to serve you, our members, using existing technology to share our experiences, to support you in your yogic endeavours and bring us together without adding to the alarming shift in planetary well-being through our use of fossil fuels.

At the pre-AGM there will be time to express your ideas. You might contact your regional rep before the AGM to ensure that your ideas are reflected in the discussions. At the AGM we will meet to see how we can move the ideas toward action. If you wish to be part of that initiative, let us know.



IYAC Pocket Calendar

Have a look at the IYAC Pocket Calendar - new and available at this year's AGM. A 19-month calendar from June 2009 to December 2010 with a 2011 calendar at the back, it will be a long-lasting memento of last year's conference with Geeta Iyengar.

Each calendar page includes a small black and white picture from the conference, along with some of Geeta's "words of wisdom" beneath each picture.

The calendars will be available at the conference bookstore for \$5 each. If you are not attending but know someone

who is, ask them to pick one up for you!

Help wanted: seeking web-savvy volunteer

We're looking for web-savvy volunteer to take on the position of IYAC website subcommittee chair.

This role involves keeping the website current, as well as developing it to serve the needs of members.

For example, we are hoping to develop a "Pune connection" page, providing information, tips and hints for those travelling to the Institute.

Help will be available from time to time from IYAC's administrative assistant for the

help will be available from time to time from IYAC's administrative assistants for the posting of routine information.

For more information, email Barbara Young, the outgoing committee chair, at b-young@rogers.com.

Pune Connection

By Barbara Young

We've created a new page on the IYAC website called Pune Connection, at <http://www.iyengaryogacanada.com/pune.php>

During the coming year, I'd like to fill it with information about studying at RIMYI, with maps, information about where to stay, eat and shop, as well as personal accounts from Canadians who have studied there before.

If you have photos of the institute we might use on the website, please send them along.

And if you've already studied at the institute, consider putting your experiences into words and sharing them with other IYAC members.

Any contributions can be sent to me at b-young@rogers.com

Celebrating Yogacharya B.K.S. Iyengar's 90th Birthday

By: Annie Okuda

December 10, 2008

Govinda gardens, Pune

Celebrating the Navati Shanti of Yogacharya B.S.K. Iyengar.

The event unfolded in the early morning within the large space at the Govinda Gardens. Rooms were more like tents on a large lawn set with chairs. In the middle was a central sacred area, where decorated coconuts were placed upon metal water jugs and a colourful sand mandala of a light image embellished the floor.

The Brahmin priest arrived, followed by close family and Guruji. Guruji sat in a chair in the centre of the sacred area. The chanting began. A loudspeaker system blasted the chants into the atmosphere (musical instruments and cell phones were also a part of the event). Numerous chants addressing all aspects of life from Ganesha, Brahma, Vishnu the Siva lingam-yoni, all the way to the stellar constellations, were offered. ALL is methodically interwoven into this ancient ceremonial Hindu tapestry. More and more people joined in. A delicious breakfast was served in the adjacent dining room. The chanting was continuous and a ceremonial fire was lit (now no chairs were available and many people were standing). A large pure silver crown was given to Guruji.

Around noon Guruji was led onto the lawn with the priests carrying the water jugs

containing the holy water from the Ganges river.

A white cloth was held above Guruji's head and the close family put their gold jewelry into the cloth. Then the holy water was poured through the gold and the cloth, bathing Guruji in the holy water.

Afterwards, in a joyous and excited moment, the crowd was blessed with a sprinkling of the holy water. Throughout the day the crowd increased, as did the number of flowers and garlands. There was a point Guruji's face was buried beneath garlands.

A long procession of guests celebrated by offering presents in gratitude for Guruji and his work. Many of us were invited to give our respect, bowing down to Guruji to receive his blessings.

Thereafter, another splendid meal was served to us all - a banquet on a banana leaf - and many delicious dishes followed by sweet milk.

Guruji walked among the tables greeting us all. On departure we were all given a bag with a coconut and beetelnut mix, which my husband and I chewed under local instructions: good for digestion after a special meal!

[Bellur, Mysore and Bangalore](#)

Monday night we embarked on the tour to the southern part of the celebration.

Everybody got to Bangalore, with great effort of the organizers.

First stop was at Ramamani Nagar, the Iyengar ashram, with a high school, hospital and two large buildings still under construction.

This place is the major development helped by yoga communities around the world. There is a lot of work going on, yet much help is still needed. Here, food was served for the huge gathering of eight busloads of Iyengar followers.

We proceeded to the nearby village of Bellur where the first Patanjali temple has been build by Guruji. When we arrived at the small village of Bellur, the road was decorated with flower-covered carpets to welcome Guruji.

A ceremony was held in the temple (the original Hanuman temple is now associated with Patanjali's temple). The surrounding trees were thick with fruit bats and the local children were dressed up for the occasion. Guruji addressed the villagers and visitors and thanked the yoga community around the world for its help. Soon after, we visited his childhood home - a very basic building, still in use. The children at both the Elementary and the High School are offered one meal a day, school books and uniforms by the ashram.

Our group returned to the ashram where we had dinner. A performance was put on by the local children including dance and pyramid building that ended with a yoga demonstration.

Guruji came on stage joined by an enlightened swami from Mysore, who addressed us with Sanskrit chants, Vedic stories and laughter. A few quotes stuck: "When you do your sun salutations, the sun does not benefit. You do."

