



# Growing Matters

## Holiday Greetings

The plants are nestled all snug in their beds, and I must say I envy them a bit. It is a shame that we don't take our cues from nature. At a time when many living creatures are settling in for a long winters nap, a lot of us are scurrying about preparing for holiday feasts, gatherings and gift exchanges. While the idea of these events is lovely, the reality of planning, preparing for, and attending these activities can often leave us feeling out of kilter. It is unlikely that you would be able to avoid all of the stress inducing aspects of the holiday, but you can learn techniques for handling them with greater ease.

I recently returned from nine days of advanced yoga teacher training at the Kripalu Center for Yoga & Health in Stockbridge Massachusetts. The focus of my training was on meditation and pranayama (yogic breathing techniques) and how to apply these ancient teachings to the modern lifestyle. The Kripalu center is in the heart of the Berkshires and the view from the top bunk of my dorm room was spectacular. The full length windows framed the surrounding mountains, and offered a view of a lake in the distance. The same lake that we walked to at 5:30 am to greet the sun as it rose on our first full day of classes. The teachers were top notch; the meals were made from natural, organic and local foods, and the majority of my time was spent practicing yoga, breathing, and sitting in meditation.

Learning to breathe and meditate in an environment free from all the responsibilities of daily life was relatively easy. Coming home to the bustle of the holiday season was a shock and trying to continue with the practice of yoga and meditation amidst other demands for my time has been challenging. However, it is in those moments when I settle myself in front of a candle and focus my attention on my breath that I find peace once again. Providing the mind and body a break from the endless barrage of thoughts and activities is a priceless gift that I hope you will consider giving yourself this season. Please join me on December 16<sup>th</sup> for a free introductory class on pranayama and meditation.

- Vicky Hilleges

## Pippi's Event Spotlight



### Free Pranayama & Meditation Class

Thursday, Dec. 16<sup>th</sup>  
6 pm - 7 pm

In the spirit of the holidays, I would like to invite you to a free introductory class on pranayama (yogic breathing techniques) & meditation. The benefits of these practices, which are available to individuals of all abilities (the only prerequisite is that you are breathing), are great. Following are some of the potential benefits:

#### Pranayama

- tones the organs,
- stimulates the relaxation response, and
- generates awareness.

#### Meditation may

- treat insomnia,
- lower blood pressure,
- improve physical and emotional responses to stress, and
- lower cardiac disease risks.

*Focusing on the act of breathing clears the mind of all daily distractions and clears our energy enabling us to better connect with the Spirit within. -Author Unknown*



12 Sherry Lane  
Kirkville, NY 13082-9212  
315-727-1062  
[hilleges@twcny.rr.com](mailto:hilleges@twcny.rr.com)  
[www.pippis.net](http://www.pippis.net)

## *Gift Certificates Available*

### **Looking to Make Your New Year Happy & Bright?**

No, I'm not recommending a vacation to a warmer climate where the sun actually shines. I'm suggesting yoga. There is a lot more to yoga than what you see in photos of people in advanced postures. In fact, the average student may never even attend a class where those dramatic postures are taught. What many people do not know is that in addition to postures (asanas), yoga also includes breathing techniques (pranayama) and meditation (dhyana). These three elements make up the heart of a Kripalu Yoga class, and when practiced regularly offer a path of self development that helps control body and mind to live a more balanced lifestyle, mentally, physically, and emotionally.

Yoga postures are well known for their ability to increase strength and flexibility, and meditation has been shown to have many health benefits, but you may be wondering why you need to go to yoga to learn to breath. After all, the first thing we did in this life was take a breath. It is likely that since you took your first breath, you have been injured or been sick, your muscles have become weak or tight from holding tension in the body, and/or your posture has been impaired in some way making it difficult to use the full capacity of your lungs. The loss of ability to take complete satisfying breaths may occur so slowly over time that you may not even realize what you are missing. The practice of yogic breathing allows you to experience the health benefits of breathing more fully.

Why not skip the New Year's resolutions this year and make room for a yoga practice that has the potential to truly change your life? All classes offered at Blooming Yoga are appropriate for students of all levels. Please see the schedule at right for a list of winter classes. Call 656-0842 or email [hilleges@twcny.rr.com](mailto:hilleges@twcny.rr.com) for more information or to register.

### **Winter Yoga Schedule**

#### **Mondays, 6:00 pm - 7:15 pm**

Dec. 13, 20, 27  
Jan. 3, 10, 17, 24, 31  
Feb. 7, 14, 21, 28  
Mar. 7, 14, 21, 28

#### **Tuesdays, 6:00 pm - 7:15 pm**

Dec. 7, 14, 21, 28  
Jan. 4, 11, 18, 25  
Feb. 1, 8, 15, 22  
Mar. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

#### **Wednesdays, 8:45 am - 10:00 am**

Dec. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29  
Jan. 5, 12, 19, 26  
Feb. 2, 9, 16, 23  
Mar. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

\$10 per class with preregistration for the month • \$12 drop in  
Class size limited to eight

**Certified Kripalu Yoga Teacher**