

Collaboration

JOURNAL OF THE INTEGRAL YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER

50th Anniversary



Let beauty be your constant ideal.
The beauty of the soul
The beauty of sentiments
The beauty of thoughts
The beauty of the action
The beauty in the work
... so that nothing comes out of your hands which is not an expression
of pure and harmonious beauty.

—THE MOTHER, *On Education, Collected Works of the Mother*, vol. 12
(Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, 2002), p. 232



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Collaboration

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SRI AUROBINDO ASSOCIATION BOARD: Mateo Needham, president; Susan Curtiss, secretary; John Robert Cornell, treasurer; Jonathan Kay and Lynda Lester, directors.

Contributors

JOHN ROBERT CORNELL has been a board member of the Sri Aurobindo Association since 2009. He was lead editor and designer for the spring 2020 revision of *Collaboration* journal, and has worked on its editing and design teams since then. He has written for *Collaboration* since 1991. He has a special interest in *Savitri* and the yoga in America.

CLIFF GIBSON was introduced to Integral Yoga in 1970 in Boston by Mickey Finn [see p. 34] and lived for one year at Matagiri Sri Aurobindo Center in upstate New York. He interviewed several Matagirians in a fascinating set of interviews called "How Have We Changed?" that appeared in the Spring and Summer 1989 issues of *Collaboration*. He also edited a book called *Sunil: The Mother's Musician* about the Sri Aurobindo Ashram composer whose New Year's music has inspired countless devotees. <https://auro-ebooks.com/sunil-the-mothers-musician/>

ERIC HUGHES went to Pondicherry and had profound spiritual experiences from his contact with the Mother that changed his life. He cofounded Matagiri Sri Aurobindo Center with Sam Spanier on 48 acres outside of Woodstock, New York, and read deeply in Sri Aurobindo and Mother's published works. He also translated the 13 volumes of *Mother's Agenda* into English from the original French, contributing to the official translation, and compiled a set of quotes from Sri Aurobindo and the Mother in the book *On Collective Yoga*.

DAVID HUTCHINSON is a lifelong sadhak [practitioner] of Integral Yoga who lives in Sacramento, California. He had a career in pediatric nursing and informatics at the University of California Davis Medical Center. After studying Sanskrit at the California Institute of Asian Studies in San Francisco, he participated in All USA Meeting (AUM) Integral Yoga conferences, edited *Collaboration*, moderated multiple online forums, and organized local study groups. He returns regularly to *Savitri*, *The Life Divine*, and *The Synthesis of Yoga*. Currently he is working on becoming fluent in French.

M. ALAN KAZLEV is an esotericist, integral philosopher, sci-fi enthusiast, vegan, animal and nature lover, and author of a number of websites, books, and essays. He explores diverse topics such as Eastern philosophy, Western esotericism, cosmic evolution, mythopoesis, popular culture, and more recently AI. He lives in Victoria state, Australia, where he is working on several new books and projects.

GORDON KORSTANGE has been an editor of three journals: *Collaboration*, the *Foundation for World Education Newsletter*, and *AVI Connect*. As a Peace Corps volunteer in Tamil Nadu, he had darshan of the Mother and then lived in Auroville with his wife Jeanne for seven years. He was a member of the group that put together the first All-USA-Meeting (AUM) at the Merriam Hill Center in New Hampshire. Gordon lives with Jeanne in Saxtons River, Vermont.

JULIAN LINES first visited Matagiri Sri Aurobindo Center in May 1972. He was responsible for printing and mailing *Collaboration* in the mid-eighties and continues to write articles from time to time. Julian and his wife Wendy are in residence at Matagiri and serve on its board of trustees.

LYNDA LESTER is a director of the Sri Aurobindo Association (SAA), a member of SAA's Digital Media Group, and a member of the editorial and design team for *Collaboration* journal. She has given numerous presentations on yoga and consciousness around the U.S., several of which are available on SAA's YouTube page, including "Our Many Selves," "The Union of Spirit and Matter," and "From Sri Aurobindo to the Grateful Dead." <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMH0Mxu1wEGIT4kw6OrCqsQ>

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LARRY SEIDLITZ, a devotee and scholar of Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's yoga, is informally associated with the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and Auroville. From 2004 until 2020 he was editor of *Collaboration*. Since 2004 he has worked for the Sri Aurobindo Centre for Advanced Research (SACAR), and since 2022 has been editor of *Invocation*, a journal published by Savitri Bhavan in Auroville, where he also conducts a Sunday study circle and monthly presentations on *Savitri*.

JOHN SCHLORHOLTZ feels extremely grateful to have had the opportunity, for more than 15 years, to gather weekly in the modest apartment of Mickey Finn [see p. 34] to read *Savitri* aloud and meditate along with a small group of sadhaks.

CAROLYN TOBEN is an educator, counselor, author, and a founder of Timberlake Earth Sanctuary. She also founded the Center for Education, Imagination, and the Natural World, a work inspired by the distinguished cultural historian, author, and priest, Thomas Berry. During her long friendship with Thomas Berry, Carolyn spent many hours with him in deep discussions about his profound insights and experiences regarding the human-earth-Divine relationship. *Recovering a Sense of the Sacred* is based on her personal notes and reflections from these conversations.



