

President's Letter

Om Gam Ganapataye Namah!

Hello again dear friends of ACVA. Hope this letter finds you well and warm. Gosh, a lot has happened since our last edition! 2018 has been quite a year – one of the best, and worst, years ever, for me. And for ACVA, too. However -- we all taught a lot of priceless knowledge, and learned a lot, too.

Our college suffered a huge loss in 2018, with the deaths of both our president, and of our vice-president. In January, our strong and sweet scholar VP Jessica Sayles died. Then in late February, ACVA's beloved and brilliant President, Bill Levacy passed away. On a personal note, between these two crushing events, I also lost the love of my life, my first husband, Carl Benson, who died peacefully in my arms, in late January. But true love never dies, and the legacy of these wonderful people lives on.

So, the ACVA board of directors and faculty mourned our losses, re-grouped, and are continuing to carry on the mission of the college. On a lighter note, we have poured a tremendous amount of effort, time and heart into developing ACVA's new Learning Management System – which is very close to completion. We'll announce the launch of this new LMS in the next quarter.

ACVA has also graduated some really inspired and inspiring learners. We'll hear more from these alumni, about how they've used their Jyotish education, in future issues of this newsletter. Interestingly, in the process of guiding these students through the Jyotish Ratna, and Jyotish Prabhakara courses, the faculty has also learned a lot! I for one, am so encouraged by feedback from this new generation of jyotishis. They've been properly trained to use the knowledge of how the stars and planets operate, in order to help their fellow human beings. What could be a better use of the sacred science of Jyotisha? Bill and Jessica would be proud.

One of ACVA's signature accomplishments this past year was our co-sponsorship of the largest Astrology symposium in the world, the United Astrology Conference, which took place in Chicago, in May 2018. ACVA was honored to be designated as the sole sponsor for the Vedic Astrology classes there. Angela Pennington took on the heroic task of being ACVA's representative for UAC. She did a tremendous service to Jyotish in this capacity – and enabled many people to have first-time access to Jyotish knowledge in the process. ACVA and UAC are very grateful to Angela for her seva there.

There was an opportunity, on stage in the ballroom of the Marriott, to present a post-humous award to Dr. Bill. Bill was appreciated by his Western Astrology contemporaries, too. Thank you, Niranjan Babu, for the impressive award which the Raman Foundation also presented to him.

Thanks, also to Dennis Harness, President Emeritus of ACVA, along with Ronnie Dreyer, and Shoba Mohan who donated great lectures on "The Foundations of Jyotish" in support of ACVA, during "Organization Day" at UAC. ACVA friends and alumni Barry Rosen, Joni Patry, Edith Hathaway, and Sam Geppi also lectured. UAC 2018 was a huge success for all the sponsoring organizations! Special appreciation goes to my long-time friend, Ray Merriman (aka the "Godfather of Western Astrology") for always including and supporting Jyotish within the Western Astrology community. All of you rock!

ACVA is very grateful to everyone who has contributed their energy and wisdom in service of the Jyotir Vidya (the living essence of Jyotisha) through ACVA, this past year. It has been a group labor of love.

Special gratitude to our instructors: Christina Collins, Ronnie Gale Dreyer, Gary Gomes, Shoba Mohan, Angela Pennington, Patty Sanders, Komilla Sutton, Juliana Swanson, and Karina Weil. This distinguished faculty has been dedicated to instructing and guiding our students, even though they have their own busy practices and full lives. I feel honored to be in your company. All of you have taught me valuable lessons about getting through this past arduous year.

Another board member who has really taught me a lot this year, is Mrs. Swati Tipnis. Her patience in getting me somewhere within a million miles of understanding the complex technology needed to sustain a world-class online college has been truly remarkable. Because of her, my vocabulary now includes modern words I've never uttered before – so thank you dear Swati! Our web administrator, Elena, has kept the electronic wheels turning perfectly – and she, too, deserves every compliment we can offer. And our volunteers – you know who you are, and your contributions are priceless – thank you!

Our Komilla produced a wonderful conference, “Fresh Talents of Jyotish”, in San Francisco in early November. It was quite wonderful. Komilla offered some really talented speakers – some of whom I had never heard before – and were very worthwhile. Sunil John, of Saptarishis channel, presented a master class on Brighu Nandi Nadi that I am still thinking about!

And continuing the lighter note regarding conferences, our Dennis Harness hosted yet another “spiritual family reunion” for jyotishis, the now-annual Sedona Vedic Astrology Conference, in late November. Pt. Samavedula conducted a powerful Navagraha puja for us to open the event. And Dennis generously organized another heartfelt memorial for our dear late Dr. Bill, afterwards. It was wonderful to meet, in person, some of our students at SVAC.

Dr. Harness will be reprising SVAC again – yay! -November 22 – 25, 2019. I was delighted to see so many younger people at these three conferences! Jyotish is alive and well, I'm happy to report.

One final note on conferences: The British Association of Vedic Astrology (BAVA), ACVA's sister organization, will be holding their annual conference in London, April 19 – 24, 2019. I am thrilled to have accepted an invitation to lecture there. I'll be speaking on The Outer Planets. Please join us there, under the Easter full Moon – for a meeting of the minds and hearts, in England!

Peggy Levacy, Dr. Bill's widow, is offering his amazing library of Jyotish books for sale. You may contact her at: plevacy@gmail.com. He has some rare and wonderful books. I'm going to write her, too.

Finally, please consider ACVA in planning your year-end donations. If you have received value from Jyotish, please help us pass on this profound knowledge to posterity. We are a registered 501-C-3, not for profit corporation – dedicated to keeping the flame of Jyotish burning brightly for humanity. All of our officers are volunteers. Any amount will be well-used by the college. The newly formed “William Levacy Memorial Scholarship Fund” has already allowed one young scholar tuition in the Jyotish Ratna course, thanks to your generosity. Thanks, from all of us here at ACVA, in advance!

Perhaps at New Year's, we could all raise a glass and toast our absent friends. In the meantime, happy holidays, and a spectacular Solstice to all! And, as Tiny Tim so simply and elegantly proposed: “God Bless us, Everyone”

Fondly, Charlotte (Jyoti Devi)

