



Crescent Moon

Spring
2009

Issue No. 1, Volume 9

Crescent Moon is the newsletter for Namasté Yoga Center in Springfield, Illinois. Your comments and ideas are welcome!

NAMASTÉ YOGA CENTER - since 1991

≈ Our Vision ≈

To develop & support a community of people dedicated/committed/aspiring to Yoga as a means of realizing peace.

≈ Our Mission ≈

To advocate health, equanimity and Self-awareness through Yoga.



From Nancy's Cushion

This morning we spent a few minutes taking photos for this newsletter. It's an exciting time! Mary turned the keys to Namasté over to Justina, our new owner and newest teacher! This issue is filled with information about the changes and offers you an opportunity to get to know Justina.

Mary, as founder of Namasté, has accomplished so much! Just consider that 18 years ago, Namasté Yoga Center sprouted from an idea that had been nurtured in the soil of Mary's mind. Over the years Namasté has grown and changed, but always the vision remains to offer a place to realize peace and a place for community. Our Yoga community provides the space for you to enjoy your practice moment-to-moment, to connect to your true nature, and to find the peace of your own being.

You will notice changes as soon as you enter the lobby as we are moving things around. There are new classes to attend and special monthly events for your enjoyment. Additionally, we certainly would like to hear any suggestions you might have to further Namasté's vision and mission. It IS an exciting time ~ a New Day at Namasté!

In gratitude and service,
Nancy

It's a New Day at Namasté!

We have a new pricing structure for classes. We are dispensing with the hourly system and will charge per class instead.

5 class pass - \$55 10 class pass - \$105 20 class pass - \$180

All of these passes are valid for six (6) months.

Or, you may choose a monthly membership for \$108.00* (three (3) month minimum). This membership entitles you to unlimited classes, a 15% discount on workshops, and a 10% discount on our retail items.

Please stop by the office to transfer your existing hours to class cards/membership!

* The number "108" holds special significance in many cultures. In Yoga, it is considered a sacred representation of the wholeness of existence. Offering 108 sun salutations is a sacred act. Mala beads, used for mantra repetition, consist of 108 beads strung together with one larger bead and a tassel. There are 108 marma points or sacred places of the human body, and so on. As such an auspicious number, we thought "108" would be appropriate to use for Namasté's monthly membership.

Pod Casts!

Pod casts are available for downloading from our website. Choose from among Yoga Nidra sessions, Meditation, and Breath Awareness with more to come. It's fast, easy and inexpensive! A great way to have these practices available 24/7 on your iPod, MP3 player or computer.

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Namasté Yoga Center...

The Next Generation



The keys to Namasté were officially exchanged on December 4, 2008. Here, Mary ceremoniously turns over the keys to Justina while Nancy looks on.

In December of 2008, I turned over the keys to Namasté to Justina Biswell! Justina has been a student at Namasté for several years and has completed her teacher training and continues to work with Nancy and me. Justina approached me just after my move to Tennessee to say that she was interested in taking Namasté into the next phase of its life. I could not have been more delighted. Justina was not just interested in any Yoga Center, she wanted a place where Yoga wasn't viewed just as a business, exercise program or hodgepodge of "new age" fads. She wanted to foster the community of Yoga that has become Namasté.

I started Namasté in 1991 a mere 18 years ago! Since then we have been housed in three different locations: Chatham Road, South Sixth Street, and here in Clocktower. We have served over 6,000 people: babies, children, pregnancy, adapted, individual, therapeutic, adults and seniors. We are a community of people that come and go, but who always depend on Namasté.

I cannot tell you how pleased Nancy and I are that Justina is going to continue Namasté in the manner to which it has become accustomed, but with new ideas and energy. Please welcome her and support her in this new exciting time in her life.

I want to thank the many students and teachers that have supported and helped Namasté remain as a vital member of the larger community. I especially want to thank the Board of Stewards who has given monetary and emotional support to Namasté these past few years. Last but not least, it is thanks to Nancy Long for keeping the integrity and upholding the tradition of Namasté this last five years.

I will continue to teach at Namasté each month-generally for Yoga Nidra. I will be leading the fall retreat at Villa Maria and plan to continue supporting Namasté retreats whenever possible.

