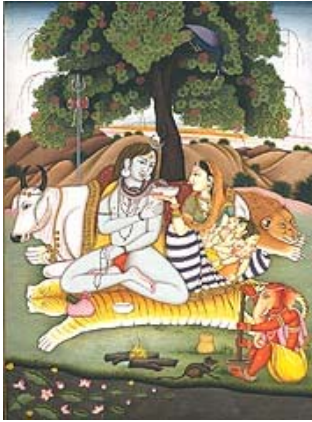


# Saraswati River Yoga Newsletter

Editor: Judith Lockard

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## Theme of the Month

### Hatha Yoga Pradipika

The text of the Hatha Yoga Pradipika is composed of four chapters. It begins with gentle, teasing banter between Shiva and Parvati in which she asks her lover to tell her about the practice of Hatha Yoga. The playful dialogue is similar to a woman asking her lover to say how he loves her. He replies, "But you know all the ways". Still he indulges her and 'counts the ways'. In describing the practice of Hatha Yoga, he describes the rhythm of the creation of the universe.

The first chapter is the Asanas. Just 32 of the thousand or more are described. This is followed in Chapter two by the Krias; cleansing practices that purify the body and mind. The third chapter describes Mudras and Bundas and the final one is Samhadi.

In class we hear how the yogis believed that everything *is* relationship and that to

participate fully we must know how to observe ourselves, in motion and in relationship to everything else. For instance, the precise alignment of the poses allows us to experience emptiness in the body. This is the set up for experiencing non-duality-the spaciousness that underlies the self-referential *I, me, mine* perspective. This may sound very abstract and esoteric but in fact, it is very down to earth and practical –hard to describe but very accessible through experience. Once experienced it becomes possible to look back at some of the mundane events or steps in the process and discern something of the path.

I remember as a young woman learning a trick for getting me out of a feeling of frustration. If I was waiting in a long line or stuck in traffic and getting cranky, I would say to myself, 'Well, maybe this is the Universe (In those days I was allergic to the word God and didn't know about the Goddess yet) saving you from a car accident or some other disaster that was waiting for you if you had had your way, your timetable; say jumped ahead in the line or circumvented this slowly moving parking lot. Of course, that was still *I, me, mine* but it was a leap out of my mind's stuck way of seeing, a sense that I was part of something bigger; that there was more to the story than my scenario and it did allow me to let go of the need for control that was the real source of my frustration.



I can take a very small, consistent step, toward the

detachment that allows for full participation without the reactivity that is based on memories and expectations.

The yogis believe that we are here to do something and that is why we are embodied. In order to fulfill this commitment we must take care of our body and make it the strongest, most flexible, awake and aware instrument for expressing the human experience that we can. And we must come to know the patterns that are the result of our conditioning and erase the habits that arise from the., They knew that as humans we are all subject to physical proclivities, vulnerabilities, early childhood experiences, and cultural influences. As we observe these patterns or habits in action and in relationship to the circumstances and people around us we can let go, surrender our *I me mine* perspective that evaluates according to that reference, relax into a larger perspective and surrender our concepts (judgements, evaluations and comparisons). This automatically allows us to be spontaneous and fresh in each moment. The first step is to observe ourselves without judgment or comparison but with luminous clarity.

Comparing is the most ingrained habit of the mind.



That is the way it is set up and I think to become a detached observer is the work of a lifetime. But, as always, the practice of asana gives us the structure. I can remember in the beginning, at the old Center Club, learning that Janushusasana meant head of knee pose and laughing out loud to think someone might actually get their head anywhere near their knee. Now it is pretty easy for me to do this although it isn't very important to me either and doesn't mean about me or my body the things I thought it would when I couldn't even imagine doing

it. And as my teacher has often said, it was not forcing my head toward my leg but actually relaxing my leg that began the process of creating the new relationship.

More surprising to me though is the way I felt when we first were practicing Kapalabhatti breathing. We did it often in those early days by the river in Lambertville. We even did a brief 'empty' retention at the end of every round. Each time I would feel a sense of stark terror as I tried to count to 10. It is hard to believe, although not hard to remember, how scared I was. I couldn't tell you what I was scared of, then or now because, of course I was always in complete control of when I took in a breath. But the fear was very real.

It is different now. I no longer feel that panic. I would watch it and notice it and then one day it was gone. Once, I did ask our teacher what that fear was. She said, "Yes, some people experience terror at the fullness, others at the emptiness." You'll notice she gave my mind very little to work with in her response. Just enough to know there was nothing wrong with feeling frightened. That allowed me to relax, let go, and observe my reaction. The habitual pattern, based on some past experience, had been erased.

