



## Iyengar Yoga Association: Southeast News

### **PRESIDENT'S LETTER**

---

Dear Members.

This December marks a full year of service for me as president of IYASE. My thanks to Sandra Pleasants and the other board members – it's been a pleasure to work with all of you.

Many things are on the horizon for 2004. We are doing our best to keep you informed and updated. Check the enclosed calendar and make your plans.

We will be voting on two new board members for outgoing Sandra Pleasants and K-Lea Gifford plus an alternate with the third most votes. Please take time to vote. We will be mailing the ballot in December. Make that small commitment of time and effort to VOTE (and return the ballot) so we can be proud of our association as the product of our combined efforts as members.

Mark your calendars for the Iyengar National Convention being held in St. Paul, Minnesota, on May 5th-11th, 2004. Please contact one of our board members if you or your studio would like to sponsor a fund raising for any one of the exciting projects the national association is working on.

*Cont'd page 7*

### **FUTURE ARTICLES**

---

If you have information that you would like to be included in future IYASE newsletters, please send an email to: [lyndasyoga@hotmail.com](mailto:lyndasyoga@hotmail.com) (**Next deadline: Jan 31, 2004**).

### **WHERE ARE THE MEN?**

*By Lynda Gill*

Look around the room in just about any yoga class, and you will see that an overwhelming majority of the students are women. Where are the men? As a yoga teacher, I am naturally curious about this and want to know why there are so few men coming to yoga classes and how we as yoga teachers might get more men interested in yoga. I talked with a few yoga teachers and a couple of male students at a recent Iyengar Yoga gathering, and here's what I discovered.

After speaking with several teachers and students, I had it dawn on me that yoga is still perceived by many people to be primarily a stretching class for women. The media does little to counter this perception given the photos of models and movie stars on the covers of popular magazines.

Atlanta yoga student Brad Priddy said, "Early on at least, people equate progress with flexibility, and men in particular see their lack of flexibility as a hindrance to their progress. Men see women in class and think 'I'll never be able to do that.' Psychologically, that's a difficult thing to cope with, so why bother?"

Brad's interest in yoga started at a young age. "As early as high school or earlier I had Richard Hittleman's book *28 Days to Yoga* ... then I took a couple of classes in college and practiced off and on before doing Iyengar Yoga."

Like Brad, many of the men who do come to a yoga class choose yoga because it is more than just a workout for the body. For those other men who are looking mainly for a physical workout, time is an important consideration. They want to use their free time more efficiently so they choose a workout that will focus on building their body.

"There are other things that attract men more strongly [than yoga]," said Brad, "like weightlifting. Men want to keep in shape, and for men that means developing muscles to attract women." Some yoga teachers address that issue by offering classes that include a lot of challenging poses, particularly arm balances, which give men the opportunity to display their macho abilities.

For some men, simply being able to study with a male instructor is a source of inspiration. Having a male instructor provides a role model that is encouraging for men who may be hesitant about venturing into a predominately female arena.

"Men are attracted to a strong male teacher," said Richard McLaughlin, a yoga teacher in Santa Barbara, Calif. "They like a commanding presence and a commanding voice. They also see that a man is doing this and has qualities that they find useful."

*Cont'd page 2*



## **Where Are The Men?**

*Cont'd from page 1*

Richard said that he gets “plenty of men” in his yoga classes. Santa Barbara is oriented by outdoor physical activities (biking, surfing, etc.), and men find that they can optimize their athletic abilities by taking yoga classes. They become more focused and can work at their peak. They end up becoming dedicated yoga practitioners.”

Another reason having a male teacher appeals to men is the sense of camaraderie said St. Louis yoga teacher Bruce Roger. “As a male teacher, I find it’s easier to correct men.”

Nancy Roberts, who also teaches in Santa Barbara, agrees. “Men don’t want women telling them what to do and most [yoga] teachers are women.” To prove her point, Nancy said her husband studies at Richard’s studio.

Apparently, not all men’s egos are so easily threatened. Carrie Owerko who teaches in New York City believes that sometimes men come to yoga classes specifically because yoga is non-competitive. She acknowledged that “...men are very competitive,” but added that “some men are ready to let go of that. The men in my classes might go to the gym, but they are multi-dimensional. They’re interested in mind/body and the spiritual dimension of the practice and how it helps them learn about themselves and bring integration into their lives.”

