Sara’s comments on first draft:

REPORTING & WRITING

So far, so good - it seems like a nice story already.

Add more on yoga - data, sources, outside expertise. Talk about yoga trends, the Pew report. Show how this is part of a national or global movement.

I would like even more explanation on why he is so attracted to yoga that he would give up all he had before. You said “something was missing” - what and why did he feel this way? He addresses it in the quotes, but can you get deeper with him?

What is his daily life like now? What about his wife, family? Talk about his trips.

Can we talk to his wife? How about family or personal friends? Someone who has seen him through this transition.

Outside expert source - see email regarding Harvard speaker on campus to talk about the neurobiology of yoga

I’m emailing the event coordinator (Terry Wilson) early next week; she’s been off for a few days but sounded enthusiastic about the story when I emailed her and said she’d talk to Dr. Lazar about an interview!

**Reporter byline**: Claire Landsbaum

**Reporter contact info**: Phone: (281) 814-2284, [cdlvg9@mail.missouri.edu](mailto:cdlvg9@mail.missouri.edu), [clandsbaum@yahoo.com](mailto:clandsbaum@yahoo.com)

**Assigned word count: 500-600 vs. ACW**: 614

**Print Hed & Dek (give at least 3):**

**PrintHed1:** Living La Vida Yoga

**Dek1:** Businessman-turned-yoga-teacher describes his complex spiritual journey

**PrintHed2:** Say Om

**Dek2:** How one man’s spiritual journey began and ended with yoga

**PrintHed3:** The Wonders of Oneness

**Dek3:** How one man’s spiritual journey ended with yoga

**Web Hed & Dek (give 1)**:

**WebHed:** The Spirituality of Yoga

**Dek:** Businessman-turned-yoga-teacher Ken McRae describes his spiritual journey

**Story Links:** (at least 3 that could be embedded into story on website)

Sadhana practice information forum - <http://www.dharmacentral.com/forum/content.php?36-Daily-Sadhana>

Ken McRae website - <http://www.globalyogajourneys.com/aboutUs.html>

Kripalu Center website - <http://www.kripalu.org>

alleyCat website - <http://www.alleycatyoga.com>

Pew forum “No Religion” report - <http://www.pewforum.org/unaffiliated/nones-on-the-rise.aspx>

William Claassen website - <http://www.williamclaassen.com>

**Suggested Tweet**: Local yoga teacher Ken McRae has led an interesting life. Here’s how he went from Toronto computer consultant to Columbia yoga instructor.

**Suggested Facebook post**: Yoga is more than your average exercise regime. For some in Columbia, it’s a way to connect spiritually with the surrounding world. Local yoga instructor Ken McRae was called to yoga late in life, and dropped everything to answer that call. Now a teacher at alleyCat Yoga in Columbia, McRae describes how his spiritual journey began and ended with yoga.

**Suggested Web Excerpt**: Yoga is more than your average exercise regime. For some in Columbia, it’s a way to connect spiritually with the surrounding world. Local yoga instructor Ken McRae was called to yoga late in life, and dropped everything to answer that call. Now a teacher at alleyCat Yoga in Columbia, McRae describes how his spiritual journey began and ended with yoga.

**Two versions of a lede**:

1.) About two minutes into Daily Sadhana practice, things are winding to a close. Ken McRae’s recorded voice speaks: level, soothing. Yogic.

“Practicing yoga is about noticing,” he says. “Noticing thoughts, feelings, sensations in the body without any need to change them.”

McRae recites a Sadhana prayer and takes a deep breathe in. The recording ends with a strong “Om” and fades away to silence.

The problem with this lede is that it uses unfamiliar terms that should be unpacked for a reader, which is hard to do in a lede. Save for later. Also, I’m confused why his voice would be recorded.

2.) Ken McRae was a teenager browsing a bookshop when a red cover caught his eye: *Why Buddhism Works*. He picked up the book and flipped through it, sparking a lifelong interest in Eastern religions.

Years later, a successful businessman in Toronto, the memory of the book stirred in McRae’s mind. He was materially successful: a wealthy computer consultant with a half-million dollar house, a family, a dog and opera tickets. Despite this, he knew something was missing.

This one appeals to me more; then describe him in action later.

(segway into “Then he discovered yoga” paragraph)

**Body of the story**:

About two minutes into [Daily Sadhana practice](http://www.dharmacentral.com/forum/content.php?36-Daily-Sadhana), things are winding to a close. [Ken McRae](http://www.globalyogajourneys.com/aboutUs.html)’s recorded voice speaks: level, soothing. Yogic.

“Practicing yoga is about noticing,” he says. “Noticing thoughts, feelings, sensations in the body without any need to change them.”

McRae recites a Sadhana prayer and takes a deep breathe in. The recording ends with a strong “Om” and fades away to silence.

Twenty years ago, McRae noticed something missing in his own life. He was living in Toronto, Canada at the time, a successful computer consultant with a business degree, a half-million dollar house, opera tickets and a dog. It was pleasant, he says.

Then he discovered yoga. He took his first class shortly before Christmas of 1988, with a free pass that he’d kept in his sock drawer for three years. Afterwards, everything changed.

“My way of experiencing my life started to change,” he says, “almost as if my eyes were opened, almost like Dorothy going from a black and white world to a colored world.”

McRae was drawn to how yoga made him feel. He enrolled in a 750-hour yoga teacher training program in Toronto and eventually quit his job, sold his house, opera tickets and dog and moved with his wife to the [Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health](http://www.kripalu.org) in Lenox, Massachusetts.

