

AVI-USA CONNECT

Fall 2015 Newsletter

Issue 05



Fall at Matagiri

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REFLECTIONS



Red Maple, Matagiri main house



The Auroville International Meeting in Woodstock

By Friederike Mühlhans

Is there a better place than Woodstock to experiment with new formats? For the first time in AVI history we had our annual AVI gathering together with the All USA Meeting (AUM). It was a great opportunity to meet and make friends with more people from the American Integral Yoga – Auroville community and to present our own work and some of the most recent achievements and challenges.

Some days before the A.U.M., AVI-USA board members arrived from different corners of the America and the AVI Board met for three days of intense consultations at Matagiri Sri Aurobindo Center. Its beautiful, charged atmosphere carried us through our discussions. Julian and Wendy Lines, who were the main organizers of the AUM/AVI event, were wonderful hosts, lovingly taking care of all our needs. They also had organized a public Auroville evening at the Woodstock Community Center, which was well attended and gave the opportunity for a broad outline of nearly 50 years of Auroville's challenges and progress to the attentive audience.

The AUM/AVI gathering itself, which took place at the beautiful Menla Mountain Retreat close to Woodstock, saw a well-balanced program. We AVI people were especially grateful for the chance to present the work of our 10 AVI centers and 22 AVI liaison offices to the AUM participants, who seemed to genuinely appreciate this broader perspective.

Mandakini of AVI France highlighted the “Acres for Auroville” fundraising campaign of which she is the initiator and driving force. With all her passion she spoke about the big challenge to secure Auroville's land and prevent outside developers and speculators from hampering the integrity of Auroville's heart and center.

Two Aurovilians, Vani, our Auroville representative at AVI, and Jaya presented another topic relating to one of AVI's core engagements—the development of the International Zone of Auroville and the need, to get all nations involved in building their pavilions there.

Auroville was very present at this AUM meeting altogether, and the different presentations mingled well with the lectures, talks, discussion rounds and yoga sessions of the AUM program. Marlenka spoke about the “Farewell Project,” an initiative to secure a dignified building for Aurovilians leaving this earthly plane. And Julian had organized a Skype conference with Auroville in which the initiatives EcoFemme, Sacred Groves and iCiti (Auroville's High Speed Optical Fiber Project) were presented.



AVI Board Meets in the Matagiri Library



Vegan Dinner at the Garden Cafe in Woodstock



Savitra Addresses Woodstock

The meeting program comprised quite a variety of highlights, among them the different cultural presentations, which truly evoked some of the genuine “Woodstock feeling,” at least as it lives in my imagination. Aurovilian musician Nadaka and also Fif and Hamish from Auroville, who presented their “India Nose Love” clowning project and enlivened the scene by distributing clown noses and inviting everyone to “just let go and have fun”, harmoniously fused into this.

I had my light bulb moment about the subliminal affinity of the Auroville and the Woodstock spirit, tangible at our gathering, when I learned about the two dates I had not been aware of: the contract for the Festival was signed February 28th on Auroville’s birthday, and the Festival itself started on August 15, Sri Aurobindo’s birthday. My heartfelt thanks to AVI USA and especially to Julian and Wendy for facilitating this great experience!

Subsequent to our meeting some of us AVI people hailing from Europe and India had the chance to visit the breath-taking Niagara Falls and also the Madison area in Wisconsin, following an invitation by our dear Fanou and Bryan who live very close to Taliesin, Frank Lloyd Wright’s home and summer estate. We found out that Bryan is an expert guide for Taliesin! We also enjoyed a tour to the place where the Wisconsin river and the Mississippi meet and to the Effigy Mounds Monument in Iowa, just on the other side of the Mississippi.

I have to say that I never experienced the sanctity of nature as strongly as I did during this stay. First the beautiful Catskill Mountains, their clean air, the deer grazing peacefully two meters next to you at Menla, the amazing idea to have bears living in the surrounding woods—Vani even met one on the road one morning - and then the Niagara Falls. We followed Nadaka’s advice and went to the Canadian side: absolutely stunning! I could not resist imagining how the native people must have felt, before the age of tourism. And finally the absolute peacefulness and grandiosity of the Mississippi-Wisconsin confluence, embedded in a densely wooded area.