Even men who take up yoga to increase flexibility or to complement an athletic interest are often drawn in by the philosophy, and yoga “... becomes a part of their life and not just an adjunct,” said Brad of Atlanta.

In Santa Barbara, Richard sees the same thing happening with his students, “Discussion of the sutras and philosophy opens another dimension to what was a physical realm. There is a spiritual component, too. It changes them, and they realize the power of an integrated practice.”

We as yoga teachers and practitioners still have a long way to go towards educating the general public so that people have a better understanding of what yoga has to offer – that yoga is more than just stretching and relaxing. In addition to getting the word out, the presence of other men in class both as students and, even more so, as teachers will play an important role in getting more men to realize that yoga really is for men, too.

Lynda Gill is an Iyengar instructor from Alpharetta, Ga. where she directs Main Street Yoga. ■

## **HELP PRODUCE A FILM!**

As part of our curriculum for the National Iyengar Yoga Convention May 2004, we are planning on producing a film on Guruji that picks up where the film “Guruji” ended 15 years ago. Those of us who have traveled to India and taken our place as a student at RIMYI have been privileged and humbled by our direct contact with Guruji, Geetaji

and Prashantji. We feel that bringing an archival quality documentary of Guruji’s life’s work up into the current decade of his life is of profound historical importance. Many of our members will never have any face-to-face contact with our Guruji. Our aim with this film project is to bring those students closer to Guruji, promoting appreciation and serious interest in his lifelong work and developing a sense of the Guru/Sisya relationship.

We are planning to premier the film at the Convention. We held a very successful local dinner/concert fundraiser and we recently received a grant award of \$7,000 from the Musser Fund. Thus far we have raised \$25,000. We anticipate the 50-minute film will cost approximately \$100,000. We are actively committed to continuing fundraising efforts that the film project will require. However, the Convention is a national gathering and we need and hope fundraising will extend beyond our local area.

Your support is requested to realize this goal. Please consider giving this some of your time. We have many suggestions for fundraising we would like to share with those of you who are interested in helping us with this project.

Donations may be made out to: IYNAUS, Convention Fund, Film and sent to me at the address below.

Please feel free to contact me and thank you for your time,

Kristin Chirhart  
Convention Co-chair  
2008 Grand Ave. So.  
Minneapolis MN 55405  
612-309-6682  
kristinchirhart@yahoo.com ■

Over twenty years ago my husband, son and I lived in a tiny house in the middle of a six hundred acre farm. In a way it was a simile for our individual lives in the universe. This was a time of transition in my life. Having resigned as an art teacher of emotionally disturbed children, I was teaching Yoga part time. Many things were shifting in my universe. Daily I would take long walks through wooded fields. The walks emptied me of expectations and fed me with the sounds, patterns and rhythms of nature. The deep silence punctuated by the rhythmic sounds of the woods sometimes brought a state of abiding in a presence beyond the boundaries of my skin, a sublime quietness of spirit. One day while walking far into the woods, I felt a presence. To my left and slightly ahead a red fox was sauntering along, undisturbed, neither stopping to examine me, nor fleeing.

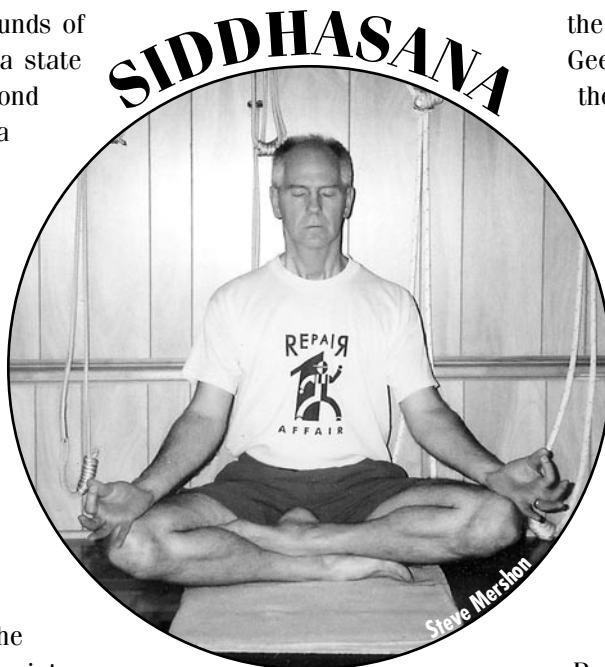
Today that small encounter remains with me, at once as profound and tender as any big dramas in my life. I recall the peace and tranquility of that point in time. Simpler and less grandiose than any accomplishment achieved or acknowledgement received, this whisper of a moment resides in my memory. These times nourish us spiritually when the artificial boundaries of our body momentarily dissolve and we abide in the presence of something greater than ourselves. Asanas offer this kind of moment.