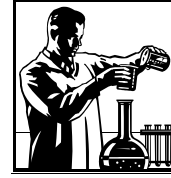
Just like you need a body to experience an asana, so you need a commitment to experience yourself in relationship to this life and to your place in it. On a mundane level, if I say I'd really like to lose some weight, (which, by the way, I've said pretty much my whole adult life) I have a thought or wish but not a resolve or a commitment. I might get sick and lose the weight in spite of myself or be put in a situation in which I can't eat what, when or I how I like but in these situations I will learn very little about how my mind and body work in the process. But if I say I am going to stop eating bread and then watch as my mind comes up against the boundaries of my commitment I will be able to observe myself in relationship to this commitment. I will begin to know my patterns of resistance, my

powers of rationalization and justification, my reasons for loving the full and comforting feeling bread gives me and what the feelings are that arise when I don't have that nice stuffed numbness.

Often I do not know how integral the habit I am observing is to my sense of control and well-being until I publicly declare that I will change it. There is a power in this public declaration, which transcends the embarrassment factor of having to admit failure to others. Public declarations have a layer of accountability that strengthens them. We know this when we refuse to let others in on our plans. I quit smoking in the 70s on an almost weekly basis. I never told a soul and this should have alerted me to the fact that I wanted an escape route. I still advise people to do it this way, to take seriously every impulse to stop even though it only lasts for few hours. But this is for a different reason. Smoking is a dependency that relies a great deal on the habitual patterns that have become bound to it and, once you resolve to become a non-smoker if you can reduce these, your chances of success are greatly increased. But it is not the same as a resolve to be someone who no longer smokes.

A commitment over time brings out the best and the worst in us. At least that is how it is for me. I have always had a slight habitual resistance to committing to things. I approached any invitation with a certain reluctance, as if it might fill up my schedule and then I'd be unavailable should the queen invite me to tea at Buckingham Palace that day. Once I saw this as my knee jerk reaction I could both laugh at myself, another excellent tool in the exercise of letting go. I could also get under the surface a bit and deepen the experiment. Over time I observed that the things I thought I would enjoy were rarely as interesting as I'd thought they would be and the things I'd dreaded were rarely as bad. Other things were, but hardly ever the ones I'd expected to be. Still it took me a very long time to question the mechanism with which I evaluated these future events. Any system in science with such a bad track record for

prediction would have been discarded ages sooner. But I loyally plodded along using my old and familiar set of expectations and memories.



If we are to bring a fresh and spontaneous approach to every moment and if we want to discover what we have come to do in order to fulfill our commitment to life, we have to hook our existence to a higher purpose. It is not enough, as our teacher has said, to get the videos back on time, though even *that* is hard enough sometimes.

And it is not enough to see and hear and feel through the filters of our conditioning. We must submit to a structure that holds us to a more compassionate but larger framework and stretch ourselves to meet the world with the most that we can be. And we can't go off in a closet and practice our *beingness* in secret until we get our act together. It must be done out in the world, in public, making huge and foolish mistakes and making these mistakes in the service of something bigger than our *I me mine* existence. That is the message and the goal of the practices in the Hatha Yoga Pradipika



Asana of the Month:

## Vinyasa



*By John Fagan*

In yoga we are always being reminded to be mindful of the breath. We are told that the breath should be steady, smooth, deep and rejuvenating. If we can remain mindful of this breath we will experience a steadiness, and peace of mind. We will find ourselves taken out of the incessant self referential monologue of I, *me, and mine*, and find ourselves dropped into the equanimity of the present moment. Because of many things; the mind being so loud and incessant, the breath being so soft and subtle just to name a few, many people find this practice challenging. Understanding the nature of being human the yogis recognized this potential difficulty. Luckily for us the yogis came to understand the universe not only through the compartmentalization of the mind/ego but also through the holistic relational understanding of the heart. Because everything is in relation, the yogis observed they could understand the workings of the gross physical world through an understanding of the subtle workings of the mind, and vice versa. So as a yogi yourself, if you are having trouble remaining mindful of the subtle breath, turn to something gross, something a little more tangible. The beauty of vinyasa is that it takes us to the same place that mindfulness of the

breath does. It does this because vinyasa is an expression, with the physical body, of the grace and beauty of the flowing breath. Vinyasa has the ability to physiologically and psychologically charge the body. It brings into harmony the emotional state. Vinyasa brings into balance the prana and apana, that is the upward and downward moving energies of the body. It creates balance and actually keeps us engaged in the world.