Please keep in touch with me at Marya-l@namasteyoga.com!

Meet Justina Biswell...

My journey to yoga is an interesting story. Almost seven years ago my husband passed away. I was left alone with three daughters: 14, 4, and 6 months. To help alleviate my grief I threw myself into what I now realize was an obsessive exercise practice. Part of that routine was practicing the asanas of yoga with videos at home. I really enjoyed the physical practice and the challenging movements of yoga. Later, as a member of the YMCA, I decided to drop in on a yoga class. I was immediately hooked. I went to the class at the Y faithfully. At that time there was a wonderful teacher there, Clay...something who was trained by his mother in the Sivananda tradition. After he left there was a series of unskilled teachers so I decided to try classes at Namasté. I loved the classes at Namasté so much that I approached Nancy about entering into the teacher training program. I know that I was led to Namasté for a reason. I found such a peacefulness there (and still do!). I began to understand the practice of yoga beyond the physical movements. I loved every aspect of the practice—all of the eight limbs of the yoga tree! I began my teacher training in 2006.

In late 2006 and into 2007 my new husband, Chris, and I had two miscarriages followed by a pregnancy in which I was on bed rest for six months. As an active person that is an incredibly hard thing to tolerate, but we made it through the nine months with a beautiful, healthy baby girl. With all of the activity in our lives I let my training slide to the back burner. However, as an avid reader I was reading all of the yoga books I could get my hands on!

In early 2008 the YMCA approached me about becoming a yoga teacher. I accepted the challenge but felt incredibly guilty at the same time because I was teaching something I hardly knew myself. It was at



Emma, Chris, Justina, Siena, and Catherine



Elsa, Justina's 9-year-old English Mastiff

that time that I knew I wanted to go back to Namasté and re-enter the teacher training program. I knew this is where I wanted to be. I have learned so much about myself through yoga. It encourages me to be the truth of who I am in every moment. I know now that yoga is an understanding, it is not an exercise. But, I had to follow my own perfect journey to come to this conclusion. I feel that my role as a teacher is to

help others find this truth for themselves.

When Mary informed me of her plans to move out of state, I knew that I would become owner of Namasté. It did not seem like something I had to decide, it just felt *right*. I would like to continue Mary's vision of Namasté as a place of community where people can practice the beautiful art of yoga together, to

mingle and discuss (new and ancient!) ideas, where they can come to celebrate joy and to share sorrow, where *life* is shared - approaching yoga always with a beginners mind and an open heart! I look forward to seeing all of you in class! Thank you for your faithful dedication to Namasté.

Justina lives in rural Athens with her four daughters, Victoria (19), Catherine (10), Emma (6), and Siena (1), two dogs-Elsa and Bear, and a flurry of outdoor cats.



LITTLE LOBBY SHOP

Be sure to come by and check out the neat items for sale at our Little Lobby Shop. Where? You guessed it! In our little lobby! Although space is limited, we have a great selection of

yoga accessories, including beautiful Mysore practice rugs, eco-friendly sticky mats, Neti Pots, zafus, bolsters, eye bags, neck pillows, hand-rolled incense made in India, and CDs. We also have a large assortment of calming BodySense products great for these cold winter evenings and for stiff, sore or inflamed joints and muscles. Several items are on sale including Namaste T-shirts, water bottle carriers, and Buddha Baby shirts.

New to our shop are organic cotton tote bags! They are HUGE and great for replacing those environmentally unfriendly plastic grocery bags!

If we don't have it, we can special order anything you need for your practice. We also have gift certificates that make thoughtful birthday and seasonal gifts. What better gift can you give than something to enhance (or begin) a yoga practice?

Experience KALPATARU

Kalpataru is a one-day experiential meditation program conducted by Paramahansa Nithyananda, a living master from India. Kalpataru is translated as "opening the door to the divine" and includes "techniques that allow the blossoming of joy, bliss, love, healing, and harmony." Meditation is our true nature! This program is being offered for the first time during Nithyananda's North American Tour – Yogam 2009. He will be in St. Louis on Tuesday, April 28!

