

**AVI USA WORKSHOPS IN AUROVILLE Building Powerful Partnerships** 

Every year, AVI USA members travel to Auroville to reconnect with the soul of our mission, to be dynamic participants in the growth of the city.

This February, Matthew Andrews, CEO and President of the AVI USA board, spent two months in Auroville. He met with Auroville partners and spent time designing strategies and goals. As part of his visit, he led two workshops for AVI USA partners and project leaders.

Auroville projects excel in sustainability, eco-conscious initiatives and social responsibility. Their ideas resonate globally. To further help their growth, Matthew held two workshops, the first focused on attracting donors, and the second, on bringing in skilled and enthusiastic volunteers.

Matthew's workshops offer guidance and training in both areas. We are excited to see Auroville projects reach for the stars and accomplish their potential. Read about the Volunteer Training below and brows our blog to read about our Donor Development Workshop.



LETTER FROM MATTHEW **AVI USA PRESIDENT** 

Dear Friends,

I write to you from between worlds. I'm at Dubai International Airport, having arrived from Chennai and on the way to Boston. Yesterday I woke up in Auroville to the calls of peacocks and brain fever birds and the sound of music from the local temple. The morning sky was tinged with pink, and as the day progressed it turned to an impossible Crayola blue, deep and rich.

Today I woke up in a "sleep capsule" in Dubai airport, where I had taken refuge from the all-night cacophony. In a few moments I'll board a plane for the United States, and head home to my family and our house in the forests of Western Massachusetts. The forecast calls for rain.

For the past month, myself, Bill, and Flavia (AVI USA board members) have been visiting AVI USA's partners in Auroville. Toward the end of last year, we set up a registration and vetting process to determine which Auroville projects are eligible to receive grants from AVI USA. The approved projects become our partners.

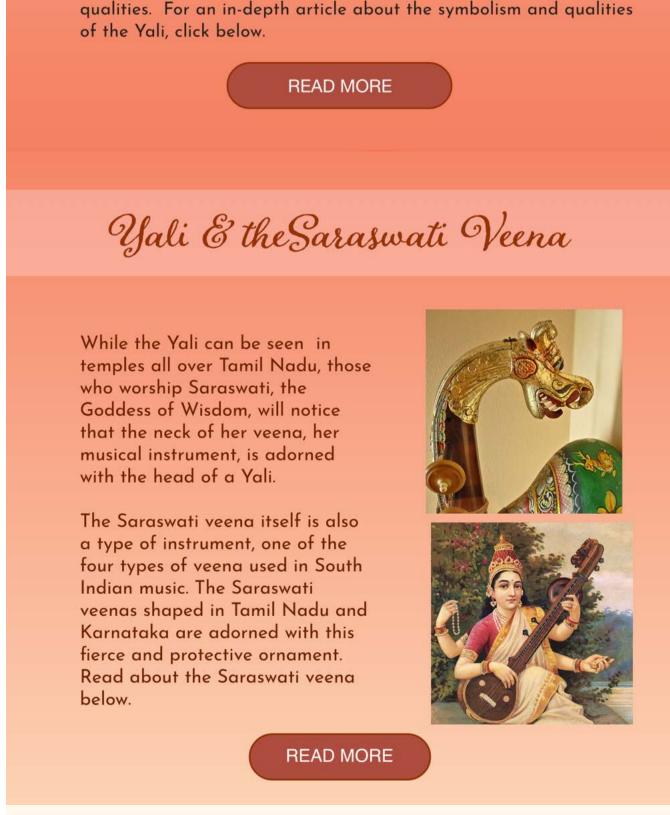
We receive contributions from donors and issue grants to our partners, who carry out their important work. In this way, we are ensuring a clear line of sight/between your donations and the outcomes that you are supporting. In this way, we visited our partners on your behalf, providing a clear link between your goodwill and their good works.



