

Collaboration

Summer, 1992

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There is a oneness native and occult
That needs no instruments and erects no form;
In unison it grows with all that is,
All contacts it assumes into its trance,
Laugh-tossed consents to the wind's kiss and takes

Transmutingly the shocks of sun and breeze:
A blissful yearning riots in its leaves,
A magic passion trembles in its blooms,
Its boughs aspire in hushed felicity.

Savitri, Book 4, Canto 1

Table of Contents

Symptoms of Withdrawal _____	3
<i>By Gordon Korstange</i>	
The Third Descent _____	4
<i>Excerpt from Mother's Agenda</i>	
A.U.M. in the Swannanoa Valley _____	5-8
<i>By Gordon Korstange</i>	
An Interview with Robert Dane _____	8-10
A Visit to Le Centre Sri Aurobindo, Montreal _____	11-12
<i>By Gordon Korstange</i>	
Projects: "Quiet" _____	12-16
<i>By Maggi Lidchi</i>	
Matrimandir Nursery Reference Library _____	16
<i>By Amrit</i>	
Bulletin Board: The Richest People in the World _____	16-17
<i>By Bill Sullivan</i>	
Los Angeles and Auroville _____	17-18
<i>By Dee Decew</i>	
People _____	18-20
Center News _____	21-27

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Symptoms of Withdrawal

By Gordon Korstange

IT'S A BEAUTIFUL, COOL Vermont day, and I'm sitting here staring at the magic window of this computer wondering why I don't have a laptop so that I could work on *Collaboration* outside. How ridiculous! Is this about wanting the new toys that American boys and girls can't stop playing with? Is it about the long winters in the Northeast? Or do I have CIWS (Chronic India Withdrawal Symptoms)?

Recently a Peace Corps magazine reprinted from *Group Leaders Digest* a list of these symptoms created by Dr. Harvey Heimweh, M.D., who served in the Peace Corps in Bhutan from 1969-71. See if you have some of them:

(1) *Guilty feelings about your indulgent lifestyle.* These can take hold at any time, whether it's in buying a new car (and not wanting to admit it to your friends) or spending \$35 for dinner when you know you could have cooked up some rice and dahl for \$5. Lately, for me, I've become fixated on not discarding things if there is the remotest chance that they can be used—stretching out their value for as long as possible. I remember those immaculate 1950's cars in India and am vain about the Honda outside with 172,000 miles on it.

(2) *Salivating when you hear polyrhythmic music.* For me, the volume and inane lyrics of most of pop music is still not as deadly as the numbing regularity of the drums. I can't understand why, when Afro-Pop music is now so available, this beat goes on.

(3) *Decorating more than two rooms of your house with India memorabilia.* To this we could add, of course, the meditation rooms with photos of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother's photos, along with books, incense, rugs, wall hangings etc. from Pondicherry and Auroville. Many of us, I would guess, have an image of Ganesh in a nook or on a wall.

(4) *The desire to do everything outdoors.* This is the symptom which may or may not be affecting me right now. The wintertime separation

between house and world is frustrating after one has experienced the way air flows through dwellings in the tropics. It could be blamed for all kinds of Western neuroses, including our lack of identification with the natural world. This symptom demands bare feet on the lawn, in the garden (a Tamilian once told me that wearing sandals among the plants was a kind of desecration), and while I mow the lawn with the quiet, clicking scissors of my non-motorized push mower (see symptom 1).

(5) *Confusion between "immediately" and "by next week."*

(6) *Greetings exceeding three sentences or eight seconds.* And how good it is, on those rare occasions when you meet a fellow traveler, to be able to fold the hands in "namaste" to both outer and inner Self instead of the testing clasp of hands and direct look into the eyes to say, "I'm me, an individual equal to you."

(7) *Subscribing to magazines normally found only in libraries.* Such as *India Today*, *Auroville Today*, *Mother India*, *Collaboration* . . .

(8) *Anxiety induced insomnia from lack of mosquito net in bedroom,* and you wake in the morning to the sharp light of day instead of gradually focusing in on the world through the gauzy web of a net that has protected you all night from malaria, scorpions, large ants, falling geckos and snakes, and who knows what other insects from the vital world.

(9) *A fixation with ethnic restaurants.* Part of the darshan celebration of the Berkeley Center included dinner at an Indian restaurant.

(10) *Feeling nostalgic when your commuter bus is filled to overcapacity,* or when you can bicycle to some place where you, and most other Americans, would normally drive.

(11) *Involuntarily using foreign swear words and interjections.* My favorite two are in Tamil and have to do with hair and the threat of a beating with a shoe.

(12) *The inability to use the left hand when making cash transactions.*

Depending on the amount of time spent in India, this is either a very faint memory or the distinct feeling that the left hand is a different sort of being from the right, almost, one might say, a different caste . . .

To Dr. Heimweh's list of symptoms I add a few of my own and some which are more specific to the experience of Pondicherry and Auroville:

(13) *Unease at wearing shoes inside a house,* and relief when, for some reason, the taking off of shoes is allowed or encouraged in a public place.

(14) *Feeling more comfortable sitting on the floor than in a chair.* This lasts from periods of ten seconds to one hour depending on the enthusiasm and flexibility of the person.

(15) *The need for fresh flowers in the house,* especially in the meditation room.

(16) *First relief, then vague unease about the roof during day-long rains.*

(17) *Noticing the way hills have eroded after the spring rains.* This symptom occurs primarily in Aurovilians who were there during the early years.

(18) *Wanting to be alone and quiet on your birthday.*

(19) *Looking up at the clock on the evenings of August 14th and February 20th, and counting forward ten and one-half hours*—and suddenly finding yourself in the long line waiting silently on the street outside the Ashram.

(20) *Surprisingly warm feelings about crows.*

I'm sure each of you could add your own particular symptom of withdrawal to this partial list. Probably yours would also include the deeper nostalgia for the company of sadhaks seeking the Divine which brings people to the All USA Meetings (see the following report), where we can indulge and come together our yearning together, accepting that we have all been touched in our depths by the complex experience of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, Indian culture, the Ashram and Auroville, from which we have withdrawn—only on the surface.



THE THIRD DESCENT?

Excerpt from Mother's Agenda contributed by Bill Moss

1 January 1969

In the night it came slowly and on waking up this morning, there was as though a golden dawn, and the atmosphere was so light. The body felt: "Well, it is truly, truly new." A golden light, transparent and ... benevolent. "Benevolent" in the sense of a certainty—a harmonious certainty. It was new.

There you are.

And when I say "Bonne Annee" to people, it is this which I pass on to them. And this morning, I have passed my time like this, spontaneously, saying, "Bonne Annee, Bonne Annee." So...

4 January 1969

On the first, something truly strange happened.... And I was not the only one to feel it, some others also have felt it. It was just after midnight, but I felt it at two o'clock and the others at 4 o'clock in the morning. It was... Last time I spoke to you a few words about it, but what is surprising is that it had absolutely no correspondence at all to anything I was expecting (I was expecting nothing), to other things which I had felt. It was something very material, I mean it was very external—very external—and it was luminous, with a golden light. It was very strong, very powerful; but even so, its character was a smiling benevolence, a peaceful delight, and a kind of opening out into delight and light. And it was like a "Bonne annee," like a greeting. It took me by surprise. It lasted, for at least 3 hours I felt it. Afterwards I was no longer busy with it, I do not know what happened. But I told you a word or two about it and I spoke of it also to two or three persons: they had all felt it. That is to say, it was very material. They all had felt it, like this, a kind of joy, but a joy friendly, powerful and... oh, very, very gentle, very smiling joy, very benevolent... I do not know what it

is, but it is a kind of benevolence, therefore it was something very close to the human. And it was so concrete, so concrete! as though it had a savour, so concrete it was.

Afterwards I did not occupy myself with it any more, except that I spoke to two or three persons about it: all had felt it. Now, I do not know if it is mixed or if... It has not gone, one does not feel as though the thing came in order to go back.

It was much more external than anything I feel usually, much more external.... Very little mental, that is to say, there was no feeling of a "promise" or... No, it would be rather... My own impression was that of an immense personality—immense, that is to say, for it the earth was small, small like this (gesture, as though holding a small ball in her palm), like a ball—an immense personality, very, very benevolent, which came for... (Mother seems to lift this ball gently from the hollow of her hands). It gave the impression of a personal divinity (and yet it was... I do not know), who comes to help, and so strong, so strong and at the same time so gentle, so all-embracing.

And it was very external: the body felt it everywhere, everywhere, (Mother touches her face, her hands), everywhere.

What has become of it? I do not know.

It was the beginning of the year. As if someone having the dimensions of a god (that is to say, someone) came to say, "Bonne Annee," with all the power to make it a Bonne Annee. It was like this.

But what was it?....

So concrete.

I do not know.

Is it... is it the personality—because it had no form, I did not see any form, there was only what it had brought (Mother feels the atmosphere), the sensation, the feeling: these two, sensation and feeling -- and I asked myself if it was not the supramental personality... who will then manifest himself later in material forms.

The body, this body, feels since that moment (the thing has entered into it everywhere, deeply), it feels much more joyous, less concentrated, more lively, in a happy, smiling expansiveness. For example, it is



speaking more easily. There is a not—a constant note of benevolence. A smile, yes, a benevolent smile, and all that with a great force.... I do not know.

You felt nothing?

DISCIPLE: I had a feeling of contentment that day.

MOTHER: Ah, it is that. Yes, it is that. Is it the supramental personality?...that will incarnate itself in all those who have a supramental body..

This material is taken from Notes on the Way, Mother's Collected Works. It was the basis for a workshop during the recent A.U.M. I used the term "The Third Descent" because of my feeling that the descent of this Superman consciousness carries a significance similar, if not equal, to the descents of November 24, 1926 (the Overmind Descent) and February 29, 1956 (the descent of the Supramental Consciousness).

This feeling was reinforced for me by a conversation I had on the last morning of the A.U.M. with Kailas and Richard, who had been at the Ashram on that particular day. Kailas described how she and Richard were among a group of about 100 disciples who were suddenly, and unexpectedly, called to the Mother's room on New Year's morning, in 1969. As they described it, the atmosphere was very concentrated. Mother was wearing one of the gowns which was reserved for Darshans, and she greeted each one with, "Bonne Annee," just as She relates in the Notes selection.

Bill Moss

A.U.M. in the Swannanoa Valley

By Gordon Korstange

*It was very fun even for every age. The feeling of family and loving was very wonderful. I had a very good time.**

It is always beautiful when people turned towards the Mother and Sri Aurobindo meet together in a concentrated atmosphere. It inevitably raises the consciousness and radiates light and joy of unity in diversities. Whenever people gather in the name of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, they are concretely, tangibly present with their Force, Light and Bliss.

It seems that each A.U.M. generates more goodwill, love, sharing, etc. than the previous one, and invites a growing descent of Mother's Love and Force, almost at times, too much to contain.

It seemed that the number of occasions (at least on my part) in which [we] experienced an influx of energies were remarkable both in sessions and meditations, nature and encounters, many unplanned, with each other.

A deep easy feeling of familiarity, friendship . . . so many warm bright faces, good hugs, laughter, heartfelt words . . . a soul family.

FROM THE CORNFIELDS and tornados of Wisconsin one year later we come to the hills and mountains of North Carolina. On the lawn in front of Sunderland dormitory, A.U.M. headquarters, we gazed up through early morning birdsong at the Black Mountains beyond the fields of Warren Wilson College. It was July 4th. The college was empty of the students who work there during the summer, a natural part of their education since Warren Wilson is one of the few work-study institutions left in this country, a place where you can be expelled for failing too many "work-classes."

**Quotations are selected as a sampling from responses by participants at the end of the conference.*



In the quiet of this weekend, like the new rhododendrums, 50+ of us opened to Mother and Sri Aurobindo, to each other and to a spiritual vibration which grew stronger as the conference gained momentum. The focus of this opening was the meditation/book room in the basement of Sunderland which had been transformed by the Rama family of Greenville, South Carolina. The night before A.U.M. was to begin, they had descended upon the room and had worked until early morning to create an atmosphere in which, as R.P. Rama later explained, Mother and Sri Aurobindo could "witness" the gathering.

Two very large photos of Them, placed on risers covered with light blue cloth and surrounded by plants, stood in the corner. The floor was covered with mats and white sheets. Despite the white noise of the air-conditioners, there was a powerful silence in this Ashram-like setting.



On the spot session programming worked.

Good organization and facilitation on

all levels and easy decision making of sessions and workshops. Good experiment that worked well.

I liked the spontaneous, cooperative way in which the agenda was formed and continued to develop. It was rich and diverse without having a predetermined structure.

Setting agenda according to interests of those present is a good idea. Not only is it more pertinent to immediate concerns, but it also encourages active participation on the part of all present. Suggest this tradition be continued.

The structure of non-structure allowed for the maximum interaction among participants, even if it was sorting out confusions. The shift of responsibility to the participants is welcome. One problem is that we spent so much time negotiating that presenters had no time to describe their presentations to the group.

The lack of structure had one negative—those who wanted to come for just part could not plan ahead of time. Also, it works best when there is a

central place for announcements where people can write changes and notes to each other. But I like the spontaneous nature of the process. Good work team!

Good open space concept, but needed a little more program organization after the agenda setting. Suggest someone to be responsible to write out a "rough" agenda for the whole weekend which could be modified.

Keep as much free time as possible, giving time for people to reconnect with each other.

Organization of A.U.M. interesting experiment, not really successful, but part of continuing development with "the perfect A.U.M." Creative chaos is fine, but I would want to make more support of what comes out of the chaos. I believe that the agenda setting was fine/interesting/spontaneous, but the circle needed to be more inclusive with more announcing with everyone present.

