



Iyengar Yoga Association of the Northwest

2012 IYANW Officers:**Anne Geil** - President**Marcia Gossard** - Vice President**Karin Brown** - Treasurer**Angela McKinlay** - Secretary**Tonya Garreaud** - Membership Chair**Denise Weeks** - Communications Chair**Karin Brown** - Education Grants

Upcoming Workshops

Area studios are encouraged to send announcements of upcoming workshops being offered by Certified Iyengar Yoga instructors. Go to <http://www.iyanw.org/workshops/submit> for more information.

Laurie Blakeney

January 6 – 8, 2012

Julie Lawrence Yoga Center, Portland, OR

www.jlyc.com

503.227.5524

Costa Rica w/Vickie & Jerry Aldridge

Register by October 20 to save money

All levels welcome – Pura Vida Spa and Resort

January 7 – 14, 2012

Boise Yoga Center, Boise, ID

www.boiseyogacenter.com

208.343.9786

New Year Toner with Meg Sutton

Saturday, January 7, 2 – 4:30 pm

Yoga Northwest, Bellingham, WA

www.yoganorthwest.com

360.647.0712

Janet MacLeod

January 27 – 29, 2012

Tree House Iyengar Yoga, Seattle, WA

www.thiyoga.com

206.361.9642

Continued on back page

Finding Balance After Injury

by Angela McKinlay

In *Light on Life*, Guruji says, “Yoga is the rule book for playing the game of Life, but in this game no one needs to lose. It is tough, and you need to train hard. It requires the willingness to think for yourself, to observe, and correct, and to surmount occasional setbacks. It demands honesty, sustained application, and above all love in your heart.” This became very real to me this summer when I suffered a setback that left me unable to work or teach my yoga classes and left me with a lot of time alone, in pain. I injured my knee in a fall and my first thought was, “I can get through this, I’m strong and flexible; I won’t let it set me back.” However, when I found out that my injury was more severe than I thought, it was hard for me to accept that I had no choice but to take the time necessary to begin healing.

The physical part of my practice has always been strong. After my injury, I found myself focusing more and more on the disappointment of having my physical practice interrupted; I didn’t realize that this was the perfect time to strengthen other areas of my practice. I began to read *Light on Life* again, and it inspired me to deepen my *Pranayama* practice to help with the stress and depression I was experiencing. Through *svadhaya*, I’ve been able to have time with myself and start moving forward in areas of my life I’ve been avoiding. By being honest with myself, and practicing *satya*, I’ve learned to respect my limitations and honor where I’m at. Knowing that this is temporary, that I will recover, I am open to learning from this experience and am grateful that it has helped me have more balance in my life.

I’m back to teaching now, slowly and mindfully. This injury has given me the opportunity to adapt my practice—to include more restorative poses, gradually adding standing poses and seated poses, and studying more *Pranayama* and yoga philosophy—in a way that honors my limitations. It also lets me show my students that we all deal with setbacks and can come through them stronger from the lessons they offer. I’m starting to feel more balanced and able to handle adversities that come my way with equanimity and compassion.



Photo by Michelle Ringgold

“Pain comes to guide you. When you have known pain you will be compassionate.”

B.K.S. Iyengar

Guruji’s chapter on pain in *Light on Life* is one I read repeatedly and relate to in a new way each time I read it, especially the passage where Guruji writes: “Most people want to take joy without suffering. I will take both. See how far suffering takes me. When you do not resist suffering, you will make friends with other people who suffer. I suffered a lot in my own body. Now when someone tells me of his sufferings, I feel in my body what suffering is. My personal experience provides me with great love and compassion. So I say, ‘My friend, let me try and do something.’ Pain comes to guide you. When you have known pain you will be compassionate. Shared joys cannot teach us this” (*Light on Life*, 52).

Since putting more focus on all the amazing jewels yoga has to offer, I feel more complete. I have a love in my heart for the path of yoga and yet another testimony that yoga and all of its teachings have been a blessing in my life. Not only has it helped me through the bumps, sprains, and bruises, but through the tears, fears, and hard times, too. ■

Coming Next Issue: Quiet or Wired? Online or on the Mat?