Our picnic at an elevated viewpoint overlooking the vast panorama is unforgettable! And to crown it all, when taking a long walk in the Effigy Mounds National Park, following the steps of the ancient Indian Moundbuilders, we spotted 7 Bald Eagles taking a rest at a little island shore in the Mississippi River, with an occasional show of majestic gliding.

To meet a whole flock of this national bird, after having experienced the grandiosity of nature and the generosity of our lovingly caring hosts during our whole stay, made me feel a deep love and sympathy for this wonderful country. And it made me send out a prayer that it may soon let its soul qualities prevail and shape its fate. This, of course, is a wish for all our nations....

Friederike Mühlhans, from Germany, is the president of Auroville International



Wendy teaching a yoga class at Menla



Clowning around



Nadaka’s musical Finale at Matagiri



Overlooking the confluence of the Wisconsin and Mississippi rivers



Vani at Frank Lloyd Wright’s Taliesin with his fu-dog

photo by isa

A Personal Reflection on the A.U.M. at Woodstock, August, 2015

by Vikas (Alan Vickers)

*"A giant dance of Shiva tore the past,
There was a thunder as of worlds that fall..."*

SRI AUROBINDO - SAVITRI



We emerged from the joy and light of our MENLA gathering to be greeted by the news of the plunge of the Chinese economy. The progressive collapse of the existing economic model despite attempts to prevent that collapse by the Chinese government pumping huge sums of money into its economy are further indications that the current world economic model is not merely unstable. It seems unsustainable and to be breaking. Banks fail. Stock markets are on a white knuckle ride. The medicine for returning this roller coaster to 'health' is the incitement to buy more stuff.

This existing economy both feeds the colossal world consumerist hunger and is fed by it. Its process and demands end up creating a world that poisons us all, literally and physically as well as spiritually. This is the world of the ego. Greed and fear are its staple diet, creating climate change, species decline and the progressive collapse of all existing systems. A giant dance of Shiva. It is an unbearable world in which many are driven to desperately seek ways out through drink, drugs, shopping, holidays, etc. so that they can escape the pain.

But how can we find a transition from that dying world to something truer? This was the big question for me at the AUM meeting.

If we can look from a different level at all of these turbulent world events, we can see the interconnectedness of all the symptoms of this collapsing world system – the poisoned oceans and air we breathe, the consumerist economy, species health, extreme and fundamentalist movements seeking to set themselves up as the antidote to the western model in turn creating the current migration crisis. A world of ignorance and falsehood, strife and suffering.

Consider then the contradiction of Auroville, which still depends on that existing collapsing world, a world we have rejected as being in ignorance and falsehood, and yet we are dependent on it to manifest the city. Consider also the contradiction of a city that still to a great extent is modelled on the same living patterns as those that are collapsing and which we purport to reject. Huge concrete structures only affordable through funding coming from a collapsing economy and a world based upon false values. Is the very idea of a city not itself really just a formation, something we should seriously question? Is it not a huge hypocrisy? Not to mention Aurovilians with their cars, motorbikes, servants, annual holidays abroad.

"We are stardust, we are golden, caught in the devil's bargain, and we've got to get ourselves back to the garden." - JONI MITCHELL, FROM HER SONG "WOODSTOCK"

We need a new life, a new model.

We need a life of simplicity, yet rich with a true wealth, based not on money nor on stuff that one owns, but on beauty, peace, sincerity, sweetness and light. A life of community working together, for each other, for all, with love. A life much more rooted in the natural world, a living world creating our environment and providing a sustainable form of living, self-sufficient, no longer dependent on the old, dying world.

We need to get in touch with the real world, with nature, and live sustainably within it. Maybe in this way we can make the transition, physically and materially, from the old world model to the new world already being born.