"Is death not just leaning into the wind and melting in the sunshine?"

Afterwards, Guruji gave an inspired talk. Here are a few words of the beginning:

"Fellow travellers in yoga and fellow travellers in search of knowledge. Having heard the talk from Swamiji, which was like nectar

He has given you the gem of the Life Force, which we all have to make use of, so that we all live as a true human beings in this universe, as we are called humans - man - manners - means honour and respect so let all live together in honour and dignity so that the whole world will see peace not pieces, let's have the peace, our minds are in pieces our intelligences are in pieces. so let's join all these pieces

together in one peace leading through yoga so there are eternal blissful dreams in the world"



A Birthday Photo, taken by Leslie Hogya, December 14, 2008

IYAC Library

IYAC Library

By Barbara Young
IYAC Librarian

The library has expanded by leaps and bounds since my January trip to Pune, where books, albums and DVDs from the RIMYI store filled my second suitcase to the brim. I hope to have them catalogued and ready for the Halifax AGM and Conference. If you can't make it there to see the new acquisitions in person, watch for the updated library catalogue in May, at http://www.iyengaryogacanada.com/resource_library.php.

I'm delighted to announce that dedicated Ottawa yogini and IYAC student member Patricia Lyle Barlow is now helping out with our library. Thanks Patricia!

Don't forget, you can borrow up to three items at a time from the library just by sending me an email at b-young@rogers.com. Either Patricia or I will mail them out to you in no time.

This year, IYAC has a new member from Connecticut, who joined the association because he was so impressed with our library that he wanted to become a member so he could borrow from it. It's a goldmine - take advantage of it!

Bellur Trust

It is heartening for the trust to be receiving so much support from Guruji's students. The Trust has one request - when sending any future donation to the trust, please accompany it with a letter stating it is for the "corpus fund" of the trust. Otherwise, it will be heavily taxed. When sending by direct bank transfer, by letter or email, please state the bank transfer details - that it is intended for the "BKSSNT corpus fund".

Thank you,

Stephanie Quirk for BKS Iyengar

Discussion Board

IYAC News is considering moving this question and answer column to a more dynamic and immediate forum - a blogsite. We will be investigating this over the next couple of months and will have more details in the next newsletter. In the meantime, here are some answers that came in with regards to the questions proposed in January.

Questions from our last issue:

Eve Johnson asked:

I think I am holding my hands correctly in Sirsasana: tight zip, loose grip, wrists vertical. But as I hold the pose, my hands start to grip, and get progressively tighter and more tired. Other than staying aware and relaxing the grip, does anyone have suggestions?

--

Sheri Berkowitz suggested:

I have experience working with students who have had the "tight grip" recurrence. Generally speaking as I understand what is happening is that the body is depending more on hand strength rather than that of the forearms. It has taken about six weeks to build up the strength.

I have used the following techniques:

i) go back to using the wall where it is much easier to monitor the gripping tendency.

ii) work on an outer corner with hands in an open position. This brings the result of both no reliance on the hand strength as well as the requirement to press down more into the forearms.

iii) work for some time in a "head off the ground, headless" sirsasana to build strength. This too done with the support of the wall.

Corrine Lowen suggested:

Sometimes when we formulate phrases to describe asana they are helpful, and other times they lead us astray. "Tight zip, loose grip" can help prevent crunching the fingers, but may also give a misleading impression that the fingers are relaxed in Sirsasana. Though it is important that the fingers should not be clenched or gripped, they do need to actively extend away from the centre line in order to maintain the stability of the base. See that the forearms are vertical. Press the sharp edges of the forearms into the mat. Make sure that, through your tripod of support at the base, you connect to the shoulder blades and lift. Keep the fingers alive and extending from their roots to their tips.

Traci Skuce asked:

Mr. Iyengar says "God is the Median Line". I'm curious as to how other teachers teach students to find the median line. Especially at the beginner level. What words do you use? What physical references? How do you engage with the median line in your own practice?

Sheri Berkowitz suggested:

I find that with beginners the room is the best alignment device. In any lying posture, even before Sarvangasana, the student can look at their body to see the alignment with which they begin. In the case of seated poses we put down some masking tape to create the visual strength for observation.

Focus on the kneecap. An old suggestion, source lost to memory for standing poses, is looking at the kneecap and putting an imaginary "happy face" on it and then lining that face up so that it looks at the foot, for seated poses, the straight leg "face" gazes at the ceiling.

Judi Mirus suggested:

I think we spend our whole practice/lives finding the median line, so perhaps one good way for beginners is to get a concrete sense of it. Geeta repeats a lot, especially during pranayama classes, that the midline is the spine. Get beginners to have an idea of their spine, back & front.

When I first started yoga classes I didn't even know the difference between my tail bone and my sitting bones. I think people are more clued in now (maybe) but a sense of our anatomical body is a revelation to most of us.

New Questions:

new questions:

From *Corrine Lowen* in Victoria:

Does anyone have any ideas for props or modifications to help students who cannot bring their palms together in Garudasana. I have a few whose hands end up flapping in the breeze once they cross their upper arms. I've tried using straps, but they are not very effective. Any ideas out there would be much appreciated.

Please send any responses to traciskuce@shaw.ca until we have our blog up and running, let the questions and answers pour forth!

Directory Update

Student Member:

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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>

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