This is a topic of endless possibility. How do you balance the demands of keeping in touch (via smart phones, email, Facebook, Twitter, blogs, etc.) with maintaining your yogic equanimity? Are the two in conflict? Can technology help us find “union”? Share your reflections, your experiences, your insights. Also send community news, goings on at your studio, workshop info, reviews of items in our lending library, and photos to Denise Weeks at workshops@iyanw.org. Deadline is May 1, 2012.

A Note from the President: Seasons of Change

It's clearly fall, and winter is quickly approaching. Of all the seasonal changes, this is my least favorite. What has been growing goes dormant, or gives up life altogether. But even as I was putting my garden to bed for the winter, there were still vegetables emerging. Radishes, carrots, and beets planted in the fall are growing even though the days are getting shorter and the temperature has dropped. From a little planning ahead at the end of summer, I have been able to extend the growing season into the beginning of winter and beyond.

This winter will see some changes on the IYANW board. As of January, Paul Cheek, who has been serving as Membership Chair for much of the past seven years, will resign in order to dedicate more time to his business, Rushing Water Yoga, and to attend to his home and new relationship with Ingrid. Paul has been instrumental in changing the way the regional associations receive membership information from the national organization. These improvements have not only been beneficial to us and other regions, but to IYNAUS, as well. We are grateful for Paul's strong commitment and outstanding service to the NW Iyengar Yoga community since the reestablishment of IYANW.

With Paul leaving the board, we are shifting the duties among the remaining board members. As we looked at our options, we took into consideration many factors—skills, time available, and length of time remaining in each person's term. Starting in January, Anne Geil will serve as President, Marcia Gossard will continue in the role of Vice President, Angela McKinlay will become Secretary, Karin Brown will

continue as Treasurer while also chairing the Grants Committee, Denise Weeks will continue as Communications Chair, and I will become the Membership Chair. We hope that the reorganization of the board will keep the organization running smoothly and will result in a seamless transition a year from now when new board members are elected.

This shift in board positions is not unlike the way that we must alter our practice when faced with injuries or illness. We have to assess our options, call on our strengths to overcome weaknesses, and set aside ego in favor of lasting progress. I am grateful to work on the NW board with others who are willing to lend a hand when one is needed, who have been willing to take on unexpected responsibilities, and who have been willing to share the work in a way that supports steadiness and ease for all involved. ■

With gratitude,



IYANW Publication Dates

We know you're busy with your own studio's publications and deadlines for all kinds of things in your life. To make it simpler for you to contribute news and articles to IYANW publications, here's a list of dates to remember:

IYANW E-News (Our Electronic Newsletter) comes out four times a year.

| <i>Submit info by</i> | <i>for Publication on (or about)</i> |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| January 15 | February 1 |
| April 15 | May 1 |
| July 15 | August 1 |
| October 15 | November 1 |

IYANW Newsletter comes out two times a year.

| <i>Submit info by</i> | <i>for Publication on (or about)</i> |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| May 1 | Mid-June |
| October 1 | Mid-November / Early December |

Setting a Direction

by Felicity Green

Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness . . . [but] the moment one definitely commits oneself, providence moves too. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one's favor all manner of unforeseen incidents, meetings and material assistance, which no man could have dreamt would have come his way. I learned a deep respect for one of Goethe's couplets:

*Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it.
Boldness has genius, power and magic in it!*

—W. H. Murray

When we follow our own direction, we are told in this passage, the universe will support us and help us. Or another way of saying it is as Swami Radha did: “When you are in touch with your own evolution, you don't get 2 by 4's” (that is, whacks from life).

I recently made a big move away from my lovely community on Lopez Island to Seattle, to be closer to my granddaughters and students. This has been a very rewarding change for me and I am feeling truly happy and content. I am busy teaching actively again and have classes and workshops coming up. I am also writing a book.

I am sometimes asked, “How do you know when to make one of those big leaps of faith? And how do you know it will all turn out well?” I think you know when your head and your heart agree.

In this society we are taught to rely on the information coming from the head, our intellect, but this is closely connected to our ego and personality. In Yoga we learn to go within and get in touch with our feelings. Even in *asana*, which deals with the body, the feelings are the most important aspect, and it is from this base that we learn about our heart.

This is why it is so important to set a direction for your life: it simplifies every big decision. Then you can always ask: will it take me in the direction I have chosen, or will it divert me?