Maybe it's the time of year or maybe it's the time of man"

- JONI MITCHELL, FROM HER SONG "WOODSTOCK"

Live in and be the Truth you aspire to

With love,

Vikas

Vikas, an early Aurovilian architect, is the president of AVI-UK.



EVENTS



Bryan & Fanou at the Peace Table at the Cathedral St John the Divine, NYC

Working with the Peace Tables

BY JAYA

Note: George Nakashima was a Japanese American who was the supervisor in the building of Golconde residence of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. His furniture design and use of natural wood for tables made him a "national treasure" of Japan and well-known in the USA. He credited Sri Aurobindo and the Mother for guiding his inner development. His large peace tables are in Moscow, New York and Auroville..

New York

On 15th of August a group of Aurovilians, AVI members and friends from the New York Sri Aurobindo Study Circle met at the Cathedral of St John the Divine in New York, to celebrate Sri Aurobindo's birthday with a gathering around the Peace Table.

On arrival we first went through the beautiful garden adjacent to the church, with all its sculptures, commemorations and writings celebrating peace. This cathedral, with its dedication to peace, is a beautiful environment for the Peace Table.

When we came inside, it turned out that the space where the Peace Table stands was temporarily under repair, and the Altar itself tucked under a cover.

Thanks to Miriam Belov and the kind collaboration of the staff, the covers were removed, chairs brought and we were invited to have our gathering. It was a beautiful meditation with Mother's reading and music and it felt very natural to share the space with all the other visitors moving quietly around the Cathedral.

Next to where the Peace Table is placed was an exhibition on the Dalai Lama and in several smaller chapels there were services taking place. We were adding to, and part of, the energy flowing through the Cathedral.

After the gathering at the Cathedral, some of us proceeded to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where we went to see the exhibits of George Nakashima. The furniture was exhibited in a room together with exquisitely painted Japanese screens, and as we sat there together, relaxing in the beautiful environment, the notion emerged that the chairs we were sitting so comfortably on would be perfect for Auroville's Hall of Peace. Permanent chairs as part of the seating arrangements around the Peace Table is a topic which we have been pondering for a long time.

New Hope, Pennsylvania

On the following day we proceeded to New Hope, to visit with the Nakshima Family. It was a very inspiring visit, the beauty and perfection so in harmony with both nature and



Jaya & Miriam at the Cathedral St John the Divine, NYC



Mira Nakashima, George's daughter
at the Unity Pavilion Auroville

usefulness. Standing in the large wood storage shed the world slowed down to tune with these slabs of wood, many of them centuries older. Georges Nakashima said that he gave a second life to these trees: there was a stillness and restfulness as well as an assurance of emergence.

It was good to speak about the Unity Pavilion and the Hall of Peace with Mira Nakashima, George's daughter who continue his work, to share our work and dreams and see how we can collaborate. The chairs for the Hall of Peace in Auroville were discussed and there was agreement to collaborate on realizing this possibility. We had a lovely lunch, where, as Kevin pointed out, we were sitting together to eat at the worlds most expensive picnic table, a beautiful long Nakashima Table with room for all of us, wonderfully surrounded by nature.

We were happy to hear that Kevin had managed to secure some adjacent land which otherwise was to be exploited, safeguarding the wonderful natural environment of the New Hope workshop and the Nakashima Foundation for Peace for the future.

Auroville

The International Peace Day, 21st September, was celebrated in Auroville with the opening of an Exhibition of Peace at the Unity Pavilion. It displayed art from some of the Auroville artists, pieces of which had been gifted to the Hall of Peace, as well as art projects from several of our Auroville schools. Lots of interactive art activities around peace had been set up: a peace tree where one could tie messages for peace, stone painting, and the decorating of a large peace mandala with flowers, seeds and painted stones. A collective poem on peace where one was invited to join was placed next to the Peace Table and in the Unity Hall there were profound quotes on peace to ponder and respond to.

The Peace Day program started at ten a.m., and throughout the day there was a flow of children and adults participating. It concluded with a one hour meditation around the Peace Table. While the meditation was going on, children from nearby Bharatipuram had come and together with Krupa and some young Auroville volunteers they were in deep silence working on the mandala.