John Schumacher likens each challenge we meet in our daily lives to challenges we meet in asana practice. "We learn

**Sutra II. 47  
prayatna saithilya ananta  
samapattibhyam**

**Perfection in an asana is achieved when the effort to perform becomes effortless and the infinite being within is reached.**

— "Light on Yoga", B.K.S. Iyengar



— By Judi Rice

**The benevolent perfection in asana comes only when efforts cease and the body and mind become one with the infinite seer.**

— "Yoga Sutra of Patanjali",  
B.K.S. Iyengar

to create order within the framework of a pose and thus find silence there. Details of instruction lead the mind inward to penetrate deeply and help us create order in the body so we may touch that silence. This process leads us toward the Source where there is space and light. Order equals silence. Can we create order in our home life and find silence there?"

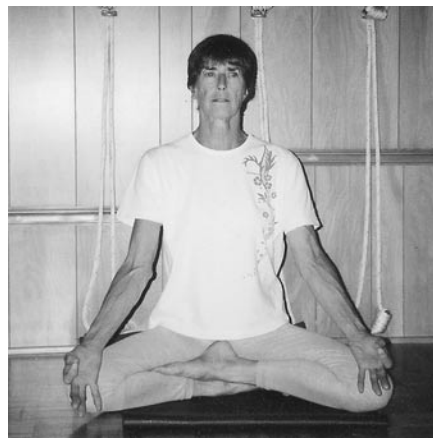
Siddhasana is designated the perfect pose. Early in our practice this pose promotes freedom in the hip, knee and ankle joints and enhances circulation in the lower spine and abdominal region. Geeta Iyengar notes Siddhasana as one of the most important asanas as it purifies the 72,000 nadis (energy channels originating in the navel plexus). For intermediate students, Siddhasana offers a solid seat for discipline of the senses, concentration and meditation. The broad base of this asana offers stability, space, steadiness and stillness throughout the body, which translates to a sense of space, steadiness, and stillness within the mind. From this stillness one may glimpse a deep level of inner silence.

Perfection in any asana is not achieved by attaining perfection in form, for form is ever changing. In the midst of diligent practice with disciplined awareness, the effort to perform the pose can become effortless. This place of effortless effort is the perfection in asana. Occasionally through many years of practice we receive glimpses of this effortless effort. Momentarily we abide in that quiet presence that dissolves our contracted self interest. These rare moments are not achievements, but gifts that appear in the midst of a steadfast, devoted, life long practice.



## Practice

1. Sit in Dandasana. Allow the left thigh to roll out. With the left hand roll the left inner knee toward the outer knee and manually bring the left heel toward the pubic bone with the toes touching your right thigh. Roll the shinbone out and turn the palm of the foot toward the ceiling. Likewise, roll the right thigh and knee out and manually scoop your right foot onto the left ankle with the heel close to the pubic bone. Rest the right ankle in the hollow behind the left ankle.
2. Tuck the sole and toes of the right foot between the thigh and calf of your left leg. Sit evenly on the ball point of each buttock bone.
3. Maintain softness in the groin and extend from the inner thighs through the inner knees. Take a moment to experience the broad, stable foundation this pose provides. Be firm and alert in the parts of your body that connect you to the earth.
4. Place cupped fingertips beside the buttocks. Simultaneously descend the buttock bones and legs as you press cupped fingertips to the floor. From these grounding actions, extend up through the sides of the waist, side ribs and chest. Observe how growing taller with this upward vertical lift in the pose energizes the bones, muscles and organs of your body.
5. Keep the sides of your chest lifting, and descend the trapezius (upper back muscles) toward the waist.



