

Auroville International USA's Evolve Newsletter fosters the link between Auroville and its members in the USA

Upcoming Events:

AVIUSA Booth at the Wisdom Festival: September 15th-16th, Fort Mason Center, San Francisco. More online at <http://www.wisdomfestival.org>
AVI International Meeting: September 19-28 in Montreal, Canada. More details online at <http://aurovillecanada.org>
Auroville's 40th Birthday: February 28th, 2008
All USA Meeting Honoring Auroville: June 1st-4th Estes Park, Colorado

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"The Divine Truth is greater than any religion or creed or scripture or idea or philosophy." - Sri Aurobindo

A Vision for AVI-USA - By Mary Alexander

I have had a little more than a year to reflect on my role as President of AVI-USA, on what will make it meaningful to me personally as well as useful to the community at large. The recent All USA Meeting (AUM) at IONS was wonderful, as always, and I was aware this time that what is so special at all AUMs is beyond the sum of time spent with old friends, meeting new ones, and listening to or participating in interesting programs. It is the thread of Divine connection and inspiration that weaves throughout. The topic this year, "Integral Yoga in Dialogue with the World," felt very timely to me, and out of it has come the clarity of purpose I was seeking.



Mary discovering a connection with Raffi, from Child Honoring, an organization that connects personal, cultural and planetary domains through a unifying principle of social change. Photo courtesy Sunny Lithman.

Around the globe and in the United States, there are many people of goodwill who are collaborating for the purpose of human evolution even though that is not the acknowledged purpose of these individuals. So I am beginning to see the purpose of AVI-USA as facilitating connection between these people of goodwill in order to foster collaboration between them, and to support building and nourishing the place called Auroville and the people there.

AVI needs to be an organization which honors all people of goodwill who are working for evolutionary growth using the inspiration that the Divine has given them, for it is a process of both individual growth and collective collaboration, and the individual growth will be unique to each one. Whether using the traditions of ancient shamanism or researching the cutting edge of cellular biology, whether in business, or law, or education, people are being inspired to reach for the next stage of evolution.

Barbara Marx Hubbard pointed out that the concept of the Psychic Being is unique to Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's yoga. She spoke of knowing a vast number of people who are working towards evolutionary change, but that they

didn't know of this piece, the Psychic Being. It may be that they experience it, but do not have the terms for describing or talking about it.

In building connections between people who are ready to grow with the evolutionary push that is manifesting at this time, we strengthen our personal growth, and we flow in support of the changes our planet needs as we face the choices before us.

I hope you will take the time to respond to our enclosed questionnaire, so that AVI-USA can begin to build connections that support you personally, Auroville, and human evolution in general.

If your copy of Evolve does not have a questionnaire, please go to our website and download one to mail to us (<http://www.aviusa.org/meetup.pdf>). Your participation is critical to our success in the important work we are doing for Auroville and the world.

Voice of the Office

When you call our office, you may hear what you think is a French accent. But Rosine Debode is actually Belgian and a veteran of the early years of Auroville. She is living at the Lodi Ashram and volunteering to help with our work. She is a wonderful new asset to AVIUSA and we appreciate her participation along with Kalpana and Julian who all volunteer to oversee our daily operations.



*AUM 2008 will be set in the mountains of Colorado.
Photo courtesy Lynda Lester.*

**All USA Meeting 2008 at Estes Park, Colorado
June 1st - 5th**

Set aside the dates for a beautiful “open” gathering (the featured speakers are us) celebrating nature and Auroville’s 40th birthday in the Rockies.

**Auroville’s 40th Birthday: An Opportunity
To Look Towards The Future – by Savitra**

Looking toward next February and Auroville’s 40th birthday, one can foresee the influx of people and the diverse program of cultural events, performances, art exhibits, seminars, speeches, ceremonies, etc.

But can we turn it into something more than a symbolic celebration? Can we make the most of that moment, of that gathering of people, energies and possibilities? Can we use our 40th birthday to update and re-dedicate ourselves in a new Re-Foundation Ceremony, built on 40 years of labor and experience?

For clearly the world and Auroville of 2008 is a very different reality (with very different urgencies and perceptions) from the world and Auroville of 1968.

If AV plans to invite local, State & National Government officials, UNESCO representatives, Governing Board & Int’l. Advisory Council members, NGOs, media, donors, supporters, (fill in the blank) to its Birthday Party, let’s use the potential of this great wealth of human resources to help us get the Birthday Present we and the Earth really need - the land of Auroville, whole, free, intact.

I would ask these dignitaries to make an active commitment to protect and re-save the land we already saved and the land we still need to save. Next, I would use this occasion to update and redefine Auroville and its mission in the world of 2008.

Can we invoke a paradigm shift among ourselves, describing our Auroville experiment with a new creative term that shifts the way the world perceives us and the way we perceive ourselves? — an inspiring yet secular term that also helps change the lingering confusions which still label

Auroville as a religious or cult-based collective.

My suggestion is Univer-city. For as a descriptive term, it combines an urban habitat with a sense of limitless exploration and an emphasis on youth and youthfulness, on never-ending learning, multiculturalism, tolerance of new ideas etc. etc.

In the mid-1980s, there was a movement in Auroville to define ourselves not simply as a future township but as a unique university campus and living laboratory where all aspects of life were simultaneously areas of research and study. Happily this theme has re-ignited through a core group of AV residents looking at developing university-level studies into Auroville’s education.