How to practice.

Vinyasa is that linking movement that connects one set of standing poses to the next. One version (Astanga) of vinyasa is comprised of High plank, Chaturanga (Low plank), Urdvha Mukhasvanasana (Upward facing dog), and Adomukasvanasana. In vinyasa it is essential to coordinate the movement of the body with the movement of the breath.

The nice thing here is that, due to the distinct nature of each asana, that becomes fairly simple.

If you are coming from Uttanasana (standing forward bend) you walk or jump back on the exhale to high plank and on that same exhale continue to lower down into low plank, Chaturanga. If you start from Adomukasvanasana you inhale to high plank.

From high plank:

Exhale to Chaturanga or low plank

Inhale roll over the toes to

Urdvhamukasvanasana.

Exhale turn the toes under press back to Adomukasvanasana.

Alignment notes for each asana in Astanga vinyasa

High plank: Shoulders should be directly over the wrists. Back flat, hips

high, not so high that they are in line with the shoulders but not too much lower. You are on the ball mounds of the feet, heels directly over the ball mounds. Imagine the feet up against a wall while you are on the ball mounds. Gaze forward; keep the neck long. Push through the four corners of the hands while simultaneously lifting out of the wrists.

Chatturanga – Low plank: As you exhale move the shoulders just beyond the wrists, bend at the elbows hugging them in tight to the body, open the collarbones wide. Lower the body towards the floor, but don't rest it on the floor. Continue to gaze forward. Here in Chatturanga you may want to play with the height of the hips. In line with the back is probably more correct but slightly higher than the back makes the transition to Urdvhamukasvanasana a little easier.

Urdvhamukasvanasana - Upward facing dog: From Chatturanga, inhale, roll over the toes, squeeze the buttocks together. This is essential; you need to support the lower part of the back anytime you do a backbend. Lower the hips towards the ground. Arch the back up, open the collar bones, move the spine forward towards the front side of the body while simultaneously pulling the energy of the front side of the body back to meet the spine. The neck remains long and the gaze goes towards the sky. Make sure that the neck is soft and swan-like and that you are not cramming the neck between the shoulder blades. Keep the big toes and the inside edges of the heels in line with the sitting bones. Activate the legs by pulling through the inseams. Imagine you are trying to pull the legs closer together but, you do not move the legs. Again press straight down into the hands while lifting up out of the wrists.

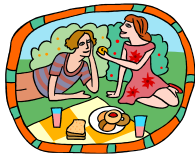
Weight is balanced on the two hands and the tops of the two feet. The knees and hips in Urdvhamukasvanasana are not on the ground.

Adomukhasvanasana – Downward facing dog: Shift the hips back rolling back over the toes. To do this you may wish to bring the knees to the ground or maybe just bend them slightly. As you push the hands down and away, swivel the sitting bones towards the sky. Bring your gaze to your toes, or thighs, or even your navel center and beyond. Keep the back flat. This asana does have a forward bending quality about it. You want to create a nice clean line from the backs of the hands up the arms through the shoulders down the back (an upward moving direction here) and out through the sitting bones. Heels should be moving towards the ground. It is not essential that they be on the ground. If you can place the heels on the ground then press into the four corners of the feet and open the backs of the knees wide.

\*note: this vinyasa will help build strength in the shoulder girdle, but it also requires a good deal of strength here to start with. As an alternative, from high plank you could bring the knees down to the ground, they will be back beyond the knees, continue to shift the hips forward until the legs are straight then press into the tops of the feet and hands and lift the legs off the ground squeezing the buttocks together. This modification skips the low plank pose and gently transitions you into upward facing dog pose. This is a nice way to practice vinyasa while you are still developing the upper body strength in dolphin pose. As always practice under the guidance of an experienced asana teacher and have fun!

## Conscious Cooking

by RaeAnn



Recently a friend, who shall be nameless (but his initials are JF), gave me some unwelcome information. He told me that my favorite night time comfort treat, Hagen Daz frozen yogurt, which I had always felt very virtuous about (I mean yogurt, how bad could that be?) actually had *more* calories than Hagen Daz ice cream! I was quite happy *not* knowing that and pouted for some time.

Then my friend and fellow yogini, RaeAnn, gave me a wonderful dish of homemade frozen yogurt, just as creamy and sweet as my 'old familiar' but really healthy too!

Here is the recipe-and think of me enjoying it when you dig in.