6. Roll the shoulder bones back and firm the shoulder blades into the body to further lift and expand the chest. Create freedom in the diaphragm by lifting and broadening the side ribs.
7. Keep that openness in the chest as you lift the breastbone toward the collarbones. Broaden the collarbones. Relax the jaw and soften the throat. Observe how the horizontal expansion in the side ribs, chest and collarbones steadies your body and invites mental quietude. Balance the vertical elongation and the horizontal breadth of the pose to make the asana both vitally alive and heart felt.
8. Fully stretch your arms and place the hands palms up on the knees. Spread the palms and extend the fingers. Now join the index finger and thumb in Jnana Mudra. Fully stretch the other three fingers. Press the hands into the knees to again re-energize the lift and expansion of the chest.
9. Draw up from the pelvic floor. Lift the abdomen and recede the navel toward your spine. Continue to lift and expand the chest. Experience the long line of extension from the tailbone through the crown of the head.

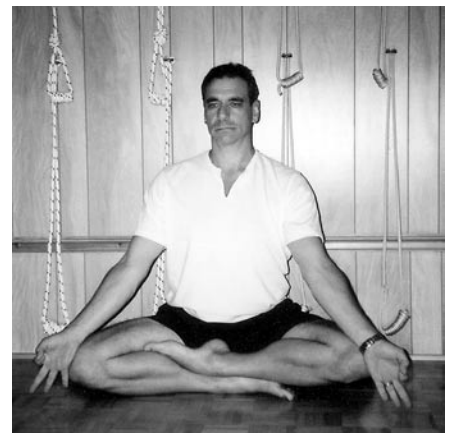
# SIDDHASANA

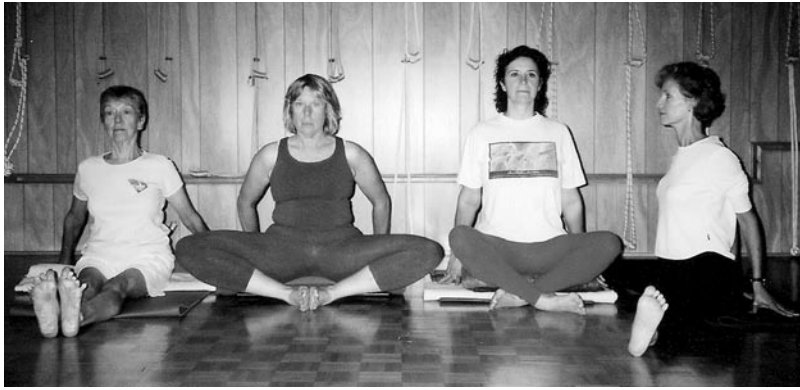
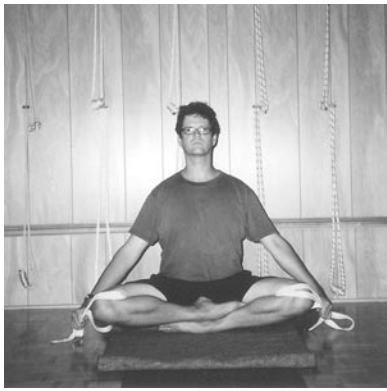
10. Close your eyes and release the energy of your eyes toward the center of your heart. Breathe evenly and naturally.
11. To exit the pose, manually support and release the right foot, then the left and return to Dandasana. In like manner, repeat to the opposite side.

## Considerations in the Pose:

Initially, Siddhasana can be a challenging pose if the hips are tight. Tightness in the hips can contribute to difficulties in the knees. Practice other seated poses such as Dandasana, Sukhasana, Baddha Konasana and Upavista Konasana to bring mobility to the hip area.

To prepare the ankles and feet for Siddhasana consider sitting in Vajrasana (you can belt the ankles together to aid foot and ankle alignment) or Virasana. Attend to the alignment of the ankles and metatarsals. More intermediate students can practice Eka Pada Bhekasana and Bhekasana for further preparation of the ankles and feet.





**Far Page, Top:**  
Yvonne Williams

**Far Page, Bottom:**  
Mark Helm

**Top Left:**  
Alex Cleveland

**Top Right:**  
Dorothy Denkler,  
Eleanor Miller,  
Betty Sue Shaver,  
& Jill Miller

**Bottom Left:**  
Dorothy Denkler,  
Eleanor Miller,  
Amy Johnson,  
& Cheri Sims

**Bottom Right:**  
Alex Cleveland

**Ways to Work**

*For tightness in the hip area,* sit on folded blankets.

- To warm up in the pose, practice one leg at a time. Focus on the rotation of the hips, knees, shinbones and feet as you bring the heel toward the pubic bone.
- To keep the pelvis upright and help maintain the natural curve in the lumbar spine, place a wedge or folded blanket partially under the base of the buttocks.
- To help maintain the upright position in the pelvis place a block between the wall and the sacrum.
- To create length from the knee to the groin and open the knees from the inside out, use 2 belts. Place one behind each knee so that the tail of the belt is available to roll the thighs and knees into external rotation. Pull out and down with the belt to lengthen the inner thighs and roll the knees from the inside out.