Catching this new wave, can we move beyond past definitions and descriptions of Auroville? Can we make our own paradigm shift, enlarging and expanding the way we see ourselves and the way we present ourselves to the world?

I would invite the Community to reread its Charter, in particular, points 2, 3 and 4. In this light, isn’t Auroville meant to be a place where life and learning are inseparable? And aren’t all aspects of AV’s experiment -- from organization to economics, from education to the environment, from communications to organic farming, from renewable energy to architecture, eco-habitat design & building materials — meant to be areas of research in a living evolutionary curriculum for a transitional species?

In today’s compartmentalized world, there are universities and there are cities. But there are no univer-cities. There is some historical precedent for this in the ancient Buddhist city of Nalanda and the ancient Greek city of Athens. But these were local centers of learning, not integrated global research experiments. So why not create a new name for a new and unprecedented model for a community that re-integrates life, lifelong-learning, the evolution of consciousness and the sustainability of our social, environmental and planetary systems?

I hope these suggestions are helpful as we look toward our next future together. With Roots to that Future, may we celebrate Auroville’s 40th in a joyful and heroic way.





Savitra speaking during a panel session at AUM 2007.
Photo courtesy Sunny Lithman.

40th Anniversary Tour Of Auroville & Southern India - January 7 - January 26, 2008

January will be a great time to experience fully and on all levels the vision of this spiritual and universal city-in-the-making! You can spend 11 inspiring and interactive days in Auroville and discover the vision, the colorful history and today's realities of the "City the Earth Needs". Aurovilians will give you in-depth presentations, followed by lively tours to various communities and projects. You will have the opportunity to actively work with Aurovilians. Experience Karma Yoga.

For more information and an application form go to <http://www.sunwolfcreations.com/tours-india.html>

Lodi Retreat Report

The March 17th Lodi Retreat at Sri Aurobinodo Sadhana Peetham (Lodi Ashram) centered on the following questions:

1. How can we strengthen, improve and deepen the connection between the Lodi Ashram, AVI-USA and Auroville?
2. What forms might that take?

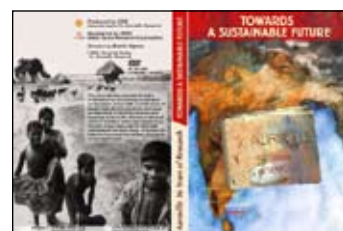
Some highlights of ideas and thoughts that came out of our sharing include:



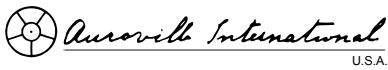
- Let Auroville residents know what facilities are available at Lodi including the alcove in the new Lodi Basement for AVI-USA office work.
- It was noted that the basement symbolizes the kundalini power. (Former Aurovilians Ed and B helped create the 20 ft. of rebar of Sri Aurobindo and Mother's Symbol in the basement's concrete floor.)
- Possibilities for the basement space:
 - Conference center/media/Silicon Valley connection/nexus point.
 - Communication Media center for all that wants to manifest in networking and education.
 - Place for active communication between SASP/AVI/Auroville, and related communities.
- Create a "To do list," "dream/project list," and wish lists for SASP/AVI/ Auroville, published so people can participate and contribute locally/internationally.
- Create a collective wish list (including all centers).
- Build a guesthouse in Lodi
- Bring US youth/students to work here before going to AV as a kind of training ground for them in collective work and community life. Possible connection with U.S. Pavilion in Auroville.
- Hold a major Auroville reunion once a year.
- Karma Yoga emphasis/ Work Days (no talks/ lectures at some retreats) where people can just come to work on long term/on going projects, such as planting seeds for a Lodi Garden
- News from Auroville: Hold periodic "What's New"
- "New Ideas for Extended Community": Hold a kind of annual town meeting for the Auroville and SASP friends and family to share dreams and intent
- Acknowledge our differences.

Towards a Sustainable Future: 36 Years of Environmental Restoration

This wonderful video shows Auroville's work on water harvesting and afforestation, with emphasis on the aim to replant the indigenous tropical dry evergreen forest. It also shows the systems of alternative energy promoted by Auroville: the windmills for water pumping, ferro-cement technology and biogas generation; adobe construction and the earth-brick machines developed in Auroville; and Auroville's work in promoting solar energy technology in India . The video has made good use of photo and video material from the early days of Auroville, showing the development through a series of compelling images and talks. Central to the theme is the 'voice' of the Banyan, the tree at the centre of Auroville, which saw it all: the goodwill, the failures and the successes.



The video is available to members of AVI USA as well as to libraries, environmental groups and nonprofits. Please become a member with a credit card donation via our website (\$10 per month is possible) or send us a check for \$120. As environmental consultant Allen Parker says about Auroville, "The work portrayed here is among the most impressive I have found in 38 years of studying, directing, and administering funds for hundreds of research and development (R&D) efforts."



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Auroville International USA
P.O. Box 1534
Lodi, CA 95241-1534
web: <http://www.aviusa.org>
e-mail: info@aviusa.org
phone: (831) 425-5620

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web: <http://www.matagiri.org/avinfo.htm>
e-mail: aviny@aviusa.org
phone: (845) 679-5358