

Upcoming workshop

Saturday June 14, 1-4 pm
Learning the Ropes

Cathie Lewis

\$40 members, \$45 non-members

According to Geeta Iyengar, "By the practice of yoga karunta, one gains agility, lightness of body, speed of movements and alertness in the brain." Please register early, as space is limited.



Summer Schedule: July 8 to August 21, 2008

Tuesday	9:30 – 11:00am	Teachers may vary over the summer session	All levels	\$85
	6:00- 7:30pm		All levels	\$85
Wednesday	9:30 – 11:00am		All levels	\$85
	6:00- 7:30pm		Level 2+	\$85
Thursday	9:30 – 11:00am		Level 2	\$85
	6:00- 7:30pm		All levels	\$85

PROPS FOR SALE AT CENTRE

- Mats \$25.00**
- Straps \$10.00**
- Bolsters \$50.00**
- Wood Blocks \$20.00**
- Foam Blocks \$10.00**
- Blankets \$30.00**

As always, thank you to our dedicated volunteers! Your contribution makes a difference. Anyone interested in volunteering please speak to your teacher or call the centre at (613) 761-7888.

Those interested in helping with the newsletter can contact Emily King at emilymking@hotmail.com

Thank you



We are missing the gold if we do asanas as a physical practice only.
 - Geeta Iyengar – Yoga: A Gem for Women

IYOGA newsletter

IYENGAR YOGA OTTAWA GATINEAU ASSOCIATION • 784 Bronson Avenue • 613-761-7888 • iyoga@canada.com • www.iyoga.ca

Iyengar Yoga Ottawa Gatineau is dedicated to promoting the art, science and philosophy of yoga according to the tradition of our teacher Sri B.K.S. Iyengar.

Geeta's visit, what it meant to me:

Inspirational

I had never been to a conference where so many people were so inspired by one person. The outpouring of affection and respect towards Geeta from her students was quite remarkable. The level of focus and attention given by her students when she spoke; how everyone in the room responded to her teachings, it was something to behold.



Geeta Iyengar

Geeta's knowledge

The knowledge Geeta imparted was of the highest quality. She had the uncanny ability to pick out someone in the crowd of three hundred people with a health issue and offer constructive commentary that immediately brought a difference to that person's posture was amazing. It was also so neat to watch the instructors all huddle as closely as possible to the stage and try to absorb every word and every positioning tip she gave her subjects over the four days.

Geeta gave us a whole new understanding to "opening the armpit chest" She drilled home the message that we must monitor our practice on a daily basis with "right purpose" and motivate ourselves not to give into laziness. As maturing yoga students, we must learn to feel the asana internally, not just the outer alignment. We must also embrace pranayama into our practice.

Chanting

Listening to 300 people chanting together was also very inspirational. I am really looking forward to actually reading and understanding what I was saying that weekend.

Friendliness

The camaraderie and sense of family was quite apparent. Meeting new people, forging new relationships and renewing old ones was so nice. Seeing all the students surrounding Geeta and Abi on the stage was like attending a big family get-together.

The experience

I will always remember my first Iyengar Yoga conference. I consider myself very fortunate to have had a chance to study under a member of the Iyengar family. It gave me even more encouragement and the confidence to continue my yoga and strive to evolve my practice. I will always remember Geeta's encouraging and sometime forceful words, and her laughter afterwards when she had raised her voice. It was like she was trying to say; "Do not be afraid, my children, I will not harm you! But you must always pay attention to what I am saying." She truly is a "mother tiger" – fierce in her demands to be in our practice and also compassionate in knowing we all have some learning to do.

We saw first hand in Abi, the third generation of the Iyengar family, the skill and devotion that will guide us and many more in our yoga journey into the future.

The conference was a very inspiring and very worthwhile four days, and is highly recommended for all Yoga practitioners.

With Sincere Gratitude,

Namaste,
 Paulette Hendry and Patricia Lyle Barlow

Witnessing mastery: traveling with Geetaji

By Donna Fornelli

I was privileged to be part of the Protocol Committee along with Shirley Daventry French, Judith Mirus and Leslie Hogya, that looked after all Geetaji's needs on her recent trip to Canada. Accompanied by her niece, Abhijata, her first stop was at the Yashodhara Ashram in the West Kootenay region of British Columbia. It is truly a beautiful place on the shores of Kootenay Lake surrounded by mountains. It is remote, quiet and has incredibly clean air, the perfect atmosphere for a retreat.

Geetaji was there to give a five day course sponsored by Timeless Books, her publisher. There she showed us how to work compassionately with students who were really innocent about Iyengar yoga. It was truly a master class in how to teach. Brilliantly, teaching the wide cross-section of students, she still got every ounce of work out of all 85 of us, like an orchestra conductor.