I really appreciate the non-hierarchical structure. This is a family—an annual reunion of Mother/Sri Aurobindo's family.

"Spontaneous organization," Sally Walton called it—the setting of an agenda through "marketplace negotiations." On large sheets of paper, participants wrote their workshop title or topic interest. Then they waited for people to sign up and/or combined their topic with that of another (for example, "drama" and "body awareness").

For the most part this worked smoothly. It created an atmosphere in which workshops could be changed and adjusted, and new ones added (On Sunday, by request, Ariel offered an updated version of her "Conscious Cells" activity originally unveiled in Madison). Sally was very clear that we, the participants, were responsible for working out our schedule. No top-down management; power to the people.



Meditation room at A.U.M.

Of course there was some initial confusion, especially at the opening of each day when the schedule had to be altered or fine-tuned and also because there was not a master, written program that each one could hold on to. Some participants found this uncertainty annoying at first, though by Sunday most of the grumbling had stopped. If Savitri reading was not on the schedule, you couldn't blame the planning group; you found some people who wanted to read and then found a time on the day's program and a place to do it.

It was about as organizationally organic as an A.U.M. could get. From the early years of tightly controlled schedules to later meetings where some presenters were invited (and paid), we had come to four days of just us and what we made of it.



Spontaneity of programs was incredible in their diversity and fallout.

The flexible and open scheduling—enhancing spontaneous sessions and encounters—the mantras (and harmonics), the Savitri readings, the relaxation, cellular and healing sessions, the presence of new seekers, the testimonials of older devotees, also the work sessions related to Auroville and

new center projects USA, all added up to a reunion experience that has planted new seeds of growth and relationships that will flower in many ways and many lives for years to come.

Arrangement of workshops worked well. Need more and more diversity, as well as common themes. Feedback from workshops or their results would be useful.

The study sessions would've been more effective if they had specific topics and were not so all encompassing.

I think there should be some things which are always offered/structured in, especially basics of yoga for "newcomers," chanting, meditations (two a day).

I would prefer us all do skits (as we did at Pathworks) that we make up together.

I believe hatha yoga needs to be offered every day. I can't take it up, but I wanted to share it with others as a daily experience.



Bill Moss, Martha Orton, Robert Orton, Ariel Browne

How about "The Great Savitri Reading," a continuous (if possible) oral reading by every participant of the entire work in a chain throughout the conference.

And here is a partial listing (I admit to relying on the big sheets of paper and not keeping my own record) of what we made of it—workshops and activities which will give some idea of

the variety of presentations: A Centers Meeting which lasted most of Friday and brought forth tangible results (c.f. SAA report in Center News); a slide



Paul Edmonston and Jesse Cooper

presentation on Matrimandir gardens and flowers by Richard Pierson and Kailas Jhaveri; solar technology slide show by Joel Goodman; a discussion group on the mind of the cells, led by Rusty Selhorst; massage; a session to formulate a letter to the Matrimandir workers concerning the use of freon air-conditioning in the inner chamber; basics of vibrational healing by Joe Seckel; videos sent by Joss from Auroville; "Bringing light into the shadow," a guided meditation by Tom O'Brien; and a discussion of a possible grant proposal to the National Endowment for the Arts which would fund a cooperative project involving artists from the USA and Auroville.

On July 4th, we went up the Blue Ridge Parkway to Craggy Gardens for a short hike. From a look-out, the misty Blue Ridge and Smoky mountains extended to the west, hill upon hill, as far as one could see. We left reluctantly, as the cool night air swept in, and came back so exhilarated that most of us skipped the fireworks.

On July 5th, there was a dramatic reading of Seyril's work-in-progress, a re-telling of *A Midsummer's Night's Dream*, set in a declining Colorado town to which a Mr. Duke (Ian Moss) of Athens comes to film a TV commercial. The enthusiastic audience applauded the performances of such new-found stars as the laconic farmer, "Spuds" Bloomquist, the dark and handsome Greek director, Demetrius

(Marichi Walton), the musician Bo (Alok) Tree and the high school valedictorian (Rena Ferneyhough) who falls for him, Miss Aminda Bustle

(Jean Korstange), Violet (Sally Walton) and the rustic postmaster (Bob Dane) who brought down the house with his closing speech.



Beautifully organized and very beautiful choice for the site.

Quiet, behind the scenes facilitation was wonderful.

... Good backup—things done well behind the scenes. Harmonious. Very harmonious.

Blessings to all of you who took on the commitment of the task of A.U.M. '92.

The group of three people, Vijay Raghavan, Sally Walton, and Alok Aurovilian, who had been keeping in touch mainly by telephone and computer during the year, expanded to six with the addition of Giridev Jaiswal, an Aurovilian who has been studying at Warren Wilson during the past year, and Ramakrishna and Manu, Aurovilians here for the summer to study solar technology at the Savitri Solar School in Baca Grande, Colorado.

They worked together effectively as a team, handling such tasks as scheduling, airport traffic, collecting conference fees, and facility use with an effort so unobtrusive the meeting almost seemed to run itself. When the weather turned hot, Alok found a lifeguard and got the college pool opened. When some of us needed late night physical exertion, Giri opened the college gym for basketball, throwball and frisbee. When there was confusion about the schedule, Rama, Manu, and Alok worked until one in the morning to post it all over the dormitory. When we ran out of flip charts, Vijay was off to the local mall

AUM

AUM is the word
AUM is the sound
AUM is the ultimate word and sound
AUM is here, AUM is there
AUM is everywhere.
AUM has meaning,
meaning which cannot be lost.

AUM 1992 in the valley of
Swannona
where the river flows
and the wind blows;
that's where the sound of AUM goes.
AUM AUM
We hear the word
the word which has peace of mind.

The mind and body speaks
the word of AUM
AUM AUM AUM AUM AUM
So let's all speak the ultimate word
AUM.

By Giridev Jaiswal

on July 4th. And Sally orchestrated spontaneous organization, circulating continuously, urging us to participate in the process.

It seems clear that such A.U.M. tasks as defining the program and handling registration/transportation can be accomplished from afar, but that it is important to have a personal connection to and knowledge of the conference site. For example, Louise Solomon, a Dean of the college and her husband Fred (who drove a Warren Wilson van) went along to Craggy Rocks with us and provided support at other times as well.



Warren Wilson beautiful setting. Very compatible with our group. Its spirit (recycling, multi-cultural, loving, earth-loving open) made it a great choice.

The people from the College were helpful and friendly.

They hold the A.U.M. meetings in the best spots!

Pool was great. Try for a pool for future A.U.M.'s.

The campus, being small and barely populated, in a beautiful setting and

relaxed summer schedule, with its small gardens, lake, pathways, magnificent trees, provided a few of us ... a number of recuperative periods of solitude or quietude and intimate sharing ...

Warren Wilson College had many qualities that made it a successful site. The scenery was beautiful; it was quiet during the weekend; it was relatively cheap; there were plenty of rooms available for meetings and facilities for recreation; it was within half-an-hour of an airport; and its ethos as an alternative college, where work is an integral part of education, made it an attractive fit with A.U.M.

As the A.U.M. continues to move



Richard Pierson and Robert Dane

around the country, it seems to find both the sites and people who are touched by it. This may lead to a "withering away" of the need for an annual national meeting in favor of regional ones, such as the Southeast Region Darshan gathering last spring and the AVI-USA meeting this coming November.

But there is something magical about an event where anyone and everyone could show up and which seems to evoke our fundamental unity as a family.

Thus, during the closing circle, the marble "talking" chip from the Matrimandir was handed over to Bob Dane of the East-West Cultural Center in Los Angeles, the site of next year's A.U.M. I started making plans to attend as our airplane lifted out of the Swannanoa Valley and up over the soft blue of the Smoky Mountains.

An Interview with Robert Dane

(Editors' Note: Since A.U.M. 93 will be at the East-West Cultural Center, we took the opportunity to interview Robert Dane, one of the guiding lights behind the center since its founding.)

Collaboration: What kind of core do you have now at the East-West Center?

R: We have as usual 6 people who are real workers. Then we have a group of 15 to 20 who can pitch in and help in different capacities.

C: What's it like.....?

R: I can only say this to give an idea of what it means. There has, since the installation of the relics on August 15, 1991, and even before that in our preparations for the installation, there has been a surge of power like we have never felt before. My own experience there has been for 25 years. And there have been wonderful moments, but nothing like the sustained force that has created some really remarkable things, one or

two of which are still being prepared.

Prior to the arrival of the relics Mother had prepared many many details but we didn't realize it at the time. About a year and a half ago she sent to us a young Indian man, Debashish Bannerjee, who you may have heard of. Well, when Jothi Priya died on December 9, 1978 she wrote a letter to the board of directors of the East - West Cultural Center delineating what she would want carried on if she were incapacitated or left the body. Her description of the person she would like to see carry the torch from her hand was a person who was of noble character, well versed in the classics, especially the Indian classics, and who had irrefutable fidelity and deep concentrated, devoted interest in Sri Aurobindo and Mother, and knowledge of the Yoga. If it were possible, this person would also know Sanskrit.

Debashish came to the Center in rather circuitous route. But that was mother's intention all the time, and as we got to know him the attributes unfolded like a beautiful flower. It was that kind of activity, because Debashish himself is quiet, modest, and a yogi. He moderates most of the activities because everybody wants him to. He shows the evidence of being from the lineage of the Tagore family. He is so well educated in English literature, the arts and science. He is a computer expert. He's now doing a contract for the city of Los Angeles. He specializes in it.

We're so delighted in him as Mother's instrument for the progress of the Center. He came before we had the relics and really helped to pave the way and establish a consciousness which Mother wanted there. And then other people, new people have started to come with real purpose and devotion which will be absolutely nurtured through continuing association and work in the various group meetings.

One learned professor from India came and heard Debashish talking about poetry. On Monday nights we have a group called future poetry, and he heard Debashish speaking about the various poets through history. It was done with such knowledge that the professor felt he should be in the university giving a course on it.

C: My feeling about the relics has always been ambivalent. This past fall we visited Montreal, and when I saw what they had done with the relics I thought it was very nice. I don't know if this happened before the installation or after either, but they were able to acquire an estate outside of Montreal and it sounds like this same kind of burst of energy. It has helped them to form a very close group.

R: I tell you when I went to Rand Hicks' Center in Pensacola I had a remarkable experience just in the approach to the relic room. And then I almost missed my plane getting back because of the magnetism of the relics. I've got to tell you a quick story. You know Dr. Maheswari in the Ashram? We used to walk down to the beach

after dinner and find an empty bench just to sit and talk. We got to talking about the relics and he leaned over and touched my arm. He said, "Now what did I do?" I said, "You touched my arm." He said, "That's true, I touched your arm, in actual reality a few cells of my index finger touched a few cells in your right arm, but I touched your arm. And that's exactly what happens with the relics. Those cells of Sri Aurobindo are there in the reliquary and they are constantly the channel for Sri Aurobindo's power. And its happening, we feel it. People come into the Center. They're struck immediately by the presence and the power that's there. Then when you go into the relic room; it's Sri Aurobindo's room the farthest back room in the house. It's an all white room, with a peaked ceiling is about 13 ft. high. The back wall by the garden is a french door. So we have a big 6 ft. opening door inviting the garden into the room and taking the power out into the garden.

For the installation, for example, we had carpeting which we had brought from the old Center spread out on the grass outside the meditation room. The doors were closed until the official start of the ceremony. Rows of chairs were set up there for people to sit. Sri Aurobindo's room was dark except for the one spotlight coming down onto the reliquary and people started to partake in the flow of power that was there from the time they were admitted into the back garden and sat waiting for the ceremony.

Dr. Maheswari had come on the first of August to help us with the preparation for the installation, because he has had experience with the relics in other places. He had everything timed and organized. At 7:45 the music started and flooded the Center. At 7:55 the music diminished, and the entry door for the celebrants who were going to do the installation and the outside door were swung open, and people came in leaving their shoes outside and sitting quietly in the meditation room around the reliquary. The silence that was sustained from that moment on was palpable. It had its own existence and power.

Then at exactly 8 o'clock, with Dr. Maheswari leading the way and three others of us accompanying him, we

went in. The ceremony was in absolute silence, and that power was sustained as we brought the relics in on a tray and installed them in the white marble cube.

Now let me quickly describe the reliquary. It's almost a miniature replica of the samadhi. It's 3 feet long, 27 inches

wide and exactly the height of the Ashram's samadhi. Sri Aurobindo's symbol occupies most of the top especially the 27 inch width. The descending and ascending triangles are engraved in the white marble which is a beautiful translucent white marble with a crystalline form throughout, so there's a living quality to it. And it's six sided. In the center, instead of the engraved marking of the water and the lotus, there sits a large pink marble lotus. We found a sculptor to do that.

In the center of the lotus, both nurturing and releasing it, is a white cube. The white cube has Sri Aurobindo's symbol in gold engraved on all four sides. The relics themselves are installed in the 7 sheathes which is customary for the transport for the relics. One other thing we did was have a hole drilled in the center of the lotus. In that hole we put sand from the samadhi at the Ashram, and we keep fresh flowers on the samadhi and keep the room reserved in a loving way for special meditations. We use it after each group on Monday, Thursday, Saturday and Sundays when we have special meditations.

C: Does somebody live at the Center?

R: Yes we have one man living at the Center. Well it's a special thing that has happened, and we all feel it internally as well as the external evidence.



Dancer Ellen Davis in tribute to Sri Aurobindo on Golden Day

C: What made you decide that you needed or wanted the relics?