He trained there as a monk for five years, living sparsely, before embarking on a spiritual tour through India, Bali and Italy. What happened to his wife? What did she do during this time? How and when did he end up in Columbia? Where did he grow up? These days McRae lives in Columbia and teaches at [alleyCat Yoga](http://www.alleycatyoga.com). How long has he taught there? What’s the place like?

McRae is one among [rising numbers of Americans](http://www.pewforum.org/unaffiliated/nones-on-the-rise.aspx) who view yoga as something spiritual. An ancient Eastern practice that involves postures of the body, meditation and a sense of ‘oneness’ that spills over into everyday life, yoga is much more than an exercise program, and its message appeals to many.

Yoga postures regulate a person’s energy flow, and channel the life force into different areas of the body, like an irrigation system. Be careful of stating things like this factually when it should probably be attributed.

“It’s just a very different approach to body, in my opinion, to soul, to mind,” says [William Claassen](http://www.williamclaassen.com), a student at alleyCat. “~~I mean~~ it’s all about connecting those things together, as opposed to isolating them.”

A regular in McRae’s classes, Claassen says that McRae is the finest yoga teacher he’s ever worked with. has he worked with many?

“The consciousness level that he has I’ve found in very few yoga teachers,” he says. “(Ken has) an awareness about the people who are there, an awareness about the space, an awareness about the music, and certainly an awareness about moving from one posture to another in a very logical manner.”

The postures release the desire to control one’s surroundings. What does this mean? This induces a sense of ‘oneness,’ or the understanding that everything is related to everything else — we all stem from the same life force.

When you’re one with everything, McRae says, life is “okay” exactly the way it is. There’s no need to intervene. Things show up the way they show up, and that’s that.

“This feeling deep inside that I get is so much more than any material or accomplishment could ever provide for me,” McRae says. “And once you’ve tasted that, why would you not want more of that? When it’s far beyond anything in the material world?”

McRae says he would never go back to where he was 20 years ago. His material accomplishments were many, his worldview small.

Nowadays, things are different. McRae shares his spiritual growth with practicing students, but never invites new people to class. What does that mean?

“I don’t want to ruin their life!” he laughs, “or change their life and introduce them to something that’s so much more.”

His students follow their own path to yoga, just as he did years before.

**Sidebar or Info Box if needed**:

(Not sure if he’ll want these advertised)

Ken McRae’s alleyCat Yoga Classes

When: Thursday, 5:30-6:45 p.m.; Friday, 4:30-5:45 p.m.; Saturday, 10:30-11:45 a.m.

Where: 23 South 4th Street

Cost: $13-16

Call: 864-4132

Online: [alleycatyoga.com](http://www.alleycatyoga.com/index.html)

**Sources**: Make sure you include their Facebook pages, Twitter handles, websites etc. in addition to phone and email. Include when, where and how you interviewed the person. (By phone, email, in person; at the office, home, etc.)

**1.) Ken McRae** - in-person interviews, 2/25, 3/20, 3/21

Instructor, AlleyCat Yoga (internationally licensed)

Director, Global Yoga Journeys

Phone: 441-0848

Email: [athayoga@yahoo.com](mailto:athayoga@yahoo.com)

Online: <http://www.globalyogajourneys.com/aboutUs.html>, <http://www.columbiatribune.com/arts_life/pulse/finding-the-perfect-yoga-class-can-help-mind-body/article_24088846-fba7-5345-ac45-baff90de497a.html>

**2.) William Claassen** - phone interview, 3/19

Yoga student, local author

Phone: 449-8764

Email: [william\_claassen@yahoo.com](mailto:william_claassen@yahoo.com)

Online: <http://www.williamclaassen.com/index.html>

**3.) Althea Harris** - phone interview, 3/19 - what did she tell you?

Yoga student, meditation instructor

Phone: 314-680-9785

Email: [amharris6@gmail.com](mailto:amharris6@gmail.com)

**4.) Erika Patterson** - working on contacting (she left me a voicemail)

Yoga student

Phone: 356-5536

Email: [drpatterson70@gmail.com](mailto:drpatterson70@gmail.com)

Online: <http://studenthealth.missouri.edu/needtoknow/meethestaff/patterson.html>

**Did you contact Jen Rowe for her friend who takes classes and has traveled with Ken?**

**Yes, it’s actually two friends-of-friends and I’m working on contacting them now**

**Documents as Sources**: (links or copies of data, reports, records; must include statistical support for your story)

**1.) A survey by the Pew Forum:**<http://www.pewforum.org/unaffiliated/nones-on-the-rise.aspx> - The number of Americans who claim no religious affiliation is on the rise; some of these believe in the spirituality of yoga as a religious experience. “Roughly three-in-ten religiously unaffiliated adults say they believe in spiritual energy in physical objects and in yoga as a spiritual practice.” Put this in the story.

**2.) A study by the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine about the health benefits of yoga:**<http://nccam.nih.gov/health/yoga/introduction.htm>

Overall, yoga is shown to be beneficial for health.

This too.

**Media Support**: (news articles on your general topic) include references to some of this as well

Community discussion of yoga as a spiritual practice in the *Huffington Post*:<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/07/13/is-yoga-a-spiritual-pract_n_1632532.html>

“Yoga Class Draws a Religious Protest,” *New York Times*:<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/16/us/school-yoga-class-draws-religious-protest-from-christians.html?_r=0>

“Bending yoga to fit their worship needs,” *Los Angeles Times*:<http://articles.latimes.com/2010/apr/05/local/la-me-beliefs-yoga5-2010apr05>

“Hindu Group Stirs Debate Over Yoga’s Soul,” *New York Times:*

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/28/nyregion/28yoga.html?pagewanted=all>