**Tamil Roots** Yali, the Tamil Protector



Tamil folklore has myths, legends and fantasy creatures. Famous among the fantasy creatures is the Yali or Yazhi, also known as Vyala, a mythological creature with the head and the body of a lion, the trunk and the tusks of an elephant.and features of a horse. This type of hybrid creature is known in mythology as a chimera. The Yali is present in the temple pillars Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, serving as a symbol of power and protection. It is believed to embody natural forces and safeguard temples and their sacred paths. Yalis are generally positioned on both sides of the entrance way to temples, shrines, and temple cars chariots to drive away evil. There are different types of Yalis, elephant, gaja Yali, a human, Nara Yali or a dog, Svana Yali, lion, simha Yali, deer, Mrga Yali, tiger, Sardula Yali, and each one has specific attributes and



#### JUNE MAHER & AVI USA A Legacy of Devotion Part 2: From Auroville Book Club to AVI USA



This February, we began publishing monthly essays about the history of June Maher, the founder of AVI USA.

In Part 2, we follow June and the growth of the Auroville Book Club to include the Auroville Association, which eventually becomes Auroville International USA.

The series is created and curated by Binah Thillairajah, who is a longtime board member and currently vice president of Auroville International USA. Binah lived in Auroville from the age of 1 until she relocated to the US beginning with her college years.

An excerpt from the second article:

"In the late 60's, June Maher and Claire Worden, Dietra as Mother named her, formed a study group on Satprem's "Sri Aurobindo or The Adventure of Consciousness," which was often hosted at June's house in Aptos, California. The group was the beginning of an enduring devotion to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother that defined the rest of June's life. Initially comprised of parents of children the same age as June's but open to all, the group later expanded its membership and branched off into the parallel the Auroville Association, fostering connections with various Sri Aurobindo Centers and supporting initiatives related to Integral Yoga and Auroville."





# ATB | Awareness Through the Body



Awareness Through the Body, ATB, was created by Aloka Mari and Joan Sala beginning in 1992. The result of many years of innovative work inside and outside the classrooms of Auroville, ATB is a practice that helps children and adults investigate and manage the complexity of their own beings.

ATB increases self-awareness and self-direction through a series of exercises that focus attention on the sensations and perceptions that of the physical body. As awareness grows, individuals become increasingly organized around their psychological center, the inmost, truer part of their being. The practice uses the concept of the personal body-feltsense-experience of oneself to assist children and adults to develop and sustain attention, concentration, self-awareness, self-knowledge and selfregulation.

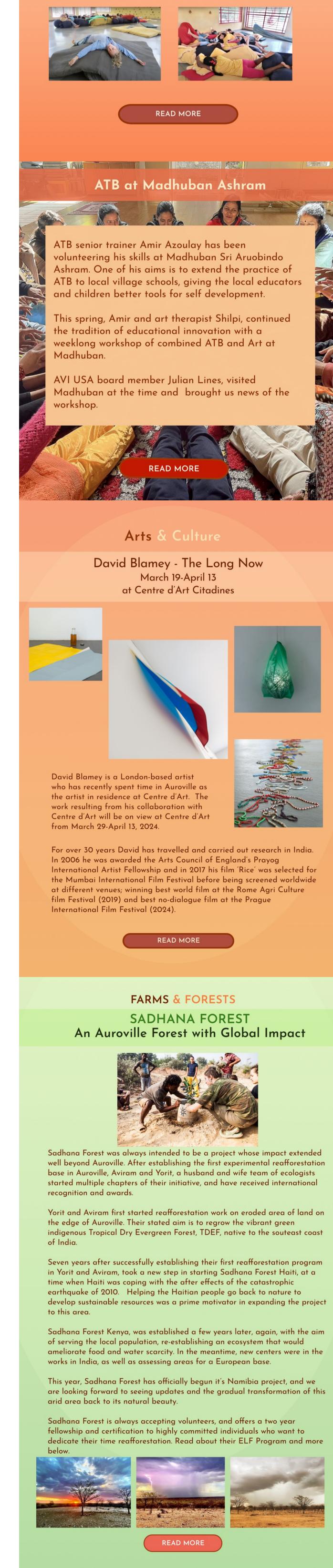




The practice asks the question "who am I," bringing awareness to the subtleties of one's existence. It was born out of a need to add the study of the nature of the individual to the typical school topics, and it has been part of the curriculum of Auroville schools since 1992. Children begin this inner journey with openness and curiosity internalizing selfawareness study.