Many blessings to all of you. ■

Valuable Time with Patrica Walden

by Vickie Aldridge

We are taught in the Iyengar method of yoga that *asana* is the beginning, as we start to see inside of ourselves. We practice yoga so the mind can reach the soul. Yoga creates new neuronal pathways, neural plasticity, a re-patterning of the brain. B.K.S. Iyengar says that yoga “*breaks the habitual mind.*” *Asana* helps us to see our habits clearly and change them, to get rid of “*things stored in the basement,*” and to bring a fresh mind to something old, a “*compassionate awareness.*” We learn to respond, rather than react.

These are some of the pearls of the yoga teachings that Senior Teacher Patricia Walden shared with us in June at Julie Lawrence's Yoga Center in Portland. Approximately 50 students, most from the Northwest, but others from Dallas, Germany, and California, cleared their busy schedules, paid their money, and committed to five days with this special teacher.

I flew in from Boise early that morning and was greeted by many familiar faces that I have met over the years at other venues. The local students were welcoming and generous to all who attended. I was fortunate enough to be awarded a \$200 scholarship from the Iyengar Yoga Association of the Northwest (IYANW) to assist me in my expenses, and my husband encouraged me to stay in a hotel by myself as part of my 60th birthday present. The gift of yoga we give ourselves is always valuable and time well spent. It doesn't matter where I am in the world, getting on that mat to practice gives me a sense of being home.

Our first class was solidly grounded in the Iyengar method, and as we started class Patricia explained that we chant for the inner experience that it brings to us, that opportunity to go inside. We learn from the *Yoga Sutras* that chanting *aum* has the potential to change our consciousness. After chanting *aums* and the Invocation to Patanjali, we moved into *Adho Mukha Virasana* so that we could reflect on the inner experience of the chanting.

AUMS:

1st aum: fuller and louder to remove us from external sounds

2nd aum: less loud to remove us from internal environment

3rd aum: quieter for internal observances

During the first afternoon session we sat in *Swastikasana* for a long time with our eyes closed, and watching from the inside—our posture, tension, habits—and followed this with *aums* and the invocation.

Later in the week we discussed the difference between *effort* and *relaxation*. Patricia said we should relax and pay attention to the breath in order for us to deepen it. As the organs move back into the body we receive a massage of the abdomen. The abdominal wall moves back as you inhale, which internalizes the mind more. Beginners to *Pranayama*

Continued on page 5

“No Yoga Poses”

by Amy Duncan

At the pre-op appointment, the physician’s assistant looked up at me and asked: “You’re a yoga teacher?” At my nod, she told me: “No yoga poses.” I didn’t say anything.

Almost four years earlier I had fallen and was told that I had sprained my knee. I simply iced and elevated the leg for awhile. For three years I continued to practice and teach yoga poses. Then there came a time when I could no longer progress in my poses. My right knee was not able to fully flex or extend, meaning I could not place the right foot on the left inner thigh in *Vrksasana* nor balance on the right leg. Encouraged by the Senior Teachers at my Introductory I assessment, I found a doctor who was taking yoga classes with his daughter. He ordered an MRI. It was then that I was told that I had completely ruptured my right ACL, one of two ligaments between the femur and the tibia.

This brought me to the surgeon’s office and someone telling me not to practice yoga poses, something I had been doing since 1993. I did not ask why. I knew that I would most likely ignore this admonition. I have been adapting poses using the Iyengar methodology even before I began to teach in 2002, which includes a class for people with Multiple Sclerosis.

Three days after surgery a yoga friend/teacher stopped by to check on me. With my right leg swollen and numb from mid-thigh to ankle, I had her spot me in *Adho Mukha Svanasana* over the back of a folding chair, feet up the wall, arms stretching toward the floor. Yes, there were a lot of poses I could not do as the leg could neither bear weight nor bend at the knee. But there were also lots of poses that I could do.

Ten days after surgery, I attended my first physical therapy appointment. Again I was told ‘no yoga poses.’ Again I did not ask why. Yet, the second exercise that they gave to me had a remarkably familiar feel to it. They called it ‘Quadriceps Sets.’ I was told to: Sit erect with your legs stretched out in front of you, hands alongside the hips. As you stretch through your legs, tighten the muscles on the tops of your legs, opening the backs of your knees. Did you guess which yoga pose it was? Yes, it was *Dandasana*. As I continued therapy I found a number of their exercises had a resemblance to yoga *asanas*.