Shirley Daventry French generously offered the use of her car and at the end of the retreat we drove to Penticton through the Okanagan. All the fruit trees were in blossom and Geetaji and Abhijata marveled at the wealth of beauty this country has. Something we often take for granted. Abhijata asked where all the people were. Even on larger Indian highways, there are usually people walking, sleeping, cooking or just waiting. She was amazed that we could drive for such a long time and not see anyone.

As we arrived in Penticton ahead of schedule, the cook we hired for Geetaji was not yet available. Ann Kilbertus had an ayurvedic recipe in her head (!) and she, Leslie Hogya and I went grocery shopping. Then Chef Ann and sous chefs Leslie and I produced a tasty meal for six. Geetaji is very present in everything she does. At the dinner table we talked about food, family and things that happen at home. Once classes started

she and Abhijata had their meals alone, so this was a rare and privileged moment for us.

Her schedule was to practice, have a light breakfast of tea and fruit, teach for three hours, another short practice, lunch, rest then take the pranayama classes in the afternoon. On returning to her room, she would practice again before having dinner around 7:30 pm. On one or two mornings after her tea a couple of us would meet and discuss the program for the day. Those of us who have seen her teach know that she gives everything she has and more to the students. While she was teaching she generally kept to herself in order to conserve her energy.

The first morning of the conference 275 students gathered at the Penticton Trade and Convention Centre. Geetaji led us through an opening ceremony and then gave an introductory talk on tapas. She is able to impart her incredible knowledge in an understandable, interesting way so that it is easy for anyone to understand. We were very privileged to be in classes with a true yoga master.

After the conference we drove to Vancouver and stayed at a hotel downtown. Abhijata was keen to see the sights of a big city. There was only one day to spare before they went back to India. The time was very well spent riding up Grouse Mountain on the gondola where they were impressed with the wolf and grizzly bear refuge and the magnificent view from the top of the mountain. While Geetaji rested, Abhijata was taken on a tour of the city, with a stop at Granville Island. The next morning Abhijata was very pleased to be able to visit the aquarium in Stanley Park.

Geetaji and Abhijata are both very gracious and enjoyed our Canadian hospitality. It was very difficult to say good bye to them. We have invited them back!

A Note From The Diaspora

I first started taking Iyengar yoga classes in January of 2000 and almost immediately I knew this was to be my practice. Over the years I have attended weekly classes with Donna and Cathy as well as workshops with them, Barbara and visiting teachers. Two and a half years ago I moved to the Okanagan valley for family reasons but unfortunately there is no Iyengar yoga close by.

I was elated therefore to find that the Iyengar Yoga Association of Canada was holding their AGM this year in Penticton and Geeta Iyengar was to be the teacher. What a gift. The meetings were extraordinarily well organized, allowing the focus to be on learning and expanding our understanding of yoga philosophy and practice from an extraordinary teacher.

Of course I remember Geetaji's skill in teaching and her generosity and patience in sharing her knowledge. Never having been to India, I felt we had a little bit of Pune in Penticton. I remember the ah-ha moments in my own practice and wishing this time would last for weeks not days. I remember that the tingle/numbness in my right arm was absent the entire time. I smile to say I remember the wonderful food—not cooking for three and a half days was indeed heaven. I remember also the sense of community—270 people all exhaling into Utthita Parsvakonasana together, the sense of shared commitment to a journey, discussion with strangers on their practice (especially the mutual frustration of practising in isolation with a woman from northern Cape Breton Island), and the strong but gentle and respectful (and may I say, women-focused) energy in the room. Especially I remember the pleasure of reconnecting with teachers and students, new and old, from the Ottawa area.

I came away with increased resolve to study, to go deeper, to communicate more clearly with my body, internally and externally. As I continue my daily practice, less and less I hear Donna's voice of correction, feel Cathy's touch on my forehead to ground my monkey mind or see Barbara extend and revolve into Trikonasana. But they are with me as I listen, correct and remember.

What I take away most from Geeta's visit to Penticton is the knowledge that I have been very well taught indeed. Thank-you to all those teachers.

Ruth Charles



Left to right, Paulette, Ruth, Barbara, Cathie, Patricia, Sharon and Glenda.



An Indian woman's life is a veritable tight-rope walk. Her status in society, the problems she has to face due to social and economic pressure, the burdens nature has imposed on her - all these result in stress and tell upon her health. The more I thought about my sisters - women and their particular problems - the more I was convinced that Yoga was the answer.

- Geeta Iyengar
- Yoga: A Gem for Women



Life without happiness is mere existence.
- Geeta Iyengar - Yoga: A Gem for Women