

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

Upcoming Events:

Auroville Family Reunion: Retreat in Lodi, CA. Saturday, March 17, "Deepening the SASP-Auroville Connection." Bring work/play clothes, vegetarian potluck, and a \$10 contribution. See more on page 3.

AUM: June 20-24 at the Institute for Noetic Science in Mill Valley. See the article on page 2 for more details.

AVI International Meeting: September 19-28 in Montreal, Canada. More details online at <http://www.auroville-international.org>.

Table of Contents:

Upcoming Events 1
 Who Are We? 1
 Matrimandir: The Home Stretch 1
 AUM 2007 Invitation 2
 Facing The Other 2
 In Memory of Seyril Schochen 3
 In Memory of Bina Chaudhuri 3
 Auroville Family Reunion 3

"As man moves towards spiritual freedom, he moves also towards spiritual oneness." - Sri Aurobindo

Who Are We?

Auroville International USA (AVI-USA) connects more than 1,200 people in the USA to Auroville, the universal township founded in 1968 in India. AVI-USA is non-profit, tax-exempt and part of a wider network of Auroville International (AVI) centers around the world. The purpose of the AVI Centers is to work together with the residents of Auroville to build "the city the earth needs."

If you have visited Auroville recently, and this is the first time you are reading Evolve, Welcome! We invite you to make connections with others who maintain contact with and support Auroville.

Matrimandir: The Home Stretch – by Julian Lines

This is an amazing time for Auroville and for Humanity.

The sphere and petals of the Matrimandir are nearing completion. Thirty-six years of effort are culminating in a final sprint to finish the railings and inner skin, and funding is very much needed!

The Matrimandir has faced many challenges, from cement shortages in the early years to a recent electronic riddle of malfunctioning diodes which serve to backlight the triangles on the inner skin. The team has made innovations over the years including the geometry of the space frame, the glass "vacuum sandwich" protecting the gold tiles, and the solar tracker on top which sends a beam of light constantly to the crystal sphere below, through the chamber and onto the earth.

Parts of the inner Matrimandir have been ready for years, just waiting for the removal of scaffolding and their protective covers. Now that time has come!

The final two puzzles are replacing a tiny electrical circuit board that had not been built as specified, and the other is the bending and placement of

the glass and railings leading up to the Inner Chamber. The ramps curving upwards turn at three different radii from the floor to the Chamber, making complex curves that even the computer assisted machinery has trouble calculating correctly. And once the glass is tempered, it is fixed.

By February 21st, the team hopes to have one ramp completed and most of the scaffolding removed. It will be a "soft opening" with the work completed over the next few months.

Some of you are aware that the Inner Chamber underwent a major renovation earlier this year, taking out four lights and vents from the ceiling and creating one circle at the top of the dome for air conditioning, one light for when the sun is not shining, and a new solar tracker. So in a sense, the Matrimandir will never be completed, but will be improved upon over time.

But this is a special moment when you can participate in the end of the first chapter. Tax deductible donations can be made through Auroville International USA by using

the donation form on page 4, or by visiting us online at <http://www.aviusa.org>.



The inner skin and spiral ramp inside the Matrimandir (photo: Julian Lines).

AUM 2007 Invitation – by Savitra

Opening In, Opening Out, Opening Up!

Greetings friends and fellow travelers,

You are cordially invited to the next AUM 2007 gathering to be held June 20-24 at the beautiful campus of the Institute of Noetic Sciences (IONS) near Petaluma, California (an hour north of San Francisco).

The theme of this AUM is "Integral Yoga in Dialogue with the World." In the spirit of modeling this collaborative dialogue with the world, the California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS) in San Francisco is hosting and co-organizing the event.

Integral Yoga in Dialogue with the World

What is the 21st Century relationship between Sri Aurobindo's evolutionary vision and the evolving fields of human knowledge and experience, in particular the enormous research opening up in the fields of Consciousness and Spirituality? And, in light of this quantum leap in emergent knowledge going on simultaneously in so many fields, what does the Integral Yoga Community have to share with and learn from its evolutionary allies in the world?

This Conference will explore and address these questions primarily through presentations and panels in a dialogue-based format.

"Evolutionary allies" participating with us as panelists and presenters include:

- Michael Murphy (author, founder, Esalen Institute)
- Barbara Marx Hubbard (visionary/president, Foundation for Conscious Evolution)
- Brian Swimme, PhD (CIIS prof., cosmologist, author)
- Elisabet Sahtouris, PhD (evolutionary biologist, author)
- Robert McDermott PhD (CIIS prof., philosophy & comparative religions)
- Craig Hamilton (former managing editor, "What is Enlightenment?" magazine)
- Sradhalu Ranade from the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry
- Ameeta Mehra from the Gnostic Centre in New Delhi

In the meantime, mark your calendars and make your plans to be with us for this exciting and groundbreaking AUM 2007 as we open in, open out, open up!

For the AUM 2007 team,

Savitra, co-organizer

Facing the Other - by Mary Alexander

The achievement of deep, trusting collaboration can bring us closer to the realization of human unity, building a synthesis of our marvelous diversity. Working toward this kind of synthesis through cooperation presents us with the tremendous challenge of seeing past our cultural values to learn from each other. We have the choice of viewing this challenge as hard and hopeless, or as a magnificent opportunity. In looking toward a future of transformation, how do we prepare for substantial, collaborative change?

In September of 2006, the Auroville Planning and Development Council (APDC) and Auroville's Future decided to explore the possibility of forming a collaborative planning and development body as both the groups were working at cross purposes at the cost of Auroville's development. Auroville Vision 2012 was requested to



Julian Lines honouring June Maher at AUM '06 (photo: Lynda Lester)

facilitate a process to resolve this situation, which resulted in a series of meetings. The beginning wasn't easy: trust was nonexistent and people and positions polarized. The biggest obstacle faced was a lack of belief that it could be different. While they do not claim to have achieved a full-fledged collaboration, they have committed to creating it.

This is an important and commendable beginning. As part of Auroville's reflection in the larger world, those of us who aspire for the success of Auroville have it on our shoulders not only to nurture Auroville's efforts, but also to attempt this challenging, transformative work within our own spheres of influence, whether in our families, our work, our communities, or our nations.

No matter what spheres we inhabit, we have the opportunity for collaboration. By recognizing the gifts in those different from ourselves, we see the Divine in the face of our diversity. It is through hearing the truth spoken by our opposite, taking their thesis, offering our antithesis, and finding the truth held in each to create a synthesis, that we find a larger, more inclusive truth. In taking the time to learn enough about our opposites to discover what we value about them, what we can learn from them, and in sharing enough of ourselves, honestly and kindly, that they can find what they value about us, we begin to collaborate.

Beginning conversations about cultures is another opportunity for collaboration. We have talked about gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, handicaps and disabilities, science and spirit, but we have danced around the fact that each of these aspects of humanity carries with it a variation of culture that has hidden rules. These rules and values, built up and agreed upon within that culture, are not shared with those from outside the culture. When outsiders break a hidden rule or violate a hidden value

they are deemed evil or stupid, or penalized, feared, and scorned.

What would it be like if we chose to replace penalty, fear, and scorn with collaboration? If we begin with acceptance, we can move into understanding, and then, finally, collaboration. Start with good will, with the aspiration to grow beyond what is. Start with an understanding that emotions are information about one's beliefs, conscious or unconscious, and that they can change. Start with patience for the time it takes to build genuine consensus. Start with a willingness to accept the truth of the other, so that it can be safely revealed. The goal is not painlessness, but movement towards healing through new understanding.

To stand in the light of Truth, knowing that our capacity to see by it is only expanded by our honest acknowledgement that those from outside our own culture know something of that Truth that we do not yet see, begins the deeper understanding. It is together that we truly move forward.

In Memory of Seyril - by Suzanne McGregor

On December 12, 2006, we lost a dear friend, spiritual advisor and a driving force in the "adventure of consciousness." Seyril Schochen passed away very peacefully in Savitri House, at the age of 91, during the reading of the selection from the Mother's Prayers and Meditations from June 18, 1914, a beautiful good-bye for us and a warm welcome into new adventures for her.



Seyril at the Matrimandir Workers' Camp (photo: Dominique Darr)

In her "past life," as Seyril described it, she was a playwright, educator, and author. She taught at Swarthmore College and Cornell University, directed Shakespeare at Bryn Mawr, and was playwright-in-residence at the University of Illinois. Her poems, essays and plays were published here and abroad. Seyril entered her "real life" and the passionate calling that would become her focus for the rest of her life when she visited Auroville in 1969. She worked on the Matrimandir for nine years, and then she returned to the U.S. with the vision of creating the Sri Aurobindo Learning Center, founded in Baca, Colorado in 1986. Her vision manifested in Savitri House, the Solar Dome, and Solar Bridge conference center. She organized monthly events on a wide variety of topics.

We all feel joy and peace for Seyril, as her spirit is now limitless in the arms of the Mother. Pavita Decorah, Seyril's assistant director, loving friend, and caregiver, will continue as director at Savitri House. The SALC Board will carry on Seyril's work. A portion of Seyril's ashes will be returned to her beloved Auroville.

In memory of Bina - by David Hutchinson

On the night of Dec 27th, 2006, four days after experiencing a stroke, Bina Chaudhuri passed away in peace and among family and a few friends. David Hutchinson relates his experiences with Bina Chaudhuri.



Bina Chaudhuri in 2004. (photo: Julian Lines)

I first met Bina in the early 1980s. She was a powerful quiet presence, carrying the authority and stature of the Cultural Integration Fellowship (CIF) and the California Institute of Asian Studies (CIAS). She embodied the spiritual history of both institutions, and beyond them Haridas Chaudhuri, and Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Like them, she was trustworthy, and carried a core of truth.

Bina had her position thrust upon her after Haridas passed away, and she fulfilled her duty well, bringing an integrity, beauty, and openness to both those institutions and to her personal life. She invited young aspiring students like me and my wife Marta to her home and listened to our wildly differing opinions with respect. She brought scholars from India, and reached out to the multi-spiritual community of San Francisco and California. Bina was a gentle maternal figure to everyone. There are few places in the world where one is always welcomed warmly; Bina's was one of them. She embodied India, which looks beyond the form to the one spirit behind.

She never aged - even though she was well on in years when I first met her. She had an eternal Something about her, so that on seeing her two decades later, it was as if no time had passed at all.

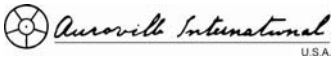
Haridas' sensibility, which she carried as well, was insightful and practical on Integral Yoga. He and she spoke and wrote from experience of the world, from a firm grounding in its realities, inner and outer, public and private.

Bina is well-remembered, and her spirit will live on through generations of seekers that she fostered. May her brave soul travel lightly, and be surrounded by the joy and being of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

Auroville Family Reunion

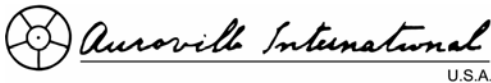
We're bringing the Auroville family together at the Sri Aurobindo Sadhana Peetham (SASP) ashram in Lodi, California, on Saturday, March 17. In addition to working and playing together, we'll also focus on deepening the connection between Auroville and SASP. The day will explore differences and similarities between Auroville/AVI and Ashram/SASP. We'll acknowledge and honor the differences, and begin a conversation about how to support each other positively while accepting where each is in their unique process.

The day will begin at 9:45am and go until about 8:00pm. Bring work/play clothes, a vegetarian dish to share at the potluck, and a \$10 contribution.



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