The focus of the physical therapy was to strengthen the quadriceps, hamstrings and gluteus muscles of the right leg – all needed to have a stable knee. After a few therapy sessions I finally asked the therapist why no yoga poses. She replied that they did not want me to torque my knee as the repair would not sustain the action. I then went through some of the basic yoga poses while the therapist watched my knee and when she thought I was twisting my knee, we modified the pose or eliminated it for the time being.

While their work was focused on my right knee and leg, I would also practice the exercises on my left leg. I wanted to stay in balance as we are taught to do in yoga. And I found that the left leg helped to inform the right leg on what to do. I worked hard in those therapy sessions. Afterwards I would feel tired and drained. Sometimes I would leave

sessions feeling sad and weepy, as if something was incomplete. When I mentioned this to the therapist, she suggested that I eat a piece of hard candy. I would go home and practice poses that would open my chest such as *Supta Baddha Konasana*.

Four months after surgery I returned to teaching yoga *asanas*, which proved to be more painful and difficult than I had imagined. I used a chair to demonstrate the poses when I could. Other times I asked a student to demonstrate the pose for me. I found a way to present most of the poses that I wanted to teach.

In my personal practice I began adding poses as I soon as I physically could. I was surprised to find familiar poses such as *Utthita Trikonasana* difficult to balance in, so I would practice them at the wall. Some poses that I had lost when I damaged the knee, such as *Virasana*, took a longer time to come back. Where once I could almost sit on the ground between my heels, after the fall I was using two blocks and now I am slowly getting closer to the ground, often using one block.

By the fourth month of therapy I knew that I had to be more proactive, to take charge of my own rehabilitation. I sought out the counsel of a yoga teacher who was also a physical therapist. Her advice began to guide me in what I needed to do. I also spoke to other yogis who had had a similar surgery and was encouraged by their advice: to go slow, not to rush into poses such as *Virasana* or *Ardha Chandrasana*, let the knee heal.



Photo by Karin Brown

It has taken almost a full year from the date of surgery for me to move easily and begin to return to some of the poses that I had had to modify or leave out of my practice. I have learned the importance of strong legs in my practice, the need for patience in my life, and the value of Yoga to me. ■

tend to breathe *up and down*, Patricia said, and more mature practitioners breathe *up and out*. With practice, the breath learns to stay in different places for longer periods of time.

This action of lengthening the spine with the abdomen and allowing the organs to recede back into the body was a theme throughout our classes, whether we were standing, reclining in *Pranayama*, or practicing in our more active backbends.

Patricia clearly articulates the reasons we do poses in a specific way, as well as detailed instructions for supple or stiff students. Her effortless way of weaving the sutras into her teaching of *asanas* was seamless and flowed easily from pose to pose, and from class to class.

Our discussions touched on many topics. We were encouraged to do poses in different ways, as it awakens our intelligence to change our habits. We also used more fluid movements in some poses to get in touch with the intuitive inner body. We all know that bodies love movement and she said it aids in finding joy and freedom. When teaching beginners we should remember that movement is more important for beginners and that they really don't care about technique. Keep them moving!

As teachers, Patricia said that we must inspire all students to do their very best and unlock their potential, and also get them to practice with tenacity and perseverance. If there is injury, then the practice must be slower, of course.

Here are some of the other points Patricia discussed with us:

- **On *asana*:** *Asana* keeps the mind stable and moving in a positive direction, rather than being disturbed by negative thoughts. B.K.S. Iyengar has often said that what we do on the mat is “meditation in action.” *Yoga Sutra* II:11 states that “the fluctuations of consciousness created by gross and subtle afflictions are to be silenced through meditation.” *Sutra* II:46, *sthira sukham asanam*, offers the effects of our practice. “Asana is perfect firmness of body, steadiness of intelligence and benevolence of spirit.”
- **On *Parivrtta Parsvakonasana*:** Patricia said we should shorten the stance, if needed, to get the heel on the floor, but DO get the back heel down. We could also lift the back heel up to get the hand down, if needed, and then take the heel down.
- **On Fear:** Is it appropriate fear or is it a *samskara* with deep roots? B.K.S. Iyengar's book *Light on Life* says, “Yoga is a powerful tool for liberating ourselves from unwanted, ingrained patterns.” Practice can help us face the fear and create a new *samskara*.
- **On *Pranayama*:** The *ujayi* sound of glottis constriction happens naturally if you're breathing properly in *Pranayama*. Too much sound is aggression, but that sound may be helpful for those who are depressed or recovering from addictions in order to stay connected and present.