Aloka Mari and Joan Sala created ATB as an educational experiment. Aloka moved to Auroville in 1991, after living at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. Joan also joined Auroville 1991, with a deep knowledge of body healing. Joan's experience in postural rebalancing was in need in Transition School for Auroville students. Aloka was working with

kindergartners, and the two joined together to bring their complementary skills to identify exercises to increase awareness and expansion of consciousness and adapted them for the children. Soon after ATB was born.



AVI USA & IDRF

A New Partnership for Auroville's Outreach Schools



Several months ago, AVI USA Director of Development, Binah Thillairajah, reached out to a sister nonprofit, IDRF, the India Development and Relief Fund, to jumpstart an AVI USA-IDRF collaboration in support of our Auroville partners. .

Since its inception in the early 1970s, AVI USA has partnered with international foundations and educational institutions to increase awareness and support for Auroville. One of our newest partners is The India Development and Relief Fund, IDRF. In December we invited them to join our second annual matching campaign and give grants with a 4x impact. For those who donated to Deepam and Udavi School, AVI USA doubled those donations, and then we sent them on to IDRF who doubled them again.



# **EDUCATION**

### **OPEN SPACE DOCUMENTARY ARTS** The Auroville Film Institute & University of Ladakh



The Auroville Film Institute introduced a 1 year documentary arts program in collaboration with the University of Ladakh. The program starts in March 2024 and is focused on creating new forms in the documentary genre, in multimedia, interactive formats that speak to our evolving concept of truth. The question asked of the participants:

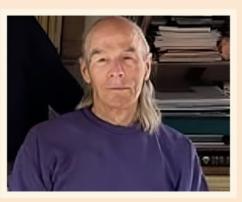
"The word 'documentary' is often burdened with the idea of 'truth'. However, what is 'truth' - for whom - who vehemently insists upon it - who contests it why – how does it matter – what to do?"

The program alternates locations between Auroville and Ladakh, and ends in Auroville, with an additional filming/work site to be chosen by each student. Faculty for the program are Rrivu Laha and Richa Hushing of The Auroville Film Institute, Debkamal Ganguly of the University of Ladakh, and additional visiting faculty and instructors.

**READ MORE** 

## IN MEMORIAM

#### **Doug Grimes**



Doug Grimes became a Sri Aurobindo and Mother devotee later in life. He discovered the Sri Aurobindo Center of Los Angeles a little more than two years ago, and quickly endeared himself to all the devotees there, sharing an affectionate bond with all through his warm, caring, and largely sattvic nature.

He developed a relationship with Binah, longtime member of AVI USA, and ultimately through their relationship, became a strong supporter and believer in the work of AVI USA.

We honor Doug's legacy and his devotion to the work of Sri Aurobindo and Mother.



## IN MEMORIAM

### Lorraine Freeman



Lorraine Freeman passed away peacefully on March 25,, at the age of 76, at Mahalakshmi home in Auroville where she had been living for the last years.

Lorraine was an American born Aurovilian, having first worked as a nurse in the US before settling in Auroville. She was a passionate and strong willed advocate for animals and shortly after her arrival in 2007 in Auroville she started the Integrated Animal Care Center. Lorraine inspired many with her love of animals, and you can hear the creator of Peepal Farm speak about her in the link below. He talks about his visit to Auroville and his life changing meeting with Lorraine around the 10:30 mark.

In 2013 she stepped back from animal care and over the following years she worked in Pour Tous Distribution Center. She followed interests such as theater and comedy, appearing in many productions of Auroville theater, including the opera IBSEN.

We offer our condolences to her friends and family.



Please help us in our mission to bring awareness of Auroville and its work by sharing our newsletter with friends, family and all those who love to dream 👾

**Our Contact Information** \*{{Organization Name}}\* \*{{Organization Address}}\* \*{{Organization Phone}}\* \*{{Organization Website}}\* \*{{Unsubscribe}}\*