It was an amazing atmosphere, an hour of deep silence flowing from the Hall of Peace, enveloping the whole building, the strong meditation and the children, so concentrated, playing with beauty, completely absorbed. Other people who entered the building during this time, simply "paused," standing around or sitting down somewhere, the atmosphere simply held everyone, one just wanted to stay with it.

This experience gave me a sense of what "Kevinizing"* can be, something I have pondered since my visit to New Hope in August, how the sacred is not apart, but can be present and tangible, expressing itself in the middle of life.

It let the Peace Table act as a center for deepening the space, gathering activities around itself, with simple means of togetherness across age and culture.

The Hall of Peace is not only part of the very active functioning of the Unity Pavilion, it also has its own programs which puts the whole Unity Pavilion at its service. This happens with events like the "Peace and Forgiveness without Condoning", commemorating the Rwandan genocide on 22 March 2015 and the "Sourcing Our Oneness" program which emerged to bring Auroville and the Ashram organizations closer, in an aspiration to better serve the action of Sri Aurobindo and Mother's work.

A next step will be to see how we can link up the present three Peace Tables and create connected activities and interactions around them. There is also the possibility to create more links with other places in the world where Peace Tables can be placed and work initiated.



International Peace Day

*At our meeting in New Hope, Mira Nakashima told me that George Nakashima used the expression “Kevinizing,” (after his young son at the time) indicating that he wanted his creations to be really handled, not kept as show pieces. How to implement this when you care for and hold in trust a symbol like the Peace Table, which we rather tend to protect and so maybe distance the user. There is of course a balance to be found, but the joy- and playfulness of the concept fully intrigued me.

A personal note and Thank You

As I flew in over USA, the first spirit that met me was that of Native America, and the strong sense of its presence, how it is the foundation of your nation. Its DNA is in your base, wherever your ancestry comes from. You are the sons and daughters of that great nation, holding values of goodness, generosity, equality of all and peace at your very core.

It was amazing to visit the US, New York, New Hope, Vermont, Menla, Matagiri and Woodstock, and meet all the participants at the A.U.M., close friends as well as new and deepened friendships.

My time there gave a real insight in the trust Mother put in America and how much energy and focus she has given there. And the response which is so visible, the beautiful centres, created as trusts for the future, the fantastic people who have been and are involved in the work. The generosity and sense of family I experienced touched me deeply.

Visiting widened me, stretching my heart and mind. And since returning to Auroville I have had a very specific experience: When I meet US Aurovilians and I say “I love your country,” they ALL happily answer back, “Me too.”

Jaya, a Swedish Aurovilian, is one of the coordinators of the Unity Pavilion..

The Sri Aurobindo Learning Center

BY ROD HEMSELL

The Many in the universe are sometimes called parts of the universal Brahman as the waves are parts of the sea. But, in truth, these waves are each of them that sea, their diversities being those of frontal or superficial appearances caused by the sea's motion. ...Even in asserting Oneness, we must remember that Brahman is beyond our mental distinctions and is a fact not of Thought that discriminates, but of Being which is absolute, infinite and escapes discrimination.

This is a quotation from Sri Aurobindo's commentary on the Isha Upanishad, and it has the simplicity and power to open the discussion that has preoccupied philosophy for most of the past two thousand years. Can our thinking know the Being of things, or does it only know the impressions of our senses and the ideas that are based on those impressions.

The philosopher Hume in the 18th century articulated the question most clearly in modern times, but it was prominent in the thinking of ancient Greece and India, and it is the hallmark of scepticism. But the phenomenology of Hegel and German Idealism followed in the 19th century, with the understanding that Consciousness can rise above the senses and rational thought to a direct awareness of the universals and essences that are knowable behind the appearances of things.

However, this kind of knowing requires that we stand back from and, in a sense, negate our mental constructions. This is a discipline taught in most schools of Yoga and it is a practice that was known at least as early as the Upanishads. It is relevant again today after a century of rationalistic science which tends to see the manipulation of objects as an end in itself, without concern for their being, and is not likely to be able to solve the problems that it has created.