EDITORIAL

Celebrating 50 Years of Collaboration

IN THIS ISSUE, WE MARK the 50th anniversary of *Collaboration*—a cause for celebration! It seems remarkable that *Collaboration* has been published for five decades! From its humble beginnings as a mimeographed newsletter, the journal has grown into the beautiful publication we enjoy today. In this milestone issue, we include commentaries by former and current editors of *Collaboration* as well as memorable articles selected from the archives.

The “Reflections, Past and Future” section starts out with a set of observations from *Collaboration*’s Editorial Advisory Board called “What *Collaboration* Has Meant to Me,” showing how *Collaboration* has been an inspiration for spiritual practice, a source of community, and, most recently, an opportunity for collective yoga.

“How It All Began: The Origin of *Collaboration* Journal” is the story of how *Collaboration*’s founding editor Eric Hughes first began publishing *Collaboration* at the Matagiri Sri Aurobindo Center in upstate New York.

In “A Center Being Any Place You Live: Editing *Collaboration* from 1982–95,” Gordon Korstange tells how *Collaboration* facilitated communication among those who had spent time in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and Auroville and helped to build Integral Yoga community in the USA and Canada.

In “The Arc of *Collaboration*: A Look at Changing Times,” Lynda Lester shares highlights of her tenure as editor and notes some of the changes in the collective mood of the Auro-sphere and the world at large over the past 50 years.

“A Reflection on My Work for *Collaboration*” is Larry Seidlitz’s account of how he came to edit *Collaboration*. He describes his experiences writing, soliciting, and editing material; highlights noteworthy articles; and acknowledges the many authors who contributed.

Turning from the past to the future, “*Collaboration* Alive: Revisioning the Journal for the 2020s and

Beyond” is a contemplative essay from John Robert Cornell that speaks about the editorial team’s dreams to make *Collaboration* wider, richer, and deeper. “What does the Time-spirit intend for this journal of Integral Yoga in the 2020s?” he asks. He also notes that there is a tangible relationship field among team members, a perceptible collective feeling of service to the Divine. “*Collaboration*” then takes on a double meaning: the journal and the field of collaborating together.

The next section, “Select Articles from the *Collaboration* Archive,” features several outstanding pieces the editors consider worth a second read.

First is “The Word,” an inspired essay by Eric Hughes detailing how the writings and conversations of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother transmit a transformative vibration. Eric writes that Sri Aurobindo’s works are like “a mighty flood of light” and his power of expression is breathtaking, luminous, and brilliantly coherent. Likewise, in the Mother’s *Agenda* we discover “a spectrum of spiritual experience and life so broad and encompassing as to stagger the reader”—evidence of an inner life of breathtaking vastness and complexity that unsheaths a radiant divine energy.

In “On the Lam from the Divine,” John Schlorholtz and Clifford Gibson interview Mickey Finn, documenting the remarkable story of a soldier, thief, con artist, and heroin addict whose discovery of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother changed his life. This is a wild tale that has captivated spiritual seekers for decades.

“Sri Aurobindo: Inside, Outside, Upside Down” by David Hutchinson is a poignant telling of how Sri Aurobindo can touch us in the deepest parts of our being. Sri Aurobindo “has guided my body along dark mountain trails, steadied my emotions in the face of physical danger, and filled my being with joy in the midst of great suffering,” David writes. “Once Sri Aurobindo awakens those hidden places, your life will be changed forever.... Find him, meet him, identify



AI digital art by Dana Lichtstrahl

yourself with him, and your life will change in ways you cannot even imagine.”

We have also selected “Seeds of the Future,” in which Carolyn Toben asks religious scholar Thomas Berry what he would say to future generations. He replies, “Tell them in the darkness of this time, a vast transformation is occurring in the depths of human consciousness, which is leading to the recovery of the soul, the Earth, the universe and a sense of the sacred”; he goes on to share a number of visionary insights.

When the editors reviewed five decades of *Collaboration* in search of a few features to reprint, we found a treasure trove of material that far exceeded our ability to fill just one issue. Thus we have compiled a list of “Recommended Reading from the First 50 Years of

Collaboration,” a selection of excellent articles that can be found in the *Collaboration* archive: <https://www.collaboration.org/journal/issues/>. Check them out!

To conclude our anniversary review of *Collaboration*, we have included “Apropos Highlights, 1995–2004,” a compilation of uplifting and amusing quotes related to yoga and contemporary life.

Lastly, on the back cover we offer a sonnet from Sri Aurobindo called “The Call of the Impossible” that mirrors *Collaboration*’s aspiration to be a vessel for the truth, light, and beauty of the Divine.

The editors sincerely hope that our readers will enjoy reflecting on these reminiscences and fascinating articles from the past.—Lynda Lester and Martha Orton for the *Collaboration* editorial team