Where: Mahatma Gandhi Cultural Center
717 Weidman Road
St. Louis MO. 63011

Phone: 314-809-1109

Contact: Ananda Satya Vani

Email: abalaram@charter.net



Early Bird Special: \$150 until April 14

Find out more at www.lifebliss.org. If you are interested in going, you can register online. Then sign up to join our Namasté carpool, if you wish. This may be a once-in-a-lifetime event!

More information and a brief bio of Paramahansa Nithyananda on page 7.

Yin Yoga: Stretching into Stillness Workshop

On Saturday, May 16, Namasté will be offering its first workshop of the new year. Linda Karl is a master teacher who has studied under Paul Grilley and Sarah Powers, and travels to India each year to study at the Krishnamacharya Yoga Mandiram. She will share her love and passion for Yoga in this afternoon session. Yin Yoga is a style of Yoga that targets the connective tissue of the hips, pelvis, and lower spine. Yin postures are held three to five to ten minutes at a time. This passively stretches the tendons and ligaments in order to unblock and distribute prana (life force) throughout the nadis (energy channels). The practice concentrates on keeping the joints flexible and is grounding, calming, and meditative. More information will be coming or you may wish to check out Linda's website: www.metta-yoga.com.

Kirtan!

Coming Saturday, April 4, at 7 p.m., is a very special event! Neha Mhaskar and fellow musicians will join us for an evening of chanting and meditation. The kirtan is one of the oldest sacred music traditions of the world. Originating in India, it involves a call-and-response chanting of Sanskrit mantras that carries us effortlessly to a place of quiet, stillness, and deep inner peace. Although the kirtan involves music, the underlying art of kirtan chanting is about the heart, not musical ability. Everyone can participate regardless of age or cultural background. The purpose of this music is to get us out of our heads and into our hearts. There is nothing like the magic of chanting in a group with musicians and participants of all ages—from kids to seniors. Please mark your calendars and plan to join us!

NAMASTÉ YOGA CENTER

offers

"The Ease of Being"



A Fall Retreat

Oct 29 - Nov 1, 2009

Villa Maria Catholic Life Center
Lake Springfield

Begin Thursday evening with dinner
End Sunday with lunch
Vegetarian meals (some fish)

Early Bird Prices (add \$25 after Sept 15):
\$350 for double room/\$450 for single room

Satsung, Meditation, Body Sensing, Asana,
Pranayama, Yoga Nidra
~ Social silence held ~

Namasté Yoga Center's four-day fall retreat invites you to depart from your daily schedule and experience an "Ease of Being." Time to just be ~ nothing to do or accomplish, no striving ~ everything just as it is. Through the practice of hatha yoga, body-sensing, meditation, and satsung (a Sanskrit word for time spent in community with like-minded people), there is the opportunity to know yourself as you truly are ~ pure Being. And because silence nurtures this undistracted abiding as Being, we hold social silence throughout the retreat. Experience an ease of Being that opens your heart and mind to your true nature. Then return to your daily routine allowing life to simply unfold.



The retreat will be held at Villa Maria Catholic Life Center. Villa Maria, located next to the Lincoln Memorial Garden on Lake Springfield, offers a tranquil, meditative setting. Meals are vegetarian (perhaps some fish). Rooms are comfortable, but modest, furnished with twin beds and a full bath.

Information on-line or at Namasté. Please consider sharing this very special time with us!

VACATIONASANA

by Betty Mazzotti

On our trip to Copper Canyon, Mexico, we stayed two nights in the hotel Posada Del Hidalgo in El Fuerte, Sinaloa Mexico. This was the home of El Zorro. He was born in this part of the hotel and was named Diago De La Vega. His mother died when he was very young. His father was in the mining business; they mined for gold and silver.



Betty practicing the Warrior Pose with El Zorro

His father's mining business failed, and when Diago De LaVega was ten years old his father took him to Alto, California. When he was older he took the name of El Zorro (which means The Fox). He fought for justice for poor, abused, and depressed people. They say his spirit roams the halls of his home in El Fuerte. I did not see or hear his ghost, but I really enjoyed his former home, the Posada Del Hidalgo. It is a restored colonial mansion with beautiful antique furniture.



I also enjoyed Copper Canyon which is four times bigger than our Grand Canyon. The Tarahumara Indians live in the canyon and are well known for their baskets, pottery, and jewelry.

As many of you may remember, in the early years of Namasté we had a small bulletin board dedicated to Vacationasana, pictures of us in an asana on vacation. Thankfully some of our long-time students have continued this tradition and inspired us to find a new place for it, the *Crescent Moon*! Send us your pictures and they will end up in the "Moon."

A Gift from the Heart of Being

by John Record

Namasté Yoga Center's last retreat, In the Heart of Being, was held October 23-26, 2008, at Villa Maria Retreat Center on Lake Springfield. This was my fourth retreat. The first was led by Richard Miller and also held at Villa Maria. Like many "firsts" in life it was a memorable experience. Familiar words like bliss and nourishment and community came to have new depths of meaning. Retreats two and three offered more of the same and reaffirmed their importance in my practice of yoga. But retreat number four would soon reveal its special gifts.

As I was driving to Villa Maria for Heart of Being I was aware of an acute need to be on retreat. At work that day I had found myself in a couple of minor yet annoying conflict situations and was looking for some peace and quiet. I wanted to escape. Walking into the familiar surroundings of Villa Maria was the beginning of the settling in process I had experienced before. I found the retreat schedule and saw many old "friends" -- yoga nidra, pranayama, body sensing, meditation, asana and satsung -- all to be enjoyed with that critical element, social silence.

Dinner conversation that evening was remarkable for the unexpected personal stories that were told and their consequence for all of us. We learned that the night before the retreat was to start, the worker hired by Villa Maria to start their heating system for the fall/winter season had passed away in his sleep. We acknowledged the tragedy for his family and friends while also recognizing that, for us, this meant a non-functioning furnace at a time that daytime temperatures were forecast for the 50's with evening temperatures headed for the lower 40's. Fortunately, both the main gathering room and the dining room had gas fireplaces to take the chill out of the air

but the sleeping rooms were, perhaps, better suited for storing wine. Finding three extra blankets in my closet was a highlight of that first night.

The conversation turned to those students who were missing. The usual assortment of life events kept some away -- a wedding, childbirth, and overtime work -- to name a few. But Dave, whom we expected to be in attendance, had yet to arrive. Besides being a retreat participant, Dave was our sound engineer and was planning to audio record all of the proceedings. We called Dave's home and found out he wasn't feeling well and had decided not to come. He was going to rest at home. But as we heard the list of his symptoms, the chorus began, "He needs to go to the emergency room - now!" We believed his symptoms indicated a cardiovascular event. A call back to his home to offer our advice may have been the first time a group of yoga students practiced telemedicine. It wasn't until the next day that we found out that Dave had indeed gone to the ER. After an overnight stay in the hospital, he was released.

The first full day, at least for me, was pretty much what I had come to expect for the first day. I had come to see this as the transition day where I slowly but deliberately moved from left brain dominated days to days given over to the right brain. During satsung on that first evening we even spent a little time talking about Jill Bolte Taylor's remarkable story of her stroke in 1996 and her opening to lightness, peacefulness, and spaciousness. I went to bed with feelings of satisfaction and a realization of having moved away from the discomfort I had brought just 24 hours earlier.

When I awoke the second morning I gave only passing thought to having had my sleep interrupted by a mild case of insomnia. The alarm awoke me at 5:43

a.m. and since I was the morning bell ringer I had to move quickly to make my appointed rounds at 5:45. Back in the gathering room at 6 a.m., I went through my personal practice with a faint awareness of being tired. At 7 we started our pranayama practice with some chanting. On a 0-10 scale, my effort was much closer to 0 than to 10. We eased into some guided breathing. I briefly thought back to a previous retreat when Nancy led us in a similar practice and how thoroughly satisfying it was. This time, though, all I brought to the practice was an empty body. I was close to falling asleep.

Next, the schedule called for us to move to breakfast. Instead Mary asked for us to gather briefly. An unscheduled satsung (Sanskrit sat = true, sanga = company; an assembly of persons who listen to, talk about and assimilate the truth) was about to begin. Mary observed that what little energy was in the room when we began quickly dissipated. She went on to point out how difficult it was to teach in such an environment. As someone who had been barely engaged that morning, her words caused me at first to feel that uncomfortable combination of embarrassment and denial. I made a conscious effort to listen and not react. At one level this was easy to do because her words were delivered with love and compassion. But they were also heartfelt. She ended by asking us to reflect on the conversation and saying we would come back to it later. I believe it was Julianna who noted the courage it took to address the matter and thanked Mary for doing so.