*For knee challenges,* place a folded belt behind the knee to create space. Focus on the alignment and rotation of the thigh, knee and shinbone.

- Another way to enter the pose for knee challenges is to stabilize the knee joint. From Dandasana bend that knee to your chest and draw the calf down from the pit of the knee to create space. To supply stability to the joint, wrap the belt firmly around the shin and thigh close to the knee. Shift the heel toward the pubic bone, and roll the thigh out as you lower the knee toward the floor.
- If the knees do not reach the floor, first sit higher on a folded blanket. If needed, place a support under the knees.
- Place a small roll cloth under the bottom ankle for sensitivity and to alleviate strain in the ankle joint.
- Although the classic entry is from Dandasana, practice entering the pose from Upavista Konasana or Sukhasana.

**Benefits**

Siddhasana improves mobility in the hips and alleviates stiffness in the knees and ankles. It improves circulation in the abdominal region and tones the lower spine and abdominal organs. This asana prepares the practitioner for Padmasana. Siddhasana's broad, stable base gives a spacious foundation. The broad base and erect spine invite attentiveness and alertness in the mind, preparing one for pratyahara (drawing the senses inward) dharana (concentration) and dhyana (meditation).

*Judi Rice teaches in Louisville, Kentucky. She is the creator of the DVD "Yoga for Inflexible People". Judi serves on the national board and edits the national newsletter. Her most influential teachers are Geeta Iyengar, Patricia Walden, John Schumacher. ■*



## THE RHYTHM OF INDIA: SLOWING THE VRTTIS

— by Lou Hoyt

India is the home of Krishna and Shiva and many other well known Hindu gods and warriors whose stories are told and lived by. India is the birthplace of Yoga, a comprehensive system of practices that give guidance on how to live in the world guided from within. When yoga is practiced with dedication and devotion over an uninterrupted time (Sutra 1.14), Mr. Iyengar states that the student "...becomes physically, mentally and emotionally stable so that he can maintain equanimity in all circumstances."

Every yoga student who first visits India feels their equanimity challenged and a sense of who they are redefined. Finding inner stability in the unfamiliar setting of a country like India can accelerate ones journey of self knowing, if one chooses to go with the rhythm and flow of this ancient and complex culture. In the West, we live and move at a different pace. We are accustomed to instant everything - from food to remote controls, instant heat and cool air, computers, and instant information on any topic. We are accustomed to efficiency, convenience and comfort. Credit cards, computers, fast and easy travel keep our country on the move, driven by "time is money." It is the contrast of these two cultures that gives the opportunity to observe ourselves when what is familiar, predictable and wanted is not there. How do we respond when life is not

on our terms? How does it effect us mentally, emotionally and even physically? Are we thrown off balance when things feel out of our control? India's gift is its rich intensity on all our senses and the opportunity to observe ourselves as we meet the unfamiliar and new challenges we face.

Life doesn't move as fast in India. Getting places takes longer, food service is rarely instant, purchases are often hand-written and mentally tallied, streets are crowded with masses of people, and transportation is slow and often unpredictable. Experiencing the chaotic maze of being in India is not unlike our over-busy minds - crowded with things to do, moving from one thing to the next.

There are benefits to slowing down. In the swirl of being too busy, it is easy to loose a connection to self, to loose our inner guidance. The Eight Limbs of Yoga, as defined in the Yoga Sutras, are a progression of practices that help us to slow down and be the observer of our inner perceptions. Most yoga students in the West start a yoga practice with asana. The deliberateness of asana practice focuses our attention inward to observe our mental states and habits of thought. In pranayama practice, the slow easy rhythm of the breath slows the vrtti (the mental activity of the mind), relaxes the body, and soothes the nervous system. This quiets the outward reach of the senses which is called pratyahara. For most students, pratyahara is first experienced in savasana, which is a relaxation at the end of class with the eyes closed and the mind's attention guided inward. In the space of a relaxed body and mental state, we more easily connect to our inner being,

which the Sutras call drastar, our true nature. Guided from within, connected to our own rhythm, we are like Shiva Nataraja, poised on one leg, balanced and steady of mind and body to dance to the drumbeat of life - whatever life brings to us. ■

### **President's Letter**

*Cont'd from page 1*

The Spring 2004 Introductory Teachers Training Workshop with Lou Hoyt and Judi Rice has been postponed. We will notify you as soon as it's re-scheduled. Check our web site for the new dates or our upcoming newsletter.

