

Mindful News



Newsletter of the Mindfulness Community of Puget Sound

Winter 2005

Slowing Down

by Jonathan Prescott

The annual MCPS Fall Retreat at Camp Indianola provided a wonderful transition between the busyness of daily life and the peaceful openness of retreat. I began at home, checking the ferry schedule and traffic backups on my computer so as not to 'waste' time leaving too early or having to endure the stress of missing a ferry. I inched towards Seattle in a river of red brake lights and, checking my watch, wondering if I'd make the ferry. Having to drive less than the speed limit increased my impatience. Once on the ferry (whew!), I followed my breath in the car where there was less distraction for my jittery mind.

The country highways on Bainbridge Island slowed my thinking and simplified my choices. Unable to look for a faster lane, I resigned myself to the flow. A sigh of relaxation escaped as I drove over the Agate Passage Bridge. The roads became smaller, the speed limits lower, and the scenery more beautiful as I reached Indianola and left

paved roads, driving the last mile on a winding path through the woods (speed limit: 12 ½ mph). As I gathered my belongings from the car and walked towards the Zendo, my steps became progressively slower and more mindful until, standing at the kitchen door, I realized that I had arrived.



Retreatants at the the Fall 2004 Camp Indianola retreat

*Happiness is here and now
I have dropped my worries.
No where to go, nothing to do
No longer in a hurry.*

Slowing down made me realize how exhausted I was. After two months of chasing a busy work schedule my body had had enough. Every free moment became an opportunity to rest. The first late sitting became such a struggle to stay awake that I listened to my body and went to bed.

By the third day, I was able to take refuge in the daily flow of retreat life. Energy was returning to my body and I was excited to get out of bed. The sameness of the days allowed me to let go of having to be somewhere or accomplish something. I could simply listen:

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Mindful News is the voice of the Mindfulness Community of Puget Sound, a Sangha that practices Buddhism in the tradition of Thich Nhat Hanh. It is published three times a year. May it be for the benefit of all beings.

Teacher: Eileen Kiera
Practice Elder: Sue Perkins
Board President: Doria Reagan
Vice President: Teresa Murphy
Board Secretary: Anita Graham
Treasurer: Brad Olmstead

Committees:

Retreats: Michael Melancon
Orