



IYA OF THE SOUTHWEST (IYASW)

A PLEDGLING ASSOCIATION WITH A SOARING VISION OF THE FUTURE by Lisa Henrich

Published on *IYNAUS* Yoga Samachar Spring/Summer 2012



Over the past year, the many devoted volunteers of the newly-launched B.K.S. Iyengar Yoga Association of the Southwest (IYASW) have worked hard. As members of the newest addition to the family of regional associations, they are excited about continuing the work of disseminating the teachings of B.K.S. Iyengar.

Over the past two decades, Arizona practitioners have been blessed with a guidance and influence of Senior Teachers Manousso Manos, Rita Lewis-Manos, and Dean Lerner. In coming to Tucson and sharing Guruji's teachings, they helped plant the seed for IYASW's work today.

It was Senior Teacher Carolyn Belko's idea to start the regional association. Carolyn comes regularly from her home in Encinitas, CA, to Scottsdale Community College in Arizona to hold teacher training sessions. Through the work of all of Arizona's Certified Teachers, Iyengar Yoga has made gains in that state in recent years, and Carolyn suggested that forming a regional association would help bring the community together, while nourishing its expansion.

At the same time, the B.K.S. Iyengar Yoga Association of Southern Nevada (IYASN) was preparing to formally disband. After starting the association in 1996 and running it for over a decade, Aileen Epstein-Ignadiou (Intermediate Junior II, Las Vegas, NV) was ready to draw the chapter to a close. Membership rolls had dwindled, and the remaining members did not have the time to keep the association going. Hearing about the formation of the new region, Aileen thought to merge the closing Southern Nevada chapter with the newly-forming association in Arizona.

Aileen realized that a lengthy and expensive process lay ahead for Arizona as a new region. Changing the name from IYASN to IYASW proved to be simpler than launching a new nonprofit corporation, and soon the B.K.S. Iyengar Yoga Association of the Southwest was born. An extra benefit to the merger was that the new region would be bigger, encompassing Arizona and Nevada. IYASW also welcomes members from New Mexico and Northwestern Texas, which are typically included in the Southwest.

An ad hoc board is currently working to get the new organization up and running. Nominations are being gathered for board members for the coming year; the elections will be completed by May 1. Once the operating board is in place, it can begin planning events for IYASW members.

Many dedicated practitioners have been working on IYASW's ad hoc board: Marivic Wrobel (Introductory I, Scottsdale, AZ), Vickie Wofford (Introductory I, Scottsdale, AZ), Ross Temple (Introductory I, Scottsdale, AZ), Gregg Temple, Rashaad Thomas, Carlyn Sikes (Introductory II, Scottsdale, AZ), Josie Lazarus (Introductory II, Gilbert, AZ), JoAnn Augur, Lisa Henrich (Introductory I, Scottsdale, AZ), and Karen Smith (Introductory II, Tucson, AZ).

IYASW has several goals for the future. It looks forward to sponsoring free or reduced-cost workshops for members, featuring the talented teachers of the Southwest and also teachers from other regions. Since one of the primary goals is to bring the Southwestern Iyengar Yoga community closer together, IYASW hopes to hold informal community get-togethers such as potluck dinners and movie nights, giving members a change to get to know one another. A bi-monthly or quarterly newsletter, listing workshops and other special events hosted by studios or members, will be emailed to members.

Another goal is to set up a members' library, building a collection of books, audios, and videos featuring and about Guruji and the Iyengar family, including harder-to-find items such as back issues of *Yoga Samachar* and volumes of *Astadala Yogamala*—items that can't be found in most public libraries.

Further down the road, IYASW would like to use membership dues and donations to offer scholarships to community members in need, so that all Iyengar Yoga practitioners have the opportunity to attend workshops and regional conventions, and possibly to pursue teacher certification and study at R.I.M.Y.I. To truly bring Iyengar Yoga to everyone, scholarships must play an integral role.

As IYASW continues to grow and branch out, members look forward to seeing Guruji's gift touch more and more lives throughout the Southwest region and beyond.