Remember – our southeastern association is still a growing family. I think we would all agree that yoga has changed our lives for the better. Yoga has become a necessary component to my physical, mental and spiritual well-being. Along with my practice, I consider my commitment of time and effort to our association an excellent investment . I am continually enriched though the process.

As always, there is much to be done. I invite your thoughts, ideas, and comments.

Yours in Yoga,  
Janie Strickland ■

## 2003/2004 WORKSHOPS

- Nov. 14-16, 2003 **IYASE Teacher Training with John Schumacher:**  
(Intermediate Jr. Syllabus) *Nashville, TN*  
Janie Strickland (601) 857-8049
- Nov. 14-16, 2003 **Joan White:** Postures, *Naples, FL*  
(239) 566.9642, www.postures.com
- Nov. 21-22, 2003 **John Schumacher:** Postures, *Naples, FL*  
Suzie Muchnick Spencer (239) 566-9642
- Dec. 5-6, 2003 **John Schumacher:** Iyengar Yoga Institute of New York  
CJ Lonoff (212) 691-9642
- Jan. 30-Feb 1, 2004 **Jan Campbell:** Yoga Intensive Weekend, *Jackson, MS*  
Janie Strickland (601) 362-0840
- Feb. 6-8, 2004 **Manouso Manos:** Postures, *Naples, FL*  
(239) 566.9642, www.postures.com
- Feb. 8-22, 2004 **John Schumacher & Barbara Benagh:**  
21st Annual Yoga Vacation in Jamaica  
Barbara Benagh (617) 523-7138
- April 2-4, 2004 **John Schumacher:** Weekend for Teachers on  
Pranayama, *Bethesda, MD*  
Linda San Gabriel (301) 656-8992 ext. 118
- April 2-4, 2004 **Laurie Blakeney:**  
Unity Woods Yoga Center, *Bethesda, MD*  
Linda San Gabriel (301) 656-8992 ext. 118
- April 9-11, 2004 **Lois Steinberg:** Postures, *Naples, FL*  
(239) 566.9642, www.postures.com
- April 16-18, 2004 **Judi Rice:** Yoga Sol, *Delray Beach, FL*  
Colleen Gallagher (561) 272.8699

### MARK YOUR CALENDERS:

*2004 Iyengar  
Yoga Convention*

St. Paul, Minnesota — May 5th - 11th, 2004

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### President:

Janie Strickland  
(601) 857-8049  
Triangleclubyoga@aol.com

### Treasurer/Scholarship:

Sandra Pleasants  
(434) 361-2262  
sandrapleasants@msn.com

### Secretary:

Mary Pappas-Sandonas  
(301) 469-7209  
yogimare@att.net

### Newsletter:

Harry Chittenden  
(727) 896-9809  
hchittenden@mindspring.com

### Teacher Training:

Lou Hoyt  
(901) 683-0932  
louhoyt@msn.com

### Membership:

K-Lea Gifford  
(615) 385-0448  
Yoginiklealea@12southyoga.com

### Additional Board Members:

Cindy Dollar  
(828) 236-0426  
cdollar@mindspring.com)

Phyllis Rollins  
(803) 324-0214

Lynda Gill  
(678) 297-1229  
lyndasyoga@hotmail.com



Iyengar Yoga Association: Southeast

C/O K-Lea Gifford  
12 South Yoga  
2814 12th Avenue South  
Nashville, TN 37204

## WWW.IYASE.ORG

---

Our website, [www.iyase.org](http://www.iyase.org), contains valuable info about our members. Certified teachers are listed by state. There are links to the National Association and Mr. Iyengar's website. If you have any requests or suggestions, send them to: [lyndasyoga@hotmail.com](mailto:lyndasyoga@hotmail.com).



# 2004 IYASE

## MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION FORM

---

Please Circle One:    New Member    Renewal

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Our membership year is Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, 2004.

Please send a check for \$50 made payable to IYASE with this registration form to:

Sandra Pleasants, 7072 Taylor Creek Road, Afton, VA 22920

NOTE: Certified teachers renew through IYNAUS, not IYASE.