R: We didn't. We didn't. There had been the quest for relics by one of our people 6 or 8 years ago, but that never materialized. I went to the Ashram in February of 1991 with no thought of the relics at all. Went there to take a Swatyaya, that intensive study course on Sri Aurobindo's The Mother. It was being given by Dr. Maheswari who had told us about it during one of his visits to the States. So when it was possible to do that I just set other things aside and went. And I was in the Ashram from the first day of February to the 28th of February.

I had taken some photographs of the Center to show to friends in the Ashram. I also wanted to make a report to the trustees of the Ashram. In the middle of the report one of the trustees said, "I see no reason why the East-West Cultural Center shouldn't have the relics." And they took a vote. It was unanimous. So there was no anticipation, no planning.

For the rest of the month I was pretty busy, because as you may know the relics are enclosed in these 7 sheathes for travel. That was marvelously interesting. You would love going through those steps of preparation, because it just pulls on all the evidence and the love and devotion you feel from your inner being. The relics themselves go in a small gold envelope, which goes in a gold box which goes in a silver box, which goes in a teakwood box, which goes in a

sandalwood box, which goes in a rose woodbox, and on the rosewood box there is a stunning perfect gold emblem of Sri Aurobindo made by hand and installed and then those 6 go into a stainless steel enclosure.

We were hoping that when we came into the airport, with all the worry about bombs and so forth, that the relics wouldn't have to be opened. We thought Dr. Maheswari would be able to bring them with him when he came later, but it developed that they wanted me to bring them back at the end of February when I came.

So I had that unparalleled experience. Just beautiful, I can't tell you. They were never out of my sight. I held them on my lap. It was unexpected, unbelievable. On the way from Kuala Lumpur to Los Angeles on Malaysian airlines, I sat with the relics on my lap for 15 hours with no need to do anything with the body. Didn't have to move. So it gives you an idea.

One feels that the power is so great we can't deny it if we wanted to. New people, new programs and activities are coming up at the Center. On August first Dr. L. Subramaniam and Zakir Hussein are giving a benefit concert for the East - West Center at a local college. That's just one of about six major activities we're working on. All sorts of things like that. It's being handled by a new devotee, Pia Gonguli, and she's so hungry. She's gotten books and devoured them and wants to give service in that way.

So this is just the outside evidence. But we feel the personal growth and even more, much more importantly we feel, and now we find ourselves featuring in our thrust of the work of Sri Aurobindo and Mother, we feel ourselves featuring the aspect of unity of the collective consciousness. And this little pin I was given at the a meeting says it: "None of us is as smart as all of us." I think that ties into the power of the collective consciousness. Our inner thrust now is towards that inner realization and the honoring of the collective consciousness.

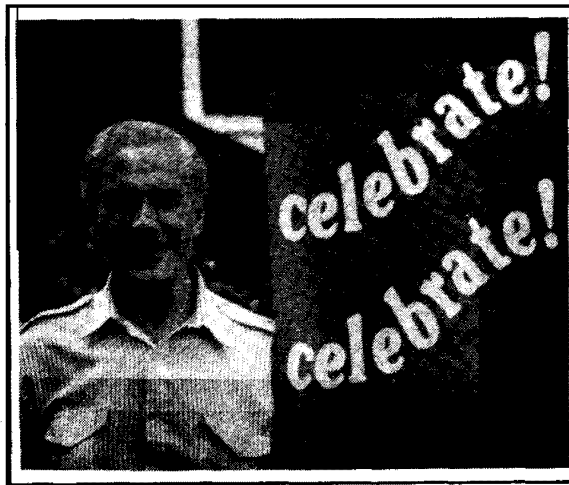
Debashish has these wonderful things just flow through him. One that comes to mind just now was expressed in one of the groups just before I left. About the supramental. Now until this happened my own feeling and concept was that the supramental was quite a

distant goal, quite a distant entity. It came through him to feel a loving relationship with the supramental and then as we worked on that and let it sink in quietly meditating on it; it became very evident, Yes! Yes! because the supramental is what we're all about, so why not have the feeling of that just permeating, just the way Mother and Sri Aurobindo had.

C: Well I think there was so much positive response when everyone heard that the A.U.M. would be in Los Angeles. Even though the Center has been there for a long, long time there are many people who have not been there from many parts of the country.

R: We must say that this is another of the evidences of the presence of the power. We're ready now. There's been a feeling of spiritual purity or purification. We don't worry whether we're good enough instruments. If we turn it over to Mother it will be done. It will be such a joy to welcome you and everyone who can come.

C: Hopefully there will be some more



airplane fare wars.

R: Yeah well start one. The Center looks like a single family home. It looks smaller than it is because additions have been put on. We have a double lot and there are roses all across the front fence. Roses up to the main entrance. Rose garden to the left of the driveway. What we want to do to the garden just outside Sri Aurobindo's room, especially for the A.U.M. conference for meditations which will

be an important part of our A.U.M., we want to have a lotus pool with Sri Aurobindo's lotus. That's over in one corner of the lot. Then get representative flowers planted and growing, flowers representative of Matrimandii gardens. Have all that growing around the periphery. Now we've kept the large grassy plot in the middle just for the purpose of putting a canopy overhead for creating a feeling of quiet and privacy for special things like large meditations that we would have at A.U.M.

We'll have carpeting on the area just outside the meditation room. There will be chairs and so on incorporated in the design. It takes some time to get the garden dug and preparations to do all this. But this is what we're doing. The lotus pool, if it comes out the way we are planning it, will be a lovely sort of a living tribute and tie right in with the feeling from the relics. Here again Mario Sanastataso, who is so gifted and dedicated, did the whole work for the french doors in the back wall that open on to the garden from Sri Aurobindo's room. He's teaching summer school this year, but he's still volunteering his time. He's done such a lovely work.

C: That's similar to Montreal. You feel a very strong group there. They're very open and sweet. They have such fun together.

R: That's really the telling story isn't it. The joy that's felt ... It's a job I'll tell you. Just sustaining a Center is a job. With all this flood of this beneficent power which is really dynamically inspiring Mother's and Sri Aurobindo's work from our stand point in America

spreading it and pushing it in new dimensions. Also with that, Mother sends evidences of where we have to do what in our own sadhana. And it becomes increasingly important because our own sadhana affects the group sadhana. Sri Aurobindo said that the Yoga isn't possible without a group entity, group consciousness. And that's where our concentration is now.

A Visit to Le Centre Sri Aurobindo, Montreal

By Gordon Korstange

HUNCHED OVER AGAINST the cold wind that sweeps down Rue St. Denis, we trudge past street corners where cars spin around in new-fallen snow-slush and down sidewalks lined with trendy shops. February in Montreal is cold. People here, as in any city, love fashionable clothes, but it is clear that their long overcoats are purchased as much for warmth as for style.

We had braved the streets for an hour's worth of walking and had fled to the Museum of Fine Arts and then, for lunch, the underground, a network of subway stations and shops spread under much of downtown Montreal. We took the immaculate subway to the old city along the St. Lawrence River. In summer it hums with tourists gawking about and lounging in outdoor cafes. Now it was virtually deserted. We dropped in at the Cathedral of Notre Dame for respite from the cold and a view of stained glass windows showing Catholic priests converting the Indians and a wonderfully ornate pulpit with a circular stairway that was carved by French Canadian woodworkers.

It is Darshan, February 21st, and meditation will soon take place at Le Centre. As we approach the building, nestled in among the fashionable boutiques of St. Denis, Mother's symbol leaps out at us from the window overhung by an awning much like the umbrellas that cover images of the gods in India. In the window are Mother and Sri Aurobindo's books and some of the small, elegant trinkets and handicrafts from India that are sold in the shop. On the second floor, where the center has its home, Mother's symbol stands out from a large, arched window inlaid with a plane of stained glass.

We are late to meditation. The long, narrow room is packed with people in sweaters sitting silent on the floor. We find a space in the back. In the front is a brightly lit space filled with flowers and the shrine that contains Sri Aurobindo's relics.

After the meditation, we meet

Madeleine, a small, vibrant woman about whom Le Centre revolves. She gives us flowers and invites us for a weekend visit to the center's estate, a 50 acre property about 60 miles to the east of Montreal.

As we walk back to the apartment of Anindya Das (Andy), an Ashram school graduate who teaches computer science at the University of Montreal, he points out Le Centre's kitchen/dining room on a corner across from two Greek restaurants. Each evening, about ten members of Le Centre come from their work and living places to gather and prepare food together. Some members, including Andy, live in apartments owned by Le Centre. His is a small walk-up almost directly behind the main building where we just finished meditation.

Thus, in the middle of fashionable, urban Montreal, Le Centre Sri Aurobindo flourishes, providing both material and spiritual sustenance to its members. Its main building has been declared a historical monument and is now worth almost one million dollars. Le Centre also has the previously mentioned estate capable of sleeping 20 people. How has this come to be? It is only the next day, after we have made the ninety minute drive to the estate that the whole story is told.

The "estate" is not the enclosed grounds and manor house that the word



Bernadette, Agathe, and Christyan in front of the shop

conjures up. The main building is a chalet with 3 bedrooms, dormitory space in the basement for 8, a large fireplace that quickly warms the room, and a view out to a small, human-made lake and a few other houses that surround it. Directly behind the chalet is a maple sugaring shed, and further beyond, beside the stream that tumbles into the lake, a smaller chalet where we are to spend the night.

As soon as we arrive the members bustle about. Louise and Jacques prepare lunch. Christyan goes outside and jumps on the tractor to begin plowing the long driveway. After lunch, we put on cross country skis for a couple of hours of touring the property, skiing down the stream onto the frozen lake, and a venture into the forest beyond the lake.

After supper Madeleine and Andy tell us the story while the others listen attentively, even though they must know it by heart. In 1965, Madeleine, married with three kids, was teaching hatha yoga from the family's rented apartment that is now Le Centre. One of her students mentioned that there was a French woman in India who was

a guru and that Madeleine might want to meet her. She felt she should visit Pondicherry, but at that time, it seemed an impossibility. However, the very next day her husband had a heart attack and died!

She was left with her children and only her hatha yoga for work. Stunned and unclear about the future, she decided the only thing to do was to go to see the Mother! Once in Pondy, she encountered a multitude of resistances within herself and, at first, did not want to even see Mother. Goyle, at whose

pressed by the sight of Madeleine behind her enormous walnut desk! He not only secured a mortgage for her but also came up with the a down payment on it.

From then on, property seemed to fall into Madeleine's lap. One day, Madeleine called the owner of the building adjoining one of Le Centre's houses to complain about its dilapidated state. He was depressed, he said, and wanted to get rid of the building. Would she like to buy it? Madeleine had to refuse. The man insisted,

declaring that he would give it to her for a song if she wanted. She began to see how things were moving.

Other properties, including the dining room, also came into the fold in

labor and ingenuity. Fearing that his children would not take care of the property to his satisfaction, he, again practically begged Madeleine to buy it. Le Centre members were hesitant about taking on this responsibility, but when Madeleine had a strong intuition to make the purchase, they all went along.

Now the estate provides a much needed escape from Montreal and a place where the group can work and play together. Today they seem very harmonious, skiing, walking, cooking, playing board games. In the evening we do some singing. They have learned several of Mohan's Sri Aurobindo bhajans when he and Champaklal visited Montreal in 1987.

Like the East-West Cultural Center, Sri Aurobindo's relics provide a focus and a foundation for Le Centre. Their photo album documents the same kind of conscious care in transporting the relics from the Ashram. For Christyan, who carried them back, it was a similar kind of intense experience that Bob Dane describes (c.f. previous interview). Having the relics would appear to be a commitment that really grounds a center, both in space and time.

Le Center found a well-known artist in Montreal, Carlos Calado, to design the shrine. It consists of two large steps in white marble representing the ascent, and a blue marble cube holding the relics in its center, surmounted by a white column expressing the descent of light. This pyramidal structure is topped by a pink lotus, the symbol of the Avatar. The shrine measures four feet at its base, five feet in height, and weighs about five hundred kilos.

Le Centre Sri Aurobindo, Montreal is impressive. We came away feeling that this group of people led by Madeleine, through dint of continuous effort and graceful fortune, have created a unique urban and rural environment that provides an alternative to the isolation of city life and an opportunity for integral yoga. We urge you to visit them if you pass through Montreal or decide to vacation there. On occasion it is possible to reserve rooms at \$25 Canadian per night. Call 514-845-2786 or write 4125 Rue St. Denis, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2W 2M7 for more information.



Louis, Guillaume, Jacques, and Claude make maple syrup

guest house she was staying, finally persuaded her to go. However, permission to see Mother was postponed several times and was finally granted on the 3rd of April, the day of her departure back to Canada as well as her birthday!

Once she had darshan, all her resistance vanished. The Mother enjoined her to start a center in Montreal, and from that time on, Madeleine has not strayed from that task, working with a dogged determination that has attracted an inordinate amount of grace.

She continued to teach hatha yoga, and gradually some of her students were attracted to Sri Aurobindo's yoga. In 1980, she had an opportunity to purchase the building but had no money to spare. Madeleine had just received some exquisite office furniture as a gift. When the banker came to visit her, he was favourably im-

pressed in a similar fashion. A solid core of members had formed around Madeline, including Christyan Feuillet, an M.A. in French literature, who came to be the "maintenance" man, grounding himself in the practical life of heating systems, plumbing, carpentry, and financial matters. Two other members, Agathe and Bernadette, work full time at Le Centre's shop

The other members all work in Montreal and help out whenever the need arises. Louis (an engineer) and Claude (a lawyer) have volunteered to work a few hours every week at the shop. Jacques, who works in the picture framing industry, devotes his free time to carpentry at Le Centre.

Four years ago, on a drive in the country, in an area where her grandparents lived, Madeleine and other members of Le Centre met a small-time industrialist, who had built up the estate over the years through his own

Projects

"Quiet": A Holistic Educational Program for Pre-birth, Birth and Follow-ups; Situated Along the Shores of the Bay of Bengal in Auroville.

By Maggi Lidchi

ONE ASPECT OF THE "Quiet" project is education, both at the highest and most primary level, and that is the preparation of parents for conscious conception and birthing; the education of the new being will start in the womb. Mother used to say that the most important section of her Ashram school was the kindergarten and that there was where all the best people should be sent as teachers. But as we shall see later her concern was also with pre-birth education.

Assisting Incarnating Souls

Perhaps second only to the Matrimandir and now that the crystal has been installed, parallel to it, is the need to give incarnating souls every assistance, to create a centre where beings looking for a place to land know that they will be welcomed, understood and respected as being already fully conscious and perceptive. This of course is already the attitude in Auroville, and indeed that of conscious seekers all over the world. But a very special atmosphere can be created if a construction as near to where we know that dolphins swim (the waters of "Quiet") is erected with all geomantic positive principles observed, where dolphin-sound music can be played to the mother in the last week or more and at any time that she wishes to visit the centre.

Joan Ocean and Dolphins

The "Quiet" project invited Joan Ocean of Hawaii, the world's foremost dolphin swimmer who has been

working with a dolphin pod for many years, to come to Auroville. She talked to us, showed videos and also took a small boat out. More than one hundred dolphins came to meet her and swam along with the boat. This has been repeated many times with our Auroville midwife taking a boat out with Aurovilians and visitors. But we have yet to determine exactly when their seasons are. Joan Ocean has also offered to bring groups out to the "Quiet" project as soon as there are suitable accommodations.

Many other aids of a subtle as well as a practical nature will be available to the mother. Dolphins are known to be attracted to places where human births take place in order to help. It is reasonable to believe that they will be especially attracted to a centre where we are aware of their capacity to foster certain qualities in the embryo and the newborn child. The human embryonic being is, because of its aquatic evolutionary nature, open to the telepathic communications that science has shown dolphins possess and can transmit.

Making the Transition More Gentle

When speaking to the devotee who helped Mother keep the Auroville birth register, Mother strongly expressed her desire that methods be found to make the transition from the womb's protective environment into our atmosphere as gentle and conscious as possible for, as she said, almost all of us carry the trauma of birth all our lives. Regressions during deep relaxation or light hypnosis show that we almost all suffer from a cold and too abrupt separation from the mother, a harsh light, the lack of understanding that the infant is entirely aware of all the thoughts going on in the minds of the nurses, doctors, and relatives. This often makes for an initial and sometimes lifelong timidity and reluctance to enter fully into the task that the soul has chosen, a distaste for participation in a world which initially seems uninviting and even chaotic, or even lifelong resentment and aggression.

In a place like "Quiet" there should be a site for friends and well-wishers to meditate welcoming the being who is about to enter our dimension.

Learning in the First Year of Life

Another consideration and concern of the Mother's was the frustration involving the tedious time it takes for an infant to learn even to feed itself, to express clearly its thoughts and wishes, to say nothing of reading and writing.

One knows that in childhood, and especially in early childhood, time values are quite different. A year is more like a century, and in the child's mind a next birthday is a lifetime away. Mother explained that in the supramental era beings would not necessarily be everlastingly confined to the same body, but that assuming a new form would not entail a loss of consciousness with the tediousness of starting all over again with all the frustrations and inevitable incomprehensions of the parents.

Obviously any gain in this area would be a step in the right direction, and as we see from the appendix to Joan Ocean's book, *The Dolphin Connection*, children can gain enormously and at the age of one express themselves with the clarity of a two or even three-year-old. Above all, these children are more serene, less aggressive, startle less easily. This is what we very much need since equanimity is the basis of what must manifest in the new cycle of evolution.

The Expectant Mother

Mother has written about the preparation of the parents before conception, and these writings as well as her talk to the women of Japan would be made available to any would-be parents who would want to consult the centre.

Mother has also written about what is desirable for, and in, an expectant mother. When patents have taken their constitutional homeopathic remedies before conception, the children are invariably more intelligent and harmonised than older siblings who have not benefited from such preparation. Still, much can be done by the mother taking her remedy during pregnancy.

Braking in the Birth Canal

It so happens that at the moment of

writing this report a young **Ashram**-educated woman wishes to have a water-birth, and because there are **already** two births expected in Auroville this month, Hilde cannot be expected to run backwards and forwards with the inflatable plastic pool. So we are trying to **find** accommodations for her and her mother and husband.

The most urgent need of the moment, as all the **benefits** of underwater birthing become better known, is a place where the midwife and the people she will train can ease the incoming beings into a joyous and open harmony which inspires them with confidence and energy to accomplish their life task. The number of us who spend our lives not doing what we came for is alarming. Most of us never catch up and have all sorts of things to work out in a whole series of lives because of unfortunate beginnings.

Helen Wambach, in her book **Life Before Life**, talks about the man who said that in coming down the birth canal he was so reluctant to come into the world he braked with his feet, and many people when regressed to their birth experience said that they came in with a sinking feeling of "here we go again" in spite of the fact that more than fifty percent of the people remembered that their souls had chosen the second half of the twentieth century because it was a time of transformation, a time for extraordinary possibilities of progress. People have reported being aware at birth that grandfather was disappointed because it was a girl; that uncle was seething because his children would no longer be inheriting; that mother was sad because daddy had gone with another woman during pregnancy; that father was sad because there was no more money for another child. We want babies to swim out feeling, "They've got it together for us at last. This time it's going to be good!"

So in very practical terms, if we could have at least two or more **birthing** rooms at "Quiet" and the accommodations for family for one week both before and after the birth, which is considered essential, we would be well on our way to making a contribution to that one essential **commodity—evolving** human consciousness.

The birthing rooms, as well as those for the families and, in fact, all the other rooms at "Quiet" will be positioned and constructed in such a way as to neutralise all negative and **energy**-diminishing possibilities. There exists an instrument called the Lecher Antenna which indicates the negative spaces and confirms their neutralisation which can be affected by various means. A first survey of "Quiet" by a French geomantist with a Lecher Antenna was done last month. Not only can negative spots be neutralised but a vibrant serenity can be created with the help of sounds, mantras, and symbols—what Sri Aurobindo says about the power of OM is full **confirmed** by the Lecher Antenna. In units called "bovis" the healthful human energy can be measured at around seven thousand. Symbols, mantras, and of course simple concentration can send them right up to eleven thousand or more. This energy can also be observed in the auras in pictures taken by Kirlian photography.

A Training Centre for Midwives

Education will be an integral part of "Quiet's" mission. The birthing project at "Quiet" would be a training centre for midwives. Ursula is already training a number of people in massage therapy. Others, Jurgen and Rees, are teaching gymnastics. Some mothers may continue wanting home deliveries which will also be made possible by the centre, but sometimes the bedroom or living room is too cramped for a water birth and has an everyday association which may not always inspire this very special occasion as should the temple which the **birthing** centre would become. The birthing centre will be a very special place in the same way as the inner chamber is a very special place and vibrations will accumulate there from all the births.

Merlin

Seventeen years after Mother's withdrawal from her body the **first** water baby in Auroville, and almost certainly in **India**, was born. The "Quiet" project had sent Hilde, the Auroville midwife, to the second

World Congress on Cetaceans where the world's premier underwater and dolphin water obstetrician, Dr. Charkovsky of Russia, gave a seminar. In an inflatable pool the baby came out on his back with open eyes, quiet, and relaxed. **There** was no hunching, howling, fist-clenching or anxiety as in ninety-nine percent of "normal" births. As the baby saw all the faces bending down he smiled!!

He was named Merlin. Bill, of the "Quiet" project looked it up: "He smiled at the wonderment he produced." An obstetrical nurse who hopes to help at "Quiet" says that never in her ten years of experience did she see anything like this, though she has done Le Boyer births where the room is darkened and babe is, after the cord cutting, put in a warm water bath. The babies almost always emerge in a state of panic. It takes only seconds to produce a life-long trauma.

In the following three months two more babies were born underwater to Aurovilians, and a pregnant Tamil worker at Aurolec, after seeing an underwater birthing on video, has decided on an underwater birth.

On the Ocean Front

Certain obstacles exist to making full use of the ocean frontage. As things are it would not be possible for any births to take place in the ocean as is done in the Crimean and other seas; the water is too polluted by the surrounding villages of which there are three. We hope with the help of the authorities to get the waters clean enough to do dolphin births in the ocean as is done in other parts of the world. In fact, "Quiet" has been obliged to draw its enclosure back from the ocean in order to allow the fishermen to draw in their nets. And if we were to pump sea water in for the birthing (which is desirable since sea water is the only substance which contains all the trace elements), we would need a purification plant.

Perhaps it would be best to start thinking of a small school for the villagers, which is the only way to get them to change their lavatory habits. Only the children can initiate change. The fishing communities are fiercely independent and have not shown much wish to collaborate. We need to help

them for their sakes and our own. Perhaps an educational fund would assist us.

Then there is Jipmer Hospital in Pondicherry, one of the four big interstate hospitals in India. It empties all its waste into the sea which washes it past "Quiet." There exist in Pondicherry a central pollution control board which recently closed two chemical industries because they were letting out untreated liquid effluents. The possibility of protecting the "Quiet" project lies very much in the hands of this board; for the dolphins which now still abound in these waters and the sea-turtles, for which hatcheries have already been created at "Quiet," will desert the area unless stringent measures are taken.

Sea-Turtles

The first sea-turtle eggs hatched at the time of this writing, and the people and the children at "Quiet" swam out with the baby turtles who immediately made their way to the ocean. Aurovilians swam out with these wonderful creatures who will be back at "Quiet" to lay their eggs, for turtles come back to their bii place, and by then we are sure that "Quiet" will be a protected area. This in itself is an education for **Aurovilian** children. Steps should be taken to have it declared a protected area.

An Untrod Path

"Quiet" is primarily a centre to foster health and educate people through an approach to the subtle body, where we know that the loss of equilibrium which we call disease begins. Health itself will be understood as consciousness rather than merely an absence of symptoms or pain. **One** does not have to be ill to go to "Quiet." It is a centre for transformation, for conscious working on the cells in this transitional phase of our evolution, and Mother, the pioneer of this work, will be our guide at the beginning of a work that is necessarily, as she always said, an untrod path.

What "Quiet" can provide are her words, her voice, videos, and reading which will evolve out of our experiences. In this age of transformation, there will be crises which must be understood and approached as such and

not as illness. Holistic methods such as homeopathy recognise the intelligence of the organism and the cells, and support their attempts to regain equilibrium and specially to cross into a new one. But the whole psychological attitude, as well as the subtle aids which we have mentioned, will help ease us over new spiritual thresholds which are so often termed illness when accompanied by physical manifestations or emotional unease, and which our traditional education insists on terming disease. This aggravates them, and indeed makes them manageable only with great difficulty.

Illness is the other side of health. We have been clearly told and shown that if the cells have a quiet confidence much of our so-called health **difficulties** can be avoided, and this is the climate which "Quiet" must educate people in.

There will be a library and video room so that people coming for advice and information may try to recognise the therapy for which they have the most **affinity**, as well as being advised by a physician and computer program.

The "Quiet" Project owns India's first **Vithoulkas** (the **wold's** foremost Homeopath) computer program and a computer. They await the building funds which will allow them to be housed. A library of teaching videos will follow; in fact a small **homeopathic** training village is planned.

Present Inhabitants of "Quiet"

There are **five** people already living and working at "Quiet," and they have made it come alive with their work of massage and gymnastics which will expand it into a multi-purpose complex. At the moment they are doing their pioneer work in temporary keet dwellings. Very simple accommodations for visitors interested in the program are available at a reasonable cost:

There is a sixth person, a homeopath, who has offered to give his time and energy to grow a vegetable garden. It is a must to have organic fruits and vegetables for the pantry specially for those who more than anything else, need a supportive climate and a good diet for transformation work and recuperation.

One should remember that Mother told the disciple who originally bought the land that, amongst other things, people should be able to recover there from what Sri Aurobindo calls the jars of life. It was the site that Mother herself chose to visit for her promenade, and it was where she advised Satprem to go for relaxation and being quiet. Much will develop and come clear as "Quiet" moves forward. As the people now living at "Quiet" say, we should feel our way and remain open to what is wanted and needed.

The Next Steps

We have so many ideas and plans waiting to be implemented through the help of funds, including people who would like to work at "Quiet:" midwives; an obstetrical **nurse**; young women wanting to be trained; a homeopath; physiotherapists; ayurveds; and other specialist all yearning to educate the world in the light of Mother's teachings.

For educational research we shall ask all parents to give us follow-ups. This is a new kind of child belonging as much to the earth as to its nuclear family and effortlessly making its contribution. If the child has any difficulties, "Quiet" will be there to recommend appropriate therapies, and we expect the dolphins who will telepathically know of our **birthings** to be aiding with all their extraordinary mystical midwifery and follow-ups.

The two "Quiet" meetings held recently have done something to bring us nearer to a formulation of what we need immediately. The next "Quiet" meeting should be held at "Quiet" itself where we **can** expect the spirit of the land that Mother chose to inspire us.

For further information and/or to send contributions, write to: The "Quiet" Network, Centre for Scientific Research, Auroville 605101, India.

Maggi Lidchi is, in fact, the "devotee who helped Mother with the birth register." A longtime resident of the Ashram, she has also worked tirelessly for the Udavi school, part of the Auroshika project in the village of Edayanchavadi.

Continued on next page

(Editors' Note: So far, much of the funding for "Quiet" has come from the sale of hand-embroidered, beaded and sequined **mandala** wall hangings, stitched by village women and children, who, along with **Maggi**, also create the colorful designs. These wall hangings are being sold primarily by individuals in places like seminar centres, yoga studios, and schools. If you would like to help sell these wall hangings to benefit "Quiet," write to **Aradhana**, 22 **Manakula** Vinayagar, Pondicherty. 605001, India.

The Quiet Network

There is at work in the world an evolutionary force that strives to create a new being and a new life of beauty, **truth**, and **soul**-born delight.

There are many in the world whose purpose it is to serve this force and who gravitate towards the healing arts as one means of collaborating with it. They **recognise** that subtle therapies have the power to rebalance the **finer** energies and substance of which we **are** made. **This** can liberate the moving force of our own rising aspiration and in turn make us more receptive to **the** ever-present **downflow** of higher transforming power that is ready and willing to do the evolutionary work in us and through us, if only we allow it.

We embrace such therapies for the role they have to play at this point in our evolutionary progress remembering, at the same time, that they are but humble tools of the spirit within us who is the only true and **all**-efficient Healer.

Let us develop our ideas in congress and let us create healing centres which will be living functioning temples of the art and science of healing.

The first Healing in Evolution Congress was held in January, 1987 in Auroville. Other gatherings have taken place in Devon, England (1988) and in Colorado in 1989.

Matrimandir Nursery Reference Library

By **Amrit**

THE PRESENT
A manager of the Nursery, I am working closely with Walter, a German landscape architect, on the Matrimandir Gardens. The first project is the New Rose Garden which is nearly completed. Since the Nursery has gone through so many upheavals, changes of management, and a tremendous loss of plants, I have been trying over the last couple of years to identify and list the surviving plants and to start the process of again collecting plants for the Gardens.

In order to facilitate this, it is necessary to build up an **up-to-date** reference library of books. Though we have some books, they are by no means exhaustive or professional enough to serve our purposes, and I've been feeling the lack of such books quite keenly, especially in the process of identification.

Thus, I am requesting help financially (the total amount would probably be from **\$2000-\$2500**), or in kind and have included a list of the books needed.

Thanks to anyone who can offer assistance.

(Editors' Note: The complete list of books is available from the SAA office in Berkeley or from **Anie Nunnally**, RFD 7, P.O. Box 270 I, West Hurley, NY 12491. Here is a sample of some of the books: *The Standard Cyclopaedia of Horticulture*, by **L.H. Bailey** (Macmillan Co., NY); *Encyclopedia of Cacti*, by **Cullmann, Colt & Groner**; *Hibiscus Catalogue*, by the **American Hibiscus Society**; *Hortus* (latest edition), compiled by **L. H. Bailey and Ethel Zeo Bailey** (Macmillan Co.); *Encyclopedia of Ferns*, by **Jones**. ..

Bulletin Board

Announcements, Letters, Reactions. ..

The Richest People in the World

By **Bill Sullivan**

I FELT SO ENRICHED by an entire **Collaboration** on money, that it gave me an incentive to chip in. Not only was **the** content offering compound interest, but the process a breakthrough: "a community bulletin board of notes on the way," as David Wickenden pin-pointed it.

The writers of the articles identified a "community" which I would describe as a "feeling" (or a morphogenetic field) that I and many of you have experienced at All-USA Meetings. Second, they identified a "way," the way of **Sri Aurobindo** and the Mother. This "way" and **that** "feeling" is a network far wider than those who read **Collaboration** or even **Auroville Today**.

Can we keep on building from the positive and well-explained theory and practice **that** appeared in the **Collaboration** articles? Gordon phrased the fundamental quest: "... reconquering the money power of a nation which, after all, seems to wallow in the stuff."

We all know that many "mystics" and economists are certain that the present world economy will soon change. How soon and how dramatically is debated. We all know that social and political conditions allow in certain places "cheap" labor and "cheap" resources to the ultimate disadvantage of everyone. We could all read in the news that one million people lost twenty billion dollars in the collapse of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International.

Now the good news: we can direct this change, this new conquest of the money power. In "Investing in the Future," Jerry **Swartz** provided an insight: "The key is to act intentionally and purposefully-not from a sense of guilt or obligation, but from the joyous realization of participation and contribution." Here it is: The A.U.M. "Community" withdraws from banks and **financial** institutions, even socially conscious portfolios and insurance

companies in favour of creating assets managed by the "community."

This declaration may infuriate or stun our accepted pattern, but the time has come for the changes we often talk about. For example, the Foundation for World Education cannot "afford" to use only its interest for the work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Everybody's capital needs to move for the "work" as directly and consciously as possible. The Foundation would then free itself to receive from the community which had also freed itself. We have all the talent for creating the mechanics of the network. Are not we the ones who have to begin now because we know? We have the "feeling" and the "way." Remember we are the richest people in the world.

Bill Sullivan is the "Director" of the Centre for Scientific Research, Auroville.

Los Angeles and Auroville: A Letter from Dee DeCew

(Editors' Note: The following letter also appeared in the AVI-USA newsletter, Vol. 1, No. 1 of Spring 1992.)

It's been a very interesting eight months here in America. I think I've learned a lot, about human nature and what is and is not specific to humans living in Auroville. I've lived in America, Europe, South East Asia, Australia, and India, and I'm beginning to get an idea, still subjective but nonetheless based on experience, about human social possibilities.

As you know, I've been involved since 1983 in bridging the gap in human unity in Auroville between we folks who've come to build the city of the future and the local villagers who are part of the experiment by default, so to speak. Until now I've always considered the Village Action work simply one among the many activities of Aurovilians, have even felt almost apologetic about "having my thing" which seemed so important to me. However, my impressions here in America have given me a changed outlook. Perhaps also because I've

'retired' from Village Action, and it is 'my' thing no longer, perhaps because I've been studying the global significance of development policy on the environment and hence on the future of the planet as a place for further evolution, perhaps because the Los Angeles riots have highlighted the dangers inherent in ignoring the problem of an alienated under-class, I'm beginning to see Co-Evolution Village Action as crucial, of prime importance to Auroville, at least at this time.

From the beginning, I saw the work with the villagers as symbolic: symbols that evoked both fear and shame. The reality of the individuals who became friends, co-workers, 'beneficiaries,' or pain-in-the-necks is not fearsome or shameful, it just is.

However, my experience in America has led me to believe that what I had been treating as personal and symbolic, is now closer to reality. Let me explain, there exists in the Auroville situation a dangerous potential with regard to the villagers. Aurovilians are a small number, albeit financially dominant, of new arrivals in their land. 30,000 to 800 would not make a very even fight, if our behavior continues to make them feel hostile excluded from the Auroville experiment and its material benefits. Even if we don't consider uprising a very great likelihood, there is the environmental danger, as borewells deplete the watertable while traditional rain-catchments fall into disrepair, as pesticides are sprayed indiscriminately, and trees continue to be cut, in a local environment we share. And the exploding population, which is pressingly palpable now in ever more crowded Pondicherry, can only be curbed by a rise in the security and standard of living of the poor people who as they are have only their children to help them through a difficult life. These dangers are not imaginary, they are not overblown, in fact they can blow up, as they did in L.A., at any time.

But there is also the shameful side, which is, I feel, no longer a minor consideration in a community devoted to Human Unity. What does it mean to our Ideal of Auroville, if our neighbors whom Mother called the First Aurovilians, are impoverished, be it by

exploitation or simply neglect? What do we have to say to the world about the future, if the masses of the people on whom we rely for the major part of the work of building the city of the future are not considered a real and participating part of the planning? What about all those ill-fed, barely educated children—about 15,000 of them—who are also part of the future to which Auroville is dedicated? We feel very much the lack of enough people to live in Auroville and carry out the Auroville idea, but we overlook the potential in those children in the villages. Westerners are not as aware of the problem, but Indian visitors to Auroville always ask, as a test of our applicability to India, what are you doing about the villages?

Auroville's Greenworkers have tackled the problem of deforestation—a major global problem—and now the Auroville forests and the techniques learned to create them are an inspiring demonstration to other Indian groups of what can be done. In this way we have led the way. But this was not done alone, there was significant support that came from Auroville Internationals—not large amounts of money, but something, and the sense of encouragement, understanding.

I think that the Village Action Group needs this kind of support from the International Aurovilians now. We need to feel that the world at large perceives the importance of our work, and is behind us as we try to bring the villagers more and more into the elaboration of Auroville, not because of a sentimental or charitable impulse, but because the physical and ethical survival of Auroville depends on it.

As I've said, in spite of years of monthly "Auro-Village Communicators," I've never said it quite like this before—I've been reticent and content to simply present what we were doing and let that speak for itself. But something in the America I've experienced this last eight months urges me to be a bit more outspoken and present the situation as I now see it, and ask for support.

Dee DeCew has lived in Auroville for many years and has been one of the

Continued on next page

main forces behind "Village Action," an organization that seeks to help village people help themselves through educational, afforestation, amenity improvement, health and social relations work in villages surrounding Auroville. Village Action currently is embarking on a project entitled "Education for Sustainable Development with the People of the Kaluveli Tank Bioregion, South India. The project includes the following programs: training in afforestation, soil

and water conservation, Permaculture, etc. for local people and other development agencies; a Life Education program for working children; a Regenerative Agriculture training program to present interested small farmers with a theoretical and practical basis for a return to biological methods; educational training with village women for kitchen gardens, tree nurseries, organic food processing, and health care; eco-clubs with school children; supplementary education in

evening programs for village children; and documentation using video and slides to disseminate instructional information on sustainable eco-restoration, to record village skills and knowledge, and document work at successful project sites.

For more information, write to Co-Evolution Village Action Group, Isai Ambalam School, Irumbai Post, Auroville 605101, Tamil Nadu, India, or contact AVI-USA (see Center News).

People

Raina Imig has completed her first year teaching in the Cascade Valley School, an experimental school whose "structured freedom" has done away with curricula, grades, tests, and bells. It is modeled after the Sudbury Valley School in Framingham, Massachusetts, where ages 4 to 19 coexist and run the school democratically (every student and staff member casts one vote in deciding school rules, budget, hiring and firing and discipline), and where students must request and set up their own classes.

The only graduation requirement at Sudbury, now over 20 years old, is a thesis proving that the student is responsible enough to leave the school. No Sudbury student has ever been refused admission to the college of his/her first choice.

Raina writes that the first year of Cascade Valley has been a success, and that her children are thriving on its structured freedom. For more information, contact her at Cascade Valley School, 13515-A SE Rusk Rd., Portland, Oregon 97222 (503) 653-8128.

Six Aurovilians have been visiting the USA during the summer, participating in educational programs.

Ramakrishna and Manu attended the A.U.M. and then traveled west to study in the Savitri Solar School summer program (see Center News). Tamilarasu, Nanavel, Ayanar, and Madhavi participated in two PeaceTrees programs, the first in Camden, New Jersey and the second in Seattle, Washington.

Marjorie Spalding (Sacheta) died on February 25th at the age of ninety-two. She had always said that she wanted her body to remain three days before she was cremated, thus while I sat in front of the Matrimandir Crystal on February 29th, the mortal remains of the instrument who brought me to the yoga was whisking skyward on the other side of the world.

It was Marjorie's idea that while Bob and Deborah Lawlor were in the States in 1971-72 that they should introduce some young people to Sri Aurobindo's yoga and their work in Auroville. Through a friend of Robert McDermott's, Bob was invited to speak at my college. For no particular reason (I supposed the lecture about an Indian community called Auroville concerned Native Americans), I went and there was Dominique Darr's slide of those few palmyras linking that incredible blue sky with that orange earth and the little granite block with "AV" on it. That was it. I was among those unsuspecting college students who faced an all-star cast consisting of Admiral Rutledge Tomkins, Dr. Jehangir Chubb, Mickey Finn, Muriel Spanier, Tim Jacob, Zena Daysch all of whom were hosted by Bob and Deborah, Andre and Goldian Vandembroeck, a commuting Robert McDermott, and the Flower Lady, Marjorie Spalding.

She was the "Flower Lady" because her main contribution, other than providing hot baths for the ladies, and respite from those seeking a candy bar refuge from the relentless Macrobiotics of Bob, and serving up endless pots of

curry for a hungry hoard, was to dose the entire lot of us with the Bach Flower Remedies which she had practised for twenty years.

She had already compressed many "lives" into this one lifetime. Born in Australia, the youngest daughter of a High Court Judge, she remembered her mother serving tea to the Aborigines with an unusual respect and fascination. She trained as a singer of classical songs and toured the world concertising.

She married, had a child, divorced and remarried a lawyer, Boardman Spalding. While living in New York, she spent hours at the Vedanta Center and befriended the Swami there. She was devoted to Ramakrishna, but came across a book by Sri Aurobindo and found an intellectual fulfillment in his writings.

For nine years, she read Sri Aurobindo, accumulating volume after volume. Then Bob Lawlor, who came to her for the Flower Remedies, saw the books and remarked that he had just returned from the Ashram and was working to save money to return to live in Auroville. Thus began a correspondence and friendship which drew her into the early days of Forecomers and lasted until her death.

She saw in Bob a great deal of promise and followed his work with enthusiasm. When he and Deborah returned to the US from their Auroville pioneer life, exhausted from their trials and in need of some respite, she encouraged them to share their story. Thus, the summer of Omega Station, and my introduction to the world

according to Bob, including major discussions of Sri Aurobindo, Mother, Hatha Yoga, Macrobiotics, Organic Gardening, I Ching, Astrology, Sacred Geometry, Dance, and the building of a thirty foot geodesic dome. Marjorie was the den mother, a bastion of British common sense facing down the sixties.

I couldn't quite understand why, as we sat reading the inspiring selections from *Savitri* on Sri Aurobindo's birth Centenary, she would want to be alone. She certainly forsook her solitude that Fall when Udar Pinto came to America as the representative of the Indian Government to speak on Sri Aurobindo. Her apartment became his national headquarters with much typing and phone calls. She would reminisce fondly of walking into the living room one morning and counting sixteen bodies asleep on the floor.

It was Udar who beguiled her with stories of Mother and then insisted she come to India. Fortunately, Marjorie agreed and had her Darshan with Mother in January of 1973 shortly before Mother stopped seeing people. Mother gave her the name "Sacheta" or "Truth-Consciousness". Nolini translated her name as "Conscious, and of One Mind With All".

She certainly welcomed all, for her home would be the site of a number of lectures and slide shows by scholars and friends and refugees, as in the case of Francis and Savitri when they were exiled from Auroville. She heard their stories, as she had those of thousands, with perspective and compassion in the atmosphere of a room steeped in the aspiration to know.

She could be withering in her criticism, seeing right through whoever came before her. But she had a very big heart. While she abhorred sentimentality, she held Sri Aurobindo in true reverence and awe, and proclaimed him to be "the greatest bhakti."

She delighted in a keen intellect and spiritual discourse, and enjoyed hosting discussion groups and meetings. She labored over many meals and teas for the sake of the *sangha*, which often included members of the original Omega Station.

In her final years, she would recount her meeting with Champaklal, how they stood in silence in the library where she would treat people with the

flower remedies, and "had the most wonderful conversation."

In the last year and a half of her life, illness disoriented her mind and she suffered much with anxiety and loneliness. To see such a clear-thinking independent spirit humbled and laid bare was difficult for me to witness. Still, she could rise to an occasion and had some special contacts with her last visitors, who included C.N. Sharma and Bhaga, both of whom kindled a light which transcended her confusion. We often reminisced to lift her spirits, invoking the night she went to the Samadhi with John Walker and was bathed in the profound stillness, or her dreams of Darshan with Sri Aurobindo. A number of times she would recall her meeting with Mother, how she held her hand, how she could still feel that hand in hers, Mother's hand on her head, blessing her.

It was hard to reconcile the suffering and confusion of her last days with all the study and work and inspiration which flowed through her body all those years. The pages of her copy of *Mind of the Cells* were dark from rereading. How could she, who used to shoo us out from her living room in 1972 with her immortal call, "If you're going—go, don't ooze!" have such a protracted parting. When I last saw her on the way to the airport in February, she could hardly muster an acknowledgement of my departure. I chanted quietly and invited her to come with us. She had said a number of times during her lucid moments, that she had always expected to return to India one more time. When I told her about the placing of the Crystal in the Matrimandir, she seemed to gather herself up and said with great earnestness, "I want to see that, do you think I could make the trip?"

She couldn't make it in the physical, but she made the trip with us to see the Crystal after all.

By Julian Lines

Champaklal, devoted attendant to both Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, left his body this past spring in Gujarat where he was born in 1903. The following biography is taken from *Prayers and Aspirations*, by Champaklal, translated from the

Gujarati by Sudha and Don Fisher.

During his first visit to the Ashram in 1921, when he prostrated himself before Sri Aurobindo with his palms around his feet, he lay there for one full hour. Then Sri Aurobindo placed his hand on his head and blessed him. When he got up he felt that he had nothing more to do in his life. There was an evident sense of having arrived.

In 1923, when a devotee, Punamchand, was coming to the Ashram from Patan, Sri Aurobindo asked him to bring Champaklal along with him. So he had the rare grace of being chosen by the Master himself. . .

He was the personal attendant and confidante of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. His simple, straightforward nature, his utter obedience, his thirst for perfection in every detail in whatever work he undertook, brought him very close to his gurus. The Mother called him "my lion." He was always alert in his service and saw to it that people did not unnecessarily disturb Her or waste Her precious time. Due to his adoration and physical proximity to his gurus, he has naturally imbibed many of their traits and even physical expressions. His service has blossomed him into a spiritual painter, writer, and poet.

Soon after the Mother left her body, he kept voluntary silence and stopped talking. But being identified with the consciousness of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, he spontaneously projected Their presence. His travels all over India and to many countries in Asia, Europe and America have made a tremendous impact on all who have come in contact with him, and helped greatly the Mother's work. All this has been achieved silently through his personality which radiates more and more of spiritual lustre and love. It is touching to see how deeply he feels the sorrows of others and becomes a beautiful, luminous instrument for divine compassion, generosity, grace and tenderness to flow out from him. He is a living inspiring example of being the Mother's true child.

Last Meetings with Champaklal

By Julian Lines

My first visit to the Ashram was in November of 1974, a year after

Mother's death. One evening I was invited to the home of Prabhat Poddar to watch the slides he had taken of Mother's Mahasamadhi. As the crowd dispersed at the end of the program, Champaklal returned my gaze. We paused for a moment, and then he proceeded to leave.

Having missed meeting Mother by a year, I was eager for contact, for any reflection of her power and personality, for some minor miracle in which to anchor my faith. This brief encounter with Champaklal seemed to be as close as I came.

Eleven years later, in what seemed a major miracle, he was sitting next to me as I drove him to Washington, D.C. The previous twenty-four hours had been a whirlwind, meeting him, Kamalaben and Claude Brun's family at Newark where they had flown overnight from Arizona. The party rested at Marjorie Spalding's, then he and Kamalaben proceeded to take in the Guggenheim and Museum of Metropolitan Art one after the other. We headed for Queens to visit the Hunzikers and await the arrival of Sri Chinmoy, who had arranged for a program in Champaklal's honor. Three hours of songs, readings, group meditations, videos, culminated in the serving of a cake with a photo of Champaklal at the foot of Mother's Chair as the centerpiece.

And while our little entourage looked wan and bedraggled, there was Champaklal, radiant before the disciples, patting Chinmoy on the head, smiling and waving to the gathering as he left the auditorium. Chinmoy had alluded to him conquering the need to sleep, his role as Mother's Lion, and his unswerving devotion.

When he did sleep, he slept on the floor, he maintained silence, and he scrupulously avoided playing the "Guru". When he wrote small notes in response to questions, each one was retrieved and torn up. He constantly referred questions to Mother, pointing to her photo or simply up in the air.

And She was everywhere, the *M* in a zigzag pattern at a museum, the first thing he wrote when trying out a pen. Not his own name, but Sri Aurobindo, Mother.

It was not only his devotion, but his flexibility. Claude, as any good Frenchman would, had a deep love of

American Jazz. So there we all were in a nightclub listening to Sara Vaughan. There were Champaklal and Kamalaben dressed up in old time costumes from the Wild West. William Netter doing pranam and Champaklal moving William's hands away, and William slapping at Champaklal so he could finish touching his feet and both of them laughing long and loud.

Indeed, as one who kept silence, laughter was the last and best form of expression. This seemed a fine resolution to life, distilled to silence and laughter.

When I saw him next in Pondicherry in 1988, it was the day before his birthday. I had expressed my concern over raising funds for Matrimandir and the continued enmity between the Ashram and Auroville. As always, he referred these difficulties to Mother, pointing to a painting of her. I closed our visit, asking him what he wanted for his birthday. He wrote and handed me a note, "Love each one for themselves."

My son was too shy to go to Champaklal when he visited Matrimandir in August of 1991, but later we visited him at the Ashram and both sat in his room holding his hand. He seemed to be listening to an inner music, for his hand glided back and forth gently through the air. There was a further distillation. Beyond the smile, a touch, and a gaze filled with Love. This was at the heart of our final contact before he left for Gujarat in March of 1992. I showed him a proposal for solar panels on Matrimandir. He smiled as I left the room, and shook his finger at me, which I took as an admonition, "Now you be good, and remember..."

I understood through friends that he had hurt his hip and was travelling to Gujarat for a cure. He had always worked to move without assistance during his travels, making his body a fit vehicle for Mother. Indeed, one could only attribute her Shakti as the force which moved him beyond the physical endurance of those much younger in years around him.

Apparently, before he left the Ashram, he greeted many most warmly, and asked to be taken to the Samadhi. In Gujarat, he had some

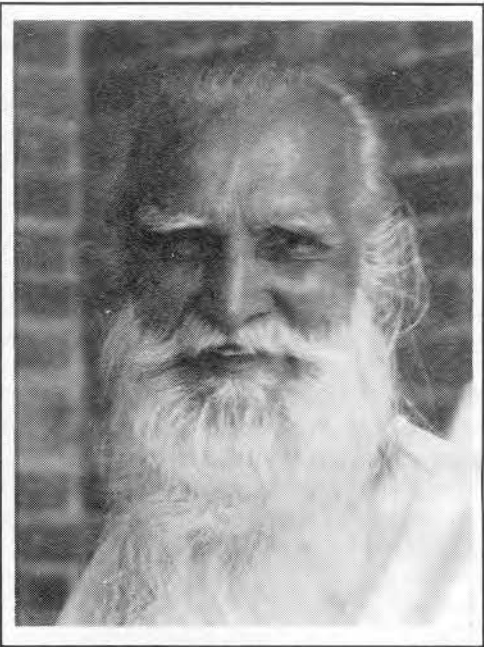


Photo by William Greaves

major success in walking again, before taking on a fever and succumbing. One last triumph for Her true devotee.

As Sri Aurobindo said of himself concerning his biographers, "My life is not on the surface for men to see," one can also know that the heart of Champaklal was in his inner life. Fortunately we have some record of that flame of devotion in the following poem:

I Stand Unshaken

I stand firm, I stand unshaken.
Let death come today or tomorrow or
at this very moment
I do not care, I do not care,
I do not care, I do not care,
I care only for my aim,
For my Dharma, for the truth of my
being,
Keep me always, constantly far away
From the false beliefs full of illusion,
Keep me always constantly at Thy feet
alone,
This is my only prayer,
This is my only prayer.

At Thy Feet, at Thy Feet, at Thy Feet,
Then let the body leave, body leave,
There is joy in this, there is bliss in
this.
Ma . . Ma . . Ma . . Ma . . Ma . . Ma . .
Ma . .

(12/9/85—From *Prayers and Aspirations*, by Champaklal)

Center News

AVI-USA
P.O. Box 162489
3112 'O' St., Suite 13
Sacramento, CA 95816
(916)452-40

AVI is now publishing a newsletter. Please write to the above address to subscribe.

During the past few years, more and more people have asked for a meeting dealing exclusively with Auroville. In response to these requests, from Saturday to Monday, November 7 to 9, AVI-USA will be hosting a meeting at Mount Madonna Center, a 30 minute drive from Santa Cruz.

The cost of room and board will be \$60 per day, including meals. Accommodations vary from dorm style to private rooms, and are available on a first-come basis. Meal service begins with dinner on Saturday, running through lunch on Monday. If you need a private room or have other special requirements, please let AVI know as soon as possible and we will do our best to accommodate you. Child care and youth programs will be available.

Programs for the meeting will include 1) An general meeting to brainstorm coordination and participation in the work in North America. 2) New videos.

Meetings like this work best when everyone participates. If you have any particular topics you would like to discuss, please contact Mary Alexander 916-457-8351 or Constance Walker 408-427-3478. A limited number of scholarships are available. If you can contribute to these, it would be greatly appreciated.

Auroville Information Office
23 Mill Hill Road, Woodstock,
NY 12498
(914) 679-2926.

On August 15th, the Auroville Information Office, was dedicated in Woodstock, NY. As an official branch of Auroville International, USA, the AIO will focus on making information available to the general public, and taking up specific projects.

Flutist, Steve Gorn, played a concert of North Indian Classical Music to celebrate the opening.

The first area of focus is the Pavilion of Tibetan Culture. Mother designated an "International Zone" in Auroville to act as a permanent exhibition area. When the Dalai Lama visited Mother and toured Auroville in January of 1973 he stated that he wanted Tibet to be the first nation to build a Pavilion.

A scale model of the Pavilion has been approved and we are now seeking the funding for this important project. It will be made from mud brick using techniques developed by Auroville during construction of the Visitor's Information Center, with Tibetan artisans being trained in the process. Potential donors should contact the AIO.

Krishna and Kamala Tewari Visit

Major General Krishna Tewari and his wife, Dr. Kamala Tewari will make their first visit to the United States this Fall. Krishna is very much involved in the Auroville Archives Project, while his wife, who is also a homeopath, is working on upgrading the health services in Auroville. Those aware of speaking venues should contact June Maher at (408) 688-4173 or Julian Lines at (914) 679-2926.

Pondicherry, the Store

On the full Moon day, May 16th, 1992, a gift shop called Pondicherry opened in Woodstock, NY which carries items imported from the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and Auroville. The shop is small, but has a good location in a renovated home owned by the neighboring bookstore, Mirabai. The goals for the shop include hosting the Auroville Information Office, mail order sales and wholesaling of appropriate items as time and funds allow. At present the shop is open from 11-6, seven days a week. For information, write or call Julian Lines at Pondicherry, 23 Mill Hill Road, Woodstock, NY 12498 (914) 679-2926.

Cultural Integration
Fellowship
360 Cumberland
San Francisco, CA 94114
(415) 626-2442

The Cultural Integration Fellowship was host to a 120th anniversary

celebration of the birth of Sri Aurobindo on August 15th and 16th. The program of events included meditation, dinner, lunch and the following events:

*"Sri Aurobindo: A Divine Incarnation," a lecture by Paul Molinari.

*"Working as the Psychic Being," a workshop by Carl Peters.

*Auroville: Current emergence of Auroville as part of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo's vision.

*"The Heart Connection to Self Sovereignty," a lecture by Dr. Hillary Anderson.

*"The Spiritual Function of Literature According to Sri Aurobindo," a lecture by Dr. Duncan Bazemore.

*"Sri Aurobindo's Teachings in Our Daily Life: Spiritual practice, work, and in relationships," a panel discussion with Dr. Hillary Anderson, Carl Peters, Dr. James Plaugher, and Celest Powell.

East Bay Center
2288 Fulton St., Suite 310
Berkeley, CA
94704
(510) 848-1841

On August 15th, the East Bay Center will have completed its first year on its evolving spiritual journey. Although inevitably there have been bumpy spots along the way, they have turned into opportunities for learning and for building a stronger communal spirit.

Since March, the group has occupied its permanent quarters and our space includes a meditation room and library/conference room. In addition, we have the use of the lounge area for informal conversation and a warm cup of tea.

Ongoing Activities

*Wednesday evening meditation for members

*Sunday morning study groups and meditation. Currently the earlier study group (9 a.m.) is beginning *Synthesis of Yoga*, with Paul Molinary serving as a facilitator. Following a short intermission there is a thirty minute group meditation. From 11 a.m. to noon, we are perusing the Mother's *Conversations* and sharing ideas/experiences and/or difficulties in practicing the Yoga.

Special Events

*Celebration of darshans on February 21 and April 24 with music and meditation, followed by dinner at an Indian restaurant.

*Participation by one of our members in the first Teleconference among Centers in the USA. From this evolved the idea of publishing a newsletter to keep Centers abreast of current happenings and upcoming events. Coordinating this first Inter-Center newsletter (due for publication in October '92) will be Celest Powell, Surama and Wayne Bloomquist. It is anticipated that such a newsletter will encourage regional and national linkage and build a network across the USA.

*A two session workshop on the Dynamics of Group Behavior—its purpose is to enable us to better understand the forces and roles operating within a group and lead to more conscious group participation.

*A July social gathering at the new abode of one of our members.

Individual Items

*Two group members had the joy of celebrating the Mother's birthday darshan at the Ashram in Pondicherry.

*One member, Celest Powell, has presented two talks at the Cultural Integration Fellowship in San Francisco—one on "The Life of Mira," and the other on the practice of integral yoga in daily life.

August Events

On August 15, in conjunction with the Cultural Integration Fellowship, our group participated in a two day celebration of the 120th anniversary of Sri Aurobindo's birthday. Plans for the program included two Saturday afternoon workshops, one led by Paul Molinari and the other by Dr. Carl Peters. Following evening meditation, there was a presentation on Auroville. The Sunday session included talks by Hillary Anderson and Duncan Bazmore followed by a catered luncheon. Celest Powell participated in the afternoon panel presentation of the Integral View.

Future Plans

*Expansion of community programs

*Beginning seminars for those interested in learning more about Integral Yoga.

It has been, we believe, a fruitful

year for our Center's beginning, and we invite you to drop by for a visit when in the Bay Area.

**East West Cultural
Center
12329 Marshall Street
Culver City, CA 90230
(213) 390-9085 or
(213) 375-2966**

Over the last year, members of the East-West Cultural Center have seen their sadhana intensify under the guidance of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother, whose constant and miraculous Presence grows ever more manifest among us.

The Center's primary aim of consolidating this presence, through the secure founding of a core community of sadhaks, united psychically in a

collective Aspiration, continues to gather strength and move toward a critical self-sustaining momentum. Groups meet four times every week in study programs on *The Future Poetry*, *Essays on the Gita*, *Sanskrit Grammar and Literature*, and An Introduction to Sri Aurobindo's Yoga, using *Sri Aurobindo or The Adventure of Consciousness* as the starting point. These meetings have taken on a practical emphasis which binds the members in Mother's arms, whether they are together or apart. Once a month, pot-luck suppers and free-forum Spiritual Inquiry discussion groups go further towards manifesting a togetherness as "Mother's children."

Since "Golden Day," these discussion groups have revolved around the

subject of the Supramental Manifestation on Earth — its implications, and the urgent need of our growing inner awareness and surrender, to allow it to prepare us to be its instruments.

At this point, the all-important "collective consciousness," a joining together in Mother's work—both inner and outer—and the work of preparing a wider ground of approach to the Divine Consciousness, are directions of Her Inspiration.

Plans are underway to install a lotus-pool in the garden adjoining Sri Aurobindo's room where the white marble cube which contains His relics rises from a pink marble lotus on a samadhi-like base in an all-white room, trance-held in Eternity.

Other plans include a newsletter, expressive of the aspirations and



Back Row: Anie Nunnally, June Maher, Veena, Jim;
Front Row: Randy, Debashish & guests

experiences of sadhaks and devotees, the expansion of Center business, which now imports and offers books, incense and products from the Ashram. This expansion is sought to be a way to help finance the Center—to allow sadhaks to be supported entirely through Mother's work—to be a means of Karma Yoga for the dissemination of expressions of the Divine Consciousness—and to provide a field for the transformation of the Money Power.

Toward the work of offering the knowledge of the Future Manifestation to more souls, the Center seeks to organize and sponsor public events which it feels are expressive of, or bring us closer to, the New Consciousness which is pressing from behind the

surface upon events and circumstances. In this context, as part of Sri Aurobindo's 120th Birthday celebrations, a concert of Indian Music was arranged for Saturday, August 1, in an auditorium of over 800 capacity. The concert features the famous artists Dr. L. Subramaniam on violin and Zakir Hussain on tabla. These artists were chosen because, though steeped in Karnatic and North Indian classical traditions respectively, they have transcended their beginnings and now represent in Music and in consciousness a global future culture.

Five more events celebrated Sri Aurobindo's 120th Birthday: Aug. 2: Richard and Kailash from the Ashram (see below); Aug. 5: "The Gayatri Mantra in the Light of Sri Aurobindo," by Dr. Pranav Pandya; Aug. 8 & 9: "Mythic Enactment workshops on *Savitri*," led by Paula Brooks; Aug. 9: North Indian Devotional Singing, by Urmila Shukla; and Aug. 15: Offerings to Sri Aurobindo, Birthday Meditation, Prasad.

More big musical events are already scheduled: A special musical celebration will take place on August 20, with another famous musician, Bob Kindler, and his ensemble from Hawaii, presenting "Hymns to The Mother" and other devotional music. A third renowned artist and his company, Debu Chaudhuri, winner of the Padma Bhushan, India's national award given to outstanding artists, will give a benefit for the work. And more will follow, according to Mother's direction.

This Sri Aurobindo Center was enriched by a truly shining event, to honor and observe Golden Day: Anie Nunnally blessed us with her presence from February 26 until March 3. Sri Aurobindo and Mother's presence was so strong, and Their harmony so flooded the Center, it felt to all of us that Anie had somehow been present all along, and she was just returning to her family.

The highlight of those bright days was, of course, Golden Day itself—February, 29 . . . music, spiritual dance, readings from Sri Aurobindo and Mother, and an inspired and inspiring talk by Debashish Bannerji, our President, all led to a profound meditation around Sri Aurobindo in His room. Then prasad was distributed

to about 40 people.

The following day, Sunday, Anie gave a very special program: her beautiful voice filled the entire building with song and then, sitting in front of the gold-draped Darshan picture of Sri Aurobindo and Mother, she enthralled us all with her recollections of her mystic experiences, visits with, and visitations from Mother. She had never told some of them before. When Anie brought out a shining golden package tied with gold ribbon, she made this day a landmark in the Center's history: she presented us with one of Mother's most beautiful saris—a treasure which will further enrich us all. We are working on a very special display case for this sacred garment. She joined in the Center's regular activities, including The Future Poetry group on Monday night. We reluctantly took her to her plane on Tuesday, March 3. Now, we eagerly await her return 'home.'

Another of the highlights of our "Sri Aurobindo's 120th Birthday" celebration was the presentation of a special program by Richard and Kailas from the Ashram, with stunning color slides of "Mother's Selected Flowers" for the 12 gardens surrounding the Matrimandir. We have also asked them to speak of their special experiences and close relations with Mother; these personal treasures deeply touched all who heard of them at the very productive A.U.M. in Asheville.

The Center, founded by Dr. Judith Tyberg (Jyotipriya) and located in West Los Angeles, has continued to serve as a beacon to seekers after Truth in this rich, teeming metropolitan hub of the collective life of urban people. It is open to all who wish to participate in Sri Aurobindo's vision and create in Mother's light.

**Sri Aurobindo Study
Group
25 East 21st St.
Hamilton, Ontario
Canada L8V 2T3
(416) 383-5743**

There is presently operating a Sri Aurobindo Study Group in Hamilton which is located in the Southeastern

Ontario area of Canada. Hamilton is in the middle of what is called the "Golden Horseshoe" area of industrialisation and population around southwestern Lake Ontario. We are located in the middle, about an hour's drive from Toronto and an hour's drive from Niagara Falls, New York.

I am interested in contacting other people in the area interested in Sri Aurobindo and the Mother as well as others passing through the area during the summer or otherwise.

Sincerely,

Johannes Vloothuis

**Sri Aurobindo Center—
Southeast Region
c/o JHM Enterprises, Inc.,
P.O. Box 8375
Greenville, SC 29604
(803) 232-9944
FAX: (803) 232-6931**

April 24th was Darshan Day and a Gathering was held in Greenville, South Carolina. Forty attendees came from South Carolina, North Carolina, Florida, Virginia, Georgia, Colorado, Washington, D.C., Tennessee, Ohio, Vermont, and Maryland.

In a very nice setting an introduction and interactive reception was held followed by meditation and opening circle of sharing of personal thoughts and feelings. After opening circle we had an Indian dinner followed by video tape presentation of The Mother's flowers and their spiritual meaning. Before all departed for evening rest at 10:00 P.M., all felt at home as if they had known each other for years with Mother's grace; all felt relaxed and at home in an environment created for this weekend retreat.

Next day, April 25th, was started with breakfast. Vehicles were ready to transport devotees to the JHM Enterprises, Inc. office for morning meditation. After meditation, Dr. John Collins, who had written his Ph.D. dissertation on *Savitri*, presented his talk on *Savitri*. After the talk, Seyril Schochen read from *Savitri*.

We had a break for snacks and then got together for sharing. This was the time when all shared how Mother's grace worked for different individuals



Site of the SE Region Darshan Gathering

in fulfilling their wishes; like how Mr. Patel from Ohio found his ring after two years and Hansa recovered her 22k gold pendant, which was snatched by a thief. Seyril experienced Mother's presence at Auroville when they were pouring concrete at Matrimandir, and a hurricane warning was given. H.P. Rama shared a photograph of Champakdada meditating and straight light came down from above on the picture and many more incidents were shared.

That afternoon we left to go to

Furman University lake where young and old played games, coordinated by Ariel Browne, without age barriers, and Gordon sat underneath a tree and played his flute. We returned to the hotel for evening meditation and then dinner.

After dinner, we saw a video on Sri Aurobindo and The Mother's life sketch and activities at the Ashram. That evening we celebrated Dr. John Collins birthday and then adjourned for rest.

April 26th morning, after breakfast, we went to JHM Enterprises, Inc. offices and had meditation. After meditation we had an open forum and some more sharing.

We all discussed and decided to form Sri Aurobindo Center Southeast Region with its current offices at JHM Enterprises, Inc., and decisions were made on certain issues mentioned below. After lunch at the hotel a closing circle was formed and all shared their weekend experiences.

In spite of weather forecasts predicting heavy rains, it did not rain during the course of our gathering. Soon after closing circle, when all started departing, it started raining as if

Mother was blessing all her children.

We hope you all can join us at our next gathering in the near future. We shall be informing you about the dates and venue when plans are finalized. The following subjects were discussed in detail at the Gathering and plans of execution will be evolved in the coming months: (1) Memberships dues—\$25 was unanimously decided by all participants to cover communication costs; (2) Southeast Regional Newsletter—Please send your news regarding events, visitors, etc. to the above address; (3) Telephone network for passing fast phone messages regarding events or news at any time. Tree for each area to be prepared by Vijay Raghavan, Nashville, TN; (4) Spread the word/philosophy/learn/practice through: academic community lectures; contact religion and philosophy departments; Asian Studies (International Studies) departments; contact international student organizations; flyers (student activity centers); electronic bulletin boards; contribute Sri Aurobindo and The Mother books to libraries; request local library to purchase books on Sri Aurobindo and The Mother; practice Sri Aurobindo and The Mother's philosophy.

Matagiri
HC 1, Box 98
Mt. Tremper, NY 12457
(914) 679-8322

More than 60 people attended Matagiri's observance of Sri aurobindo's birthday on August 15. The crowd spilled out of the meditation room into the library and kitchen, and some attendees came from as far as Montreal, Boston, and Baltimore. There was a reading of Sri Aurobindo's "Message to America," and Tom O'Brien led the group in chanting, followed by a videotape of Mother's last Darshan and a meditation. Everyone enjoyed an abundant collective lunch, and, fortunately, threatening rain held off all day so people could enjoy the gallery. Later, Kailas and Richard, from the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, showed a video on



August 15 Darshan at Matagiri

Photo by Verne Henshall

flowers and their spiritual significance. There was also a display of new books and some unpublished manuscripts in Matagiri's extensive library.

Late in the afternoon there was a classical Indian flute concert by Steve Gorn (assisted by Anie Nunnally) in

nearby Woodstock, sponsored by Julian Lines' new Auroville shop, Pondicherry.

Matagiri will mark its 25th anniversary in August, 1993. anyone may visit Matagiri by writing or calling the above address or phone number.

**Sri Aurobindo Learning
Center, Inc.
Savitri House &
Savitri Solar Village
Baca Grande, P.O. Box 80
Crestone, CO 81131
(719) 256-4917**

A Transcendental Opportunity

A reading from Mother's *Agenda of the Supramental Action Upon Earth*, Vol. I, February 3, 1958 in the Sri Aurobindo Learning Center's Savitri House this summer is sunseed for "a transcendental opportunity"—and a call—to all ready for conscious community creation. Such a one is being planted in the San Luis Valley of the spectacularly magnificent Sangre de Cristo mountains.

Inspired by The Mother's experience as She related it to Satprem two years after the first uninterrupted flow of the supramental Light and Force and Consciousness upon earth 29 February, 1956, solar engineer designer George Smith, responsible for building Savitri Solar Dome on land neighboring Savitri House, was envisioning the whole educational community destined to grow up around SALC's House, Dome, Solarbridge—future residence, office, classroom, greenhouse space for Savitri Solar School—and the "call" came through.

The Mother's experience was as follows: *Between the beings of the supramental world and men, there exists approximately the same gap as between people and animals. Some-time ago, I had the experience of identification with animal life, and it is a fact that animals do not understand us; their consciousness is so constituted that we elude them almost entirely. And yet I have known domestic animals—cats and dogs, but especially cats—who made an almost yogic effort of consciousness to understand us. But generally, when they watch us living and acting, they don't understand, they don't SEE us as we are, and they suffer because of us. We are a constant enigma to them. Only a very tiny part of their consciousness is linked to us. And it is the same for us when we try to look at the*

supramental world. Only when the link of consciousness has been built shall we see it—and even then, only that part of our being which has undergone the transformation will be capable of seeing it as it is—otherwise the two worlds would remain as separate as the animal world and the human world.

The experience I had on February 3 proves this. Before, I had had an individual, subjective contact with the supramental world, whereas on February 3 I went strolling there in a concrete way—as concretely as I used to go strolling in Paris in times past—in a world that EXISTS IN ITSELF beyond all subjectivity.

It is like a bridge being built between the two worlds.

This is the experience as I dictated it immediately thereafter:

The supramental world exists in a permanent way, and I am there permanently in a supramental body. I had proof of this today when my earthly consciousness went there and consciously remained there between two and three o'clock in the afternoon. I now know that for the two worlds to join in a constant and conscious relationship, what is missing is an intermediate zone between the existing physical world and the supramental world as it exists. This zone has yet to be built, both in the individual consciousness and in the objective world, and it is being built.

Then the call came through in Savitri House, addressed to anyone listening with the third ear: Are you prepared to accept your personal responsibility in the willed mutation of our species? Has your time come to participate in building the bridge to the supramental world? Does your intuited destiny beckon you towards a life of dedicated physical, mental, conscious endeavour powered by the uncharted, boundless inner light-force—demanding the politics of ecstasy? Will nothing else suffice?

Does participation with like-minded individuals in a life-style embracing ecological awareness, sustainable small-is-beautiful technology, service to humanity and the earth—the Divine in both—healing sciences, voluntary simplicity, transformational theatre arts and rituals for consciousness-changing—all happening in a beautiful moun-

tain wilderness—make sense?

If it does make sense, contact the Sri Aurobindo Learning Center, Savitri House. We look forward to working with you, Supramental Bridge Builders.

The Third Annual Global Village Network Conference August 14-18, 1992

Participants to the conference were summoned with this message: "All groups and individuals in process of creating new communities in the new and global consciousness are invited to gather in Crestone-Baca for the Third Annual Global Village Network Conference. Together we shall participate in consciousness-changing experiences for new ways of living in harmony with the Earth—our Universal Mother. We shall celebrate our journey in song and dance, learn from one another locally and globally, including visiting Aurovilians, pioneers of the City of Human Unity, Auroville, South India, which by its Charter belongs to humanity as a whole... to live in Auroville one must be the willing servitor of the Divine Consciousness... in a place of an unending education, of constant progress and a youth that never ages;... taking advantage of all discoveries from without and from within... to boldly spring towards future realizations... making material and spiritual researches for a living embodiment of an actual Human Unity."

Included among the presenters were: C. V. Devan Nair, Former President of the Republic of Singapore and SALC Director of Education and Research in Community Development, Baca; Hanne Strong, President of Manitou Foundation and Earth Restoration Corps, Baca; Seyril Schochen, Director of Sri Aurobindo Learning Center (SALC) and Transformational Theatre, Baca; Katherine and Howard Roske, Global Family Representatives, Hawaii; Rod Hemsell, Director, Savitri Solar School, Baca; Phillip Tabb, Solar Architect, University of Colorado, Boulder; Joan Ocean, Author, and Jean-Luc Bozzoli, Artist, *The Dolphin Connection*, Hawaii; John Robert Cornell, Editor and Publisher, *Sunseeds Magazine*, Carmichael, California; Arvind Habbu, Free Energy

Specialist and Poet, Kansas City, Missouri; Paula Brooke, Psychodrama Counselor and Author, Baca; and Katherine Wersen, Transpersonal Therapist and Musician, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Savitri Solar School

The aim of Savitri Solar School, sponsored by the Sri Aurobindo Learning Center, Inc., in the Baca Grande area of Colorado, is to bring together groups of international youth in a residential setting to engage in consciousness-raising educational activities and experiences. It will present programs that aim to integrate the whole being—physical, vital, mental and spiritual—of each individual participant and of the group collectively.

The School will inspire its participants towards the realization of noble, enlightened life goals and further the development of a new and more viable educational perspective for humanity as a whole at this transitional point in our civilization's history.

The first program was offered this summer, from July 6th through August 15th, by the Sri Aurobindo Learning Center, in the Baca/Crestone community at the base of the Sangre de Cristo mountain range in Colorado. It is the setting of ancient Native American vision-quest grounds where today the world's wisdom traditions are represented in a living manner through temples, ashrams, and hermitages for the practitioners of such diverse faiths as Zen and Tibetan Buddhism, Hinduism, and Carmelite Christian mysticism. The Baca/Crestone community, the context in which these traditions flourish, is also dedicated to the development of alternative energy, affordable housing, and agricultural technologies for the creation of an environmentally sustainable lifestyle for the future.

The Savitri Solar School program curriculum will focus on secondary and undergraduate students, and will encourage the participation of youth between the ages of 15-25, from Auroville, India, and other countries, with youth of the same age from the United States, selected and referred by such organizations as Auroville International, Merriam Hill Center, Global Family, and other private and



Savitri Solar School Dance Class: Nicholas Ballet, Rama-krishna, Manou, Heidi, L'Aura, Michael Brody, Melissa Michaels, Seyril Schochen, Merica, Aurosylle, Rod Hemsell

public educational institutions interested in promoting the values and experiences envisioned by this program.

Boarding and lodging will be provided in a communal setting with a family atmosphere in which students, directors, presenters and staff share responsibilities and learn together to create a harmonious, dynamic learning environment, in which our roles as creators of a global society, respectful of the planet, its people and cultures, and all nature, are our intention and goal.

The program directors are Seyril Schochen, Director of the Sri Aurobindo Learning Center and Transformational Theatre, and Rod Hemsell, Director of Savitri Solar School.

The curriculum for this summer's session included participation in the wisdom traditions represented in the Baca, and designing and building a prototype solar village. A third major focus of the program was Transformational Theatre, which utilizes music, drama, dance, and poetry with the deliberate aim of raising and illuminating consciousness. A fourth focus was wilderness treks, geological and archaeological, and outdoor recreation.

Instructors and presenters during this summer's session were Jonathan Goldman, Director, Sound for Healing Association; Healing Sounds Seminar (who gave two workshops, the first on Harmonic Chanting and Toning, the

second on Tibetan Overtone Chanting); Melissa Michaels, Director, Moving Journeys Creative Arts and Savitri Dance Theatre; Steve Clark, Director, Citizens for Clean Energy; Solar Energy Seminar and Technologies; and Maryanne Jerome, M.D., Holistic Psychiatry, Counseling, and Evaluation.

Tuition Fees, including room and board, July 6 thru August 15, were \$900/student. For further information about this summer's and next year's program, contact Rod Hemsell, Savitri Solar School, P.O. Box 88,

Crestone, CO 81131 (719) 256-4115 or (719) 256-4917.

Sri Aurobindo Association
2288 Fulton St., Suite 310
Berkeley, CA 94704
(510) 848-1841

SAA Centers Teleconference Project

On Saturday, June 13, 1992, the Sri Aurobindo Association arranged the first of what is hoped to be a series of teleconference calls between organizers of Sri Aurobindo and Auroville Centers or Work Groups. Martha Orton organized the call, and Bill Moss facilitated the discussion. Funding assistance for this project was provided by the Foundation For World Education.

The meeting began at just after 3 p.m. Eastern (Noon Pacific) Time. The participants included: June Maher—AVI-USA, Aptos, CA; Seyril Schochen—Sri Aurobindo Learning Center, Baca, CO; Santosh, Krinsky—Lotus Light, Wilmet, WI; Ron Jorgensen—Study Group, Enumclaw, WA; Celeste Powell—Sri Aurobindo Study Center, Berkeley, CA; Robert Dane and Debashish Bannerji—East-West Cultural Ctr., Culver City, CA; Martha Orton—SAA, Charlottesville, VA; and Bill Moss—SAA, Watertown, MA.

Each participant had 10 minutes to briefly summarize their experience organizing and/or running centers and offering lessons learned from that experience. At the end of this segment, since so many ideas for further expansion of this format had arisen during the planning for this call, we spent a half hour airing possibilities.

Some ideas which came out include:

*A bi-monthly newsletter for activities at centers and cities around the country. Celeste offered to collate the entries from centers and individuals if she could get support with the nitty-gritty details. Bill tentatively offered the assistance of the SAA in printing and mailing, as well as helping to set up the format initially. Wayne Bloomquist, who runs the SAA office in Berkeley, later made it official, since it will be his office which will supply the help. We have decided to mail out the first two or three issues free to the entire mailing list and then offer subscriptions at a reasonable rate.

*Weekly "inner networking," an idea that was attempted at one of the early A.U.M. meetings but never caught on. The purpose is to establish a single time every week when people around the country can "tune in" together inwardly. The question arose when Martha asked if people in the conference call felt inwardly, as she did, a growing awareness of others who also follow Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

The new time was set for Sundays, 9 a.m. Pacific time (10 a.m. Mountain, 11 Central, and Noon Eastern time). The first day was June 14, the day after the conference call. The plan for inner networking was also announced at the July A.U.M. conference. Once the newsletter gets established, there will be a feedback section for people's responses to the inner networking.

*A hospitality network, whereby people around the country offer to accommodate sadhaks and Aurovilians, both domestic and from India and elsewhere, for a night or two as they make their way around. Presumably a central listing will have to be established or some simple way for people to identify homes in the areas they plan to visit.

*Electronic networking. Debashish is looking into various aspects of electronic or computerized hook-ups.

These include computer bulletin boards and E-mail capability through an established network such as Inter-Net (and international educational computer network which soon will include India), or Compu-Serve.

*Regional Meetings, to supplement the national A.U.M. The Southeast region recently held their first, organized by the Rama family and Ariel Browne and plan to hold further ones. Many people around the country now have experience hosting A.U.M. conferences and so have the necessary knowledge base to proceed.

There were other suggestions, including one which called for further collaborations between centers, such as the ones currently underway between the SAA and Lotus Light (see below). There were also several requests for further conference calls like this one for some of these ideas to be elaborated and put into action.

Two weeks later, a A.U.M. 92 over the July 4th weekend, a joint workshop was held with people interested in national networking along with the organizers of the new Southeast Regional Sri Aurobindo Center. Most of the morning was taken up with the task of organizing the new Center in South Carolina. Those from outside the region participated as supportive members of the larger community, lending its encouragement and support to the newest member of our diverse and extended network of groups and individuals working to advance the vision of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

The end of the morning session, and a short session in the afternoon, consisted of presentations by the SAA's Martha Orton and Bill Moss concerning the above-mentioned Centers Project, as well as the upcoming collaboration between the SAA and Lotus Light in publishing and distributing a new selection of letters of Sri Aurobindo, tentatively titled *The Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo: Teaching and Method of Practice*. Included in the discussion was the new bi-monthly newsletter described above, with participants helping to devise a format.

Another topic of discussion was the idea of a computer network capability such as was used so successfully in the organization of this A.U.M. Our

computer whizzes are currently looking into the details. It turned out that the SE Regional Center organizers, at the Darshan gathering on April 24, had proposed many of the same ideas as those brought up in the Centers' teleconference call. Then, at the closing session, the inner networking was announced with the addition of a suggestion that, since the Rama family has a regular family meditation on Wednesdays at 9:00 p.m. Eastern time, that those who wished to could join in at that time as well.

The profound impression one was left with was that the aspect of collective work on a national level has long been prepared on a deeper level, and that it is now our joyful privilege to participate in it if we feel so moved.

Other Sri Aurobindo Centers, Study Groups, Contact Persons and Affiliates, USA not represented in Center News.

(Please contact the SAA office in Berkeley if you would like your center or study group listed here.)

Boston Study Group
91 Kilmarnock St.
Boston, MA 02215
617-262-6390

California Institute of Integral Studies
765 Ashbury Street
San Francisco, CA 94117
415-753-6100

Dushyant Desai
Sri Aurobindo Center
25 Hill Street
Bloomfield, NJ 07003
201-748-0639

The Integral Knowledge Study Center
Sri Aurobindo Circle
221 Clematis St.
Pensacola, FL 32503
904-433-3435

Pacific Northwest/Puget Sound
2020 Roosevelt
Enumclaw, WA 98022
206-825-3413

Wilmot Center
33719 116th St.
Twin Lakes, WI 53181
414-889-8561

THE SUPREME MOTHER — A MANTRA¹

आनन्दमायि चैतन्यमायि सत्यमायि परमै
anandamayī chaitanyamayī
satyamayī parama
Sri Aurobindo

¹ The last two words in the English transliteration of this Mantra have been added by the Mother as they were not written by Sri Aurobindo in the original.

Sri Aurobindo Association
Collaboration
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