### Ingredients:

1 large container yogurt (whole milk or cream-on-top are best)

1 pint strawberries (or more)

½ cup + 2 T agave nectar

1T vanilla

Egg replacer powder and water (follow box instructions for 1.5 eggs)

### To Make:

Puree ½ pint strawberries with 1T agave nectar, set aside

Chop remaining strawberries, mix with 1T nectar, set aside

Whisk together yogurt with ½ cup nectar, vanilla and egg replacer  
Fold in pureed strawberries and whisk to blend

Pour mixture into container you'll use to freeze the yogurt

Gently mix in chopped strawberries and place container in freezer

Freezing time depends on the depth of the container; figure about 2 hours per inch.

ENJOY!



## CHAI CHAT

Hello Dear Yoginis,

I am having so much fun going to asana classes and picking up sweet gossip. Someone left me a chat note at the front desk. Finally! Will more of you please step up to the plate and either tattle on yourselves or more fun, tell on your mat mate. Soon I'll be leaving for my annual trek for new spices and I need all the help I can get with this column. You remember the disasters that happened with previous temp employees.

It was a well deserved and much overdue acknowledgement of SRY and Kirin to be honored by NBC Today. Such fun to see all of us! By now I bet we have all seen it, even if in the lobby of SRY. I don't begrudge any of you and as a yogi, I know I should be bigger than this, but I am very disappointed to have been omitted. I did a complete makeover when I heard the crew was

coming. Collagen to my lips, liposuction to my thighs, manicure, pedicure, leg waxing and those are only the things I am willing to tell you about. Oh, and I bought a cute multi-colored Prana outfit so I could easily recognize myself on TV. After taping the show, I played the VCR so many times on slow speed looking for myself that the tape split. There was no me. Being turned down for the next Survivor show, this was my final hope.

I have an addition to last month's demographics and now I can say: 'TV star

Donna Sand is added to our list of prana hairdressers.' Sorry I omitted you last month, Donna (Lucky you, is fame as great as they say?).

Fun to announce: Recently appearing on the Today show, Fred Young and Joy Stocke make another grand appearance at the Governor's mansion. You two will have to fill in more details. (See first paragraph above).

Continuing my section of 'What is this World Coming to?' and speaking of television, does anyone get Frontgate catalog? Ad starts: Be the first in your neighborhood to really raise the 'wow factor'. You can purchase an outdoor, waterproof, 42" Plasma TV screen for your patio. This way while you're in your garden enjoying crickets, and the fragrance of flowers, you don't miss a moment of Survivor or The Apprentice. All this for just under \$17,000. (and this is not a typo).



Still on the TV theme, Judi Barton's appearance on Grey's Anatomy was postponed. It will be one of the first new episodes when the show returns in the fall. Her son, Tom Wheeler, created a new TV series Empire, to rave reviews. Her other son Bill Wheeler wrote the 2nd episode. While shooting the series in Rome, someone burned down the set and it was determined arson.

This news is hot off the press (ouch)! What a creative family. Tom's book Arcanum just got released in paperback. Bill's latest screenplay, The Hoax, begins shooting first week in August. Hold onto your malas everyone's favorite Buddhist, Richard Gere (did you think I was going to say the Dalai Lama?) will be starring. Our Ms. Judi will have a cameo role too. Do you think if I offer to give her my secret chai recipe she will introduce me?

Does anyone know where to find Sandy Constable? Apparently my facts are straight, she does have her new apartment and she is Michelle Clancey's neighbor. However, when I went over to her house with a welcome pitcher of my famous iced chai, I discovered her home still vacant and being renovated. If this construction takes as long as Michelle's did, it will be the season for steaming chai and Christmas carols. Speaking of which, now that Sandy joins Michelle & Denyse in Doylestown, we will not as I suggested in an earlier column, have to pitch our ears at the County to hear them chanting the

Gayatri. I think we will be able to hear them from the Lambertville toll bridge. If RaeAnn joins them on harmonium, maybe Stockton.

Speaking of music, haven't the evening events been amazing? First Carl Klemme's Deep Dancing with his outrageous funky sound and then a week later, David Newman's Kirtan that was so heart opening, everyone floated home.



Joan Kingsley is off to a yoga workshop in August that has taken her 3 years to attend. She finally has arranged her life to make it possible to participate in a unique program of Iyengar asana instruction with the accompaniment of a classical Indian music master. We wish you traveling mercies and om shantis.