Nakashima Showroom



Savitri Immersion Workshop



UHU workshop in Auroville

The pursuit of 'consciousness' in the form of workshops and seminars on the philosophy of consciousness began in Auroville in the University of Human Unity program this year, conducted weekly Jan-Mar, 2015, and it continued in a workshop at the Sri Aurobindo Center of Los Angeles in June and in the SALC annual Savitri Immersion workshop, in August. The first cycle of 16 presentations in Auroville is available in audio files on the <www.universityofhumanunity.org> website. This pattern of lectures on a theme related to Savitri has been going on for several years, with this same round of presentations in three different locations, sponsored by a collaboration between SALC and UHU, and in the coming year we hope that it will also include a series of presentations at centers in Europe.

Our Savitri Immersion Workshop in August included a survey of this wisdom, expressed by various philosophers and traditions, culminating in the teachings of Sri Aurobindo and his Integral Yoga. The workshop was attended this year by a brilliant constellation of participants from many states and from abroad, and our local members who provided the usual fare of tantalizing meals and warm hospitality.

Sadly, we were informed during our opening meditation that a long time member of our group, Pavita Bluedeer, had passed away. She had been with us just the previous morning, as genuinely present as she had always been for the past 15 years, and we continued to feel her presence, clarity, and devotion with us throughout the week. For the past year her articles have appeared here regularly as a witness to her deep devotion to this center and its mission. We remember her with respect and gratitude.

Center activities for the next month will include Sunday morning teachings from 10 to 12 and Tuesday evening potluck and teachings from 6 to 8:30. For more information please call 719-256-4917 or 719-256-6010.

UPDATES

A Summer Visit to Auroville

Mary and Jack Alexander, long time board members of AVI-USA (Mary is the treasurer) visited their son, Satyavan, his wife Nicole and their granddaughter, Romaya, in July, 2015 in Auroville. Jack and Mary were Auroville residents for several years in the 1970's, living in the Matrimandir camp, Jack working first as part of the construction team and then at Abri Workshop, and Mary in the Matrimandir Workers Camp kitchen. They currently live in Sacramento, California. Here are some of their observations:

They had last visited Auroville two years ago, although they visit Satyavan, Nicole, and Romaya several times a week through Skype. This time, Mary volunteered as a tailor in the Free Store, and Jack tried out some ecological experiments.

They brought along something that we use here, radiant barrier foil, strips of heat insulation placed in the rafters of a house that can slow down heat absorption. However, it can also make a home for critters, so they weren't sure how well it will work in Auroville. Jack worked with Sukrit at Aurovelo, a bike and coffee shop, to install it in a portion of the ceiling to see how it worked. He had also brought a device to measure the change in temperature and found that it reduced the temperature where it had been installed by 10 degrees celsius.

Jack also oversaw the installation of an underground drip irrigation in the yard as an experiment and demonstration site in providing a grassy playground without a lot of wasted water. He installed a water meter in the lines to get data on how much water was being used and a rain sensor to shut off the system when it is raining. This was of interest to the Matrimandir Gardens crew.



Jack supervising the landscaping of the drip irrigation

They visited some of the Auroville projects that AVI-USA has been supporting, including Sacred Groves, which is experimenting with many forms of sustainability, such as composting toilets, earth brick walls, and water recycling, using a large number of volunteers, many of whom are young architects who are interested in learning hands on about these techniques. Jack also visited the Botanical Garden, which is celebrating its 15th year. and walked its labyrinth. He brought them a pruning saw blade and bought a rake, pots, and garden plants at their garden center.

“I also went out”, said Jack, “to see areas around Auroville where encroachment from villagers and developers is taking place. In some cases, a large house has been constructed right up to the Auroville property line and the land group has been forced to build a modular concrete fence to prevent any further development on Auroville land.”