- **On learning the Sutras:**

- o Literal translation
- o Paraphrase it
- o Put it in your own words
- o Apply it to your own life

Patricia instills confidence and inspires us to rise to our full potential, not for her, but for us. She is direct and honest, yet non-judgmental in her approach, and she has a clear and patient way of teaching that inspires us to be our very best. I know I join others in hoping she comes back to our beautiful Northwest and shares more of her valuable teachings. ■

Pranayama

by Felicity Green

When we hear the word “yoga” these days, the mind goes to *asana*. *Asana* is the most superficial of the practices. It affects mainly the *Anamayakosa* (the food body), the muscles and bones. Because of the way the *kosas* (or sheaths) effect each other, it obviously has an effect on *Pranamayakosa* (the physiological body) and to some extent on *Manomayakosa* (the mental, emotional body).

As we proceed on our yogic path it is necessary to move into the deeper practices. B.K.S. Iyengar says that *Pranayama* is the Hub of Yoga; after all, *Prana* is vital to life. As *Pranayama* is a deeper practice, it has more direct effects on *Manomayakosa* and *Vijnanamayakosa* (the wisdom body).

In the Iyengar system, every level of certification has its *Pranayama* component. Is it not intended that this level of *Pranayama* be taught to students?

Agreed, a teacher should be proficient in this *Pranayama* and should be practicing at a level above the students. I also understand that students do not necessarily find it an exciting practice at first, so teachers avoid it. But, if we teach ethically, we do not teach only what students want. As a senior teacher I am disturbed by the lack of knowledge and interest in *Pranayama* in students and wonder how this is.

For beginning level students, the end of a restorative class with no forward bends could have a longer *Savasana* than usual, and more awareness of the breath. As the students graduate to higher levels of *asana*, teachers should begin teaching the *Pranayamas* in the lying position. Taking into consideration that the sitting positions should ideally not be taught before the understanding of the diaphragm is there, these positions should only be taught to students who have a regular daily practice of *Pranayama*.



Photo by Meg Sutton

I encourage teachers to start including *Pranayama* in their classes every few weeks. Not all students will start a daily practice, but at the very least they will begin to understand that yoga is not for the development of the body only. ■

Upcoming Workshops – continued from cover

**Weekend Workshop with Julie
Gudmestad Upper Back, Neck &
Shoulders: Anatomy Awareness in Asana**

January 27 – 29, 2012
Yoga Northwest, Bellingham, WA
www.yoganorthwest.com
360.647.0712

Carolyn Belko

March 13 – 15, 2012
Iyengar Yoga of Bend, Bend, OR
www.yogaofbend.com
541.318.1186

Joan White

April 20 – April 22, 2012
Tree House Iyengar Yoga, Seattle, WA
www.thiyoga.com
206.361.9642

Gloria Goldberg

April 20 – 22, 2012
Rose Yoga Center, Medford, OR
www.roseyogacenter.com
541.292.3408

member discount available

George Purvis

April 27 – 29, 2012
Moscow Yoga Center, Moscow, ID
www.moscowyogacenter.com
208.883.8315

Manouso Manos

April 27 – 29, 2012
Yoga Northwest, Bellingham, WA
www.yoganorthwest.com
360.647.0712

Mary Obendorfer and Eddy Marks

May 4 – 6, 2012
Boise Yoga Center, Boise, ID
www.boiseyogacenter.com
208.343.9786

Gulnaaz Dashi

May 20 – 25, 2012
Olympic Iyengar Yoga, Port Angeles, WA
www.olympiciyengaryoga.com
360.452.3012

Rebecca Lerner

June 15 – 17, 2012
8 Petals Yoga, Bellingham, WA
www.8petalsyoga.com
360.738.6442

Rebecca Lerner

July 13 – 15, 2012
Boise Yoga Center, Boise, ID
www.boiseyogacenter.com
208.343.9786

Jo Zukovich

September 28 – 30, 2012
Rose Yoga Center, Medford, OR
www.roseyogacenter.com
541.292.3408

member discount available

Mary Obendorfer and Eddy Marks

May 4 – 6, 2012
Boise Yoga Center, Boise, ID
www.boiseyogacenter.com
208.343.9786

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