When I was a kid our choices for ice cream were chocolate, vanilla or strawberry, Dixie cups or Mellorolls. Today you can get homemade organic ice cream (have you tried Bent Spoon in Princeton), blend-ins (Thomas Sweets), gelato (Paganini's in Doylestown) and the newest national favorite franchise, Cold Mountain (Flemington) where you can pick as many additions/fillers of candy, cereal, etc and the staff paddles it on a marble slab into the ice cream. I was all set to try it until seeing the turquoise colored ice cream in the display case screaming out to me 'run.' I did.

All that was the appetizer to report the best dish of all; Holly Glidden just won championship in Rita's water ice tasting contest in New Hope. She has a trophy; t-shirt and \$25 gift certificate to Rita's to prove it. This was no small feat. In addition to delighting and freezing her taste buds with all the flavors, she was able to distinguish between mango and mango passion fruit. She did all this blindfolded. She should be in the Olympics or something. When Godiva follows Rita's lead, I'll sign up. Does Godiva make mango chocolate, I wonder?

Joyce Nagle responded the way any true yogini would. When her sister, visiting from Northern Massachusetts, asked her why she loves asana' rather than explaining, she brought her to class.

Have you noticed the beautiful wildflowers in our lobby most days? Helen must have a green thumb and expansive garden as well as heart to offer these to SRY this summer.

Christine Haas, you must leave a note for me at the desk. I've missed your enthusiasm. Now that you're back, I can tell from your tan you've been somewhere. Do tell.

Well folks until next time, best wishes for just the right amount of spice in your chai and in your lives.

Chai Chat Lady

# Let's Go To the Movies

By Joy Stocke

Imagine a Saturday night in the large yoga room at SRY. You might be wearing a loose fitting pair of pants, you may be barefooted, but you won't be holding an extended Warrior pose. Instead, you'll be reaching up as someone passes a bowl of popcorn.

Movie Night, held the first Saturday of the month at 7 pm, is fast becoming a SRY tradition. Organized by Reel Justice and the Lambertville Coalition for Peace and facilitated by Judith Lockard, the series has featured the work of Michael Moore and Arundhati Roy, as well as several others.

My husband Fred and I have been part of the movie-going crowd since June. The opportunity to see a compelling film on a large wall where I usually rest my hand to balance during Dancing Shiva pose has been a rewarding experience.

But the reason Fred and I have made movie night a regular event is the opportunity to join the group for a discussion of the film afterward, and to hear the thoughtful opinions of fellow yoga students.

So come and join us. Pull up a pillow or use a chair that has been provided, and wear socks if you like. We promise to share our popcorn.

Reel Justice Presents:

## Arundhati Roy's Public Power in the Age of Empire

Saturday, August 6 at 7:00 pm

Doors open at 6:45 pm

Admission is free

and so is the Chai!!!

## Upcoming Events/Announcements

### **Gentle Yoga with Sandy Constable**

Tuesdays, July 26-August. 30  
6:45-8:00 pm  
Drop-Ins allowed if space permits.

### **Chi Gong with Laura DuPont**

Fridays, Aug. 12, Sep. 23, Oct. 14, Nov.  
18 and Dec. 16. 1:00-2:30. *No Charge!*

### **Wake Up Your Wisdom with Diego Del Sol**

Friday, Aug. 26, 6:00-8:00 pm  
Saturday, Aug. 27, 2:00-4:00 pm

### **Shoulder Openers with David Pittenger**

Sunday, August 28, 3:30-6:00 pm

### **Mat-Less Yoga with David Pittenger**

Sunday, September 11, 6:00-8:00 pm

### **Yoga Sutras with Kirin Mishra**

Mondays Sept. 12-Oct. 17.  
6-week session, 6:45-9:00 pm  
CEUs: 14.5 hours towards SRYS and  
Yoga Alliance Certification.

### **Hip Openers for Beginners with Kirin Mishra**

Saturday, September 24, 12:30-4:00

### **Kirtan with Michelle Clancey**

4th Thursday of every month  
8:15-9:15 pm (no charge!)

### **Saraswati River Yoga**

#### **Teacher Apprenticeship Program**

Application deadline: August 22  
Program Dates: 9/9/05 – 2/25/06

### **Saraswati River Yoga Teacher Training Intensive with Kirin Mishra**

October 22- November 5, 2005  
Pick up your application today!

### **March on Washington**

Saturday, September 24  
Yogi Charter Bus leaving SRYS  
If interested in reserving a seat please  
call Barbara at 609-397-4490

### **Jai Uttal**

Tuesday, October 11, 6:30 pm  
Get your tickets now!!!

**Be Sure To Check At Front Desk  
For Recent Class Schedule Changes**

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