For me, this was the first gift - a clear demonstration of truth telling done from the heart of being. The second gift was a simple question Mary posed that, I believe, is important to re-visit regularly. Why do you practice yoga? Hearing this question during retreat, in the company of friends and in the peaceful reflection that is present during retreat simply added an element of importance to the query. And it was a reminder that a question can be more meaningful than the answer.



Paramahansa Nithyananda

Paramahansa Nithyananda, was born in South India and embarked upon his spiritual journey at a young age, enduring years of rigorous penance. Through intense meditation practices and indepth study of Yoga, Tantra, Vedanta, and Shaiva philosophies, he attained the ultimate state of consciousness, the State of Nithyananda (Eternal Bliss).



Having emerged as an inspiring personality, Nithyananda transforms individuals around the globe through his simple teachings and powerful meditation techniques.

Nithyananda's mission is to help each individual actualize his inherent potential. With a pragmatic and compassionate approach, and an enlightened insight into the core of human nature, Nithyananda continues to touch and transform the lives of millions across the world. His lucid explanation of practical issues and simple and dynamic meditation techniques help individuals to blossom at the physical, emotional and spiritual levels.

By offering Himself as a subject for research, Nithyananda works with scientists across the globe to bridge the modern Western system of logic and evidence-based science and the ancient Eastern system of mysticism. These studies thus help bridge the gap between science and spirituality for the benefit of humanity.

The spiritual mission established by Nithyananda works towards the goal of creating a blissful society, and currently serves through the many centers located in several countries, and continues to grow at a rapid pace. Thousands of volunteers work to support the mission world over. (From www.lifebliss.org.)

SHARE WITH US

The *Crescent Moon* is an excellent way to share your experiences and express your feelings. We welcome original photos or thoughts that might be of interest to fellow yoga students. We also like to hear about books or movies you have read or seen that might broaden our study of yoga. Feel free to contribute your original ideas to the *Crescent Moon*. We look forward to hearing from you!

BOOK REVIEW

My Stroke of Insight by Jill Bolte Taylor

by Nancy Long



Here is a book that describes the Presence! We talk about meditating, going inward, finding our true nature, but for many of us this is all so abstract. Well, *My Stroke of Insight* is the first-person account of a woman who suffers a stroke and finds that place of bliss. Her descriptions are so vivid and accurate that perhaps we can come to a deeper understanding of the place where our true nature abides.

Jill Bolte Taylor is a neuroanatomist (brain scientist) who was a researcher at the Harvard Brain Bank when she experienced a massive stroke in December 1996. She takes the reader on a journey through her brain during and after her stroke. She actually observed the left side of her brain deteriorate to the point that she could not walk, talk, read, write, or recall any of her life, all within the space of four brief hours.

She alternated between the left side of the brain (the rational, grounded, detail- and time-oriented side) and the right side (the intuitive, feeling, spacious, and not connected to time side). Having experienced this deep sense of complete well-being and peace, she realized that it was a part of herself that she did not want to give up. It is an amazing account and a great read.

There is a great clip on TED that presents Bolte Taylor giving a talk about what happened and her amazing eight-year recovery. Just google "Jill Bolte Taylor" and the TED website will come up.

If you watch this and it piques your interest, I encourage you to read this book. It won't disappoint!



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Namasté Yoga Center

Established in 1991

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Justina Biswell

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R.Y.T., H.I.T.A.

Founder/Senior Teacher:

Mary Addison-Lamb, M.A.
Integrative Yoga Therapist

Secretary:

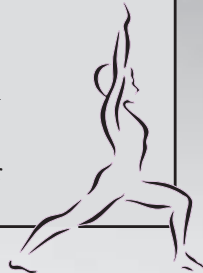
Joann Svetlik

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***It's a New Day
at Namasté!***

New Practice Classes

New Pregnancy Class

Mom & Baby Class

Saturday Morning Kids & Teens Class

Healthy Bones Class

Special Monthly Events or Workshops

Information on class schedules and workshops can be found on our website or at Namasté. For new class pricing, see the front page of this newsletter.