Satyavan and Nicole are part of a group of young Aurovilians, many of whom grew up in the community, and so they were able to spend time with many of them. These young Aurovilians are involved with projects in Auroville such as Wasteless, started by Ribhu and Chandra, a unit that is dedicated to raising people’s consciousness about the waste they produce and recycling. They often gather at Aurovelo, Sukrit’s bike shop coffee house.

Some of these young people are getting involved with Auroville governance, despite a somewhat critical perspective on its workings. But Mary and Jack found it both interesting and hopeful to be around them.

They also had some interesting conversations with Aurovilians about land. Acres for Auroville has succeeded in purchasing some important pieces of land within the city zone, and a new land committee, which includes many Indian Aurovilians has succeeded in winning some important court cases in land disputes. It’s hard not to notice the development taking place around and in Auroville, Jack and Mary both said, as India’s economy accelerates.

From Mary’s perspective, Auroville will always have to work with local villagers and others who own land or businesses near and within Auroville rather than create a “pure” Auroville populated by only those aspiring to the charter’s ideals, and she was interested to hear this perspective from some Aurovilians as well. Her hope is that Auroville will be able to integrate them in a harmonious way and to see this integration as part of the ideal.

Chandra Goes to Cambridge

By VIKAS (ALAN VICKERS)

Chandra De Dionigi, the 25-year-old Aurovillian who was accepted into Cambridge and who was profiled in the last issue of Connect, managed to get the funding she needed to take up her place, on 2nd October, at Kings College Cambridge, where she will read modern languages. She partly succeeded in raising the funds by recording and releasing a beautiful CD of her playing the flute, with music inspired by the twelve qualities of The Mother. Hariprasad Chaurasia, her flute master, also appears on her CD.

Auroson was with us on that day, and we were invited by her to attend the start-of-term service in the incredible Kings College chapel followed by dinner at the College’s refectory. It turns out that in Sri Aurobindo’s days at the College, it was compulsory for all students to attend chapel services, so we became aware of a continuity of learning and knowledge. Chandra also had visited the College library earlier and looking up to the bookshelves, saw the complete works of Sri Aurobindo located there.



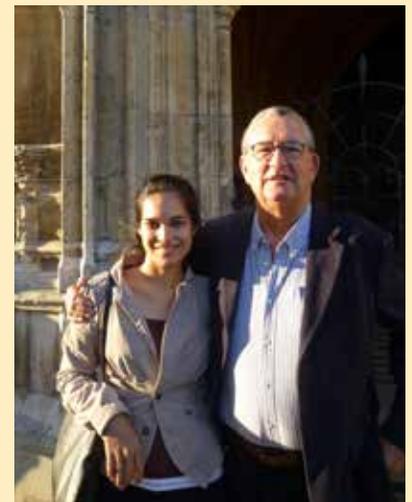
Jack and Romaya



Sacred Groves under construction



Mary at the free store



Chandra and Vikas



Reach For the Stars

By MAGGIE ASPLAND

Aspire, dream for something better, this is what Stephanie Bussman a German Aurovillian decided in 2010. She had spent several years getting to know the people in the villages surrounding Auroville and seen so much wasted potential. She met young men and women who had finished high school who were smart and enthusiastic but had no means to pay for higher education. Stephanie decided to set up Reach for the Stars, a scholarship scheme to pay for the higher education of the brightest and the neediest students.

Education is out of reach for many of the villagers living around Auroville. Courses take three to four years and cost \$200 to \$1500 per year, amounts that seem small by European or American standards but can be an insurmountable hurdle for families living on a few dollars a day.

Many students come from single parent households, or one parent (usually the father) has a serious alcohol problem. Others have family members who are disabled or seriously ill and families with multiple dependents. Girls are often expected to stay home and work in the household. Young people are pressured to earn money instead of receiving support for their studies.

Vaidegi, 22, was funded from her second year onwards. She finished her Bachelor of Technology in Electronics & Communication last year. After considering different job offers she decided to work for an Auroville based Electronics Research Project. Vaidegi is a self-confident, smart, hard working young woman who will go far in life. She paid back the 20% of funds she had received from Reach for the Stars after only 6 months of employment.

Ganesan, 18 was raised by his mother (who works at the Pour Tous vegetable counter) and older sister. A bright, young man, who financed his high school education by working nightshifts, he has been accepted at the Hindustan College of Engineering & Technology, Coimbatore, where he pursues his studies in aeronautical engineering .

Young people applying for Reach for the Stars go through a rigorous application procedure. In the first year, 2011, 16 students were sponsored and since the inception of the program 28 students have graduated and 40 students are currently enrolled. Students study a variety of subjects including: English, physics, chemistry, political science, engineering, nursing, business, and computer science.

To give the best and the brightest of the village young people an opportunity to earn an education is not only a huge benefit for that young person but for their immediate and extended families. There is an increased economic benefit potentially lifting the entire family out of poverty and other siblings being afforded the chance to attend university or college. There is an increased social benefit for the village and the community to have well-educated citizens, potential leaders, community organizers and an example and inspiration for others.

The Reach for the Stars students are monitored on their academic progress. Assistance is given in English and general confidence building skills. Once the student graduates they are expected to pay back 20% of the scholarship they have received, supporting and taking responsibility for others who enter the program

Reach for the Stars is an all-volunteer organization, 11 people working hard to support the goals of the organization. 98% of monies donated go directly to scholarships, 1% goes to the Unity Fund and 1% to overhead.

*Tax deductible donations can be made through AVI USA at: www.aviusa.org/donations
For more information: www.reach-for-the-stars.org*



Vaidegi



Ganesan



Sadhana Forest Update

By AVIRAM

A major highlight at Sadhana Forest India has been some innovative infrastructure development. Thanks to a grant through A Well Fed World, Sadhana Forest India was able to replace several of its aging and disintegrating keet (coconut palm leaf) roofs with long-lasting ones made of recycled Tetra-Pak sheeting.

The decision to replace the roofs with Tetra-Pak was motivated by Sadhana Forest's desire to experiment with and showcase sustainable methods as well as to promote recycling and sustainability. Tetra Pak containers are composed of 75% paper, 20% polyethylene and 5% aluminum foil, and while the carbon footprint to produce and use these containers is remarkably low (about 1/10 that of an equivalent glass bottle), they are quite difficult to recycle. While efforts are being made to open special recycling units, much of the 360, 000 tons of Tetra- Pak sold each year in India still ends up in the landfill.

A creative solution for recycling Tetra-Pak is to shred it, agitate it in water to remove the paper pulp, and compress the remaining plastic and aluminum into roofing and siding sheets. The new dormitory roof made of recycled Tetra-Pak dramatically improves the quality of the living space within the dorm and maximizes the use of space so that we can host even more people!

Sadhana Forest Haiti has seen a significant upscale in training and planting activity over the last five months. At the beginning of April, we received a shipment of 6,000 maya nut seeds. They were planted in our waiting and prepared nurseries and grew into healthy seedlings that our Haitian and international volunteers are now planting throughout the local community. Since April, 1, 340 food-bearing trees have been distributed and planted in individual homes and kitchen gardens. In that time, Sadhana Forest Haiti has also hosted 120 workshops and trainings.

Sadhana Forest Kenya hosted Africa's first free vegan Permaculture Design Certificate Course in June and July! During the course, 42 participants from 13 countries studied Permaculture and hosted trainings for the larger Samburu community. One of these trainings included a visit by the Governor of Samburu County and brought close to 1,000 guests. The event was highly successful and attended by the media, which resulted in several articles publicizing Sadhana Forest Kenya's work in major news sources in Kenya and abroad.

In addition to the direct educational outreach, the PDC course enabled Sadhana Forest Kenya to develop its infrastructure and the ability to host and educate many more people in the future. Meanwhile, great strides have been made toward creating plant-based food security for the Samburu people as food producing trees continue to be planted around the traditional homes of community members.



Sadhana Forest Kenya Celebration



New Roofs in Sadhana Forest Auroville



Planting a Tree in Kenya

Keep informed:

www.aviusa.org

www.facebook.com/aviusa

www.auroville.org

www.aurovillradio.org

www.green.aurovilleportal.org

www.sadhanaforest.org/

www.sacredgroves.in

www.collaboration.org/

CONNECTIONS:

Varoslava's Flowers

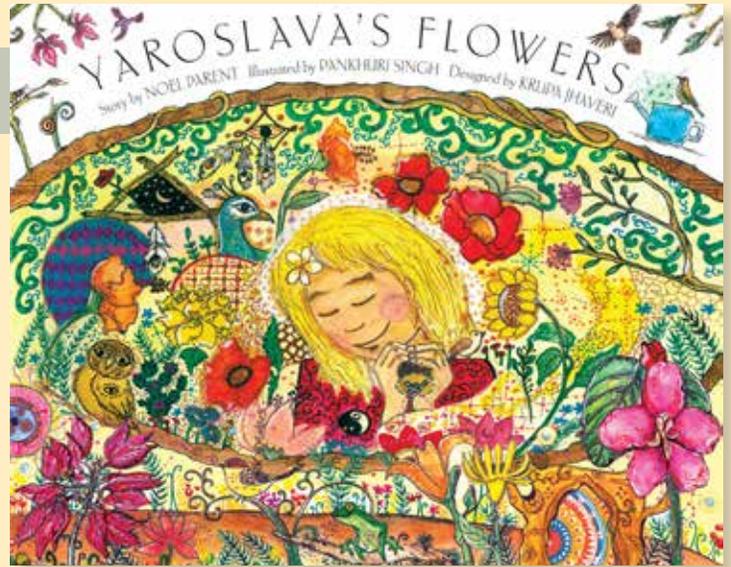
Finally, after a very long wait, my children's book, Yaroslava's Flowers, is ready and has been released for the world to enjoy. We recently had a nice little book launch event here in Auroville, including children from a local village and Aurovilians together, where we made seed-sculptures and planted other flowers and plants around the space of the Sankalpa Art Center, a place in the International Zone of Auroville which was started by the designer of my book, Krupa Jhaveri.

Now is the more difficult job of selling the books! I will need your help most of all to spread the word and find new ways to share the book with others around the world. You can now order the book at www.truthyoga.wordpress.com/books/yaroslavas-flowers/

Share about this book on Facebook (www.facebook.com/yaroslavasflowers), Twitter (@yogapoetry), Pinterest, or any other social media you are active on. You can also share my Blog Website: www.truthyoga.wordpress.com

Share with me the contact information for any local independent bookstores, alternative spiritual or metaphysical stores, flower shops or other artsy shops in your area, or talk with them directly about carrying the book.

I would appreciate any support you can give. You can also forward article to anyone you know who may be interested in children's books. Thank you for everyone who has supported the book already, including our illustrator Pankhuri Singh, our designer Krupa Jhaveri, Stichting de Zaaier and Auroville's Project Coordination Group for provid-



Yaroslava's Flowers is a story for all children and anyone with a youthful Heart. Yaroslava is a little girl who loves flowers so much that she can hear them speak to her. When the Flower Spirit appears to her and gives her a bag of magic seeds, she embarks on a Journey of the Spirit to discover the healing and transforming power of flowers. As Yaroslava brings life to the places and people around her, she also discovers more about herself – through the power of flowers!

ing the financial means to materialize this project. I wish you all lots of Divine Grace, Beauty, Light and Love along your own Journey's in Life.

Love and Light,
Noel

Noel Parent, who works in the Botanical Gardens of Auroville, was profiled in the spring 2015 issue of Connect

AVI-USA VISION

We believe that humanity's current ecological, economic, social, and spiritual crises call for a new consciousness rooted in an experience of true unity, and that Auroville is and has been a laboratory for the emergence of this new consciousness.

AVI-USA MISSION

Auroville International, USA works to share the unique spirit and resources of the USA with Auroville, and the unique spirit and resources of Auroville with the USA.

Please give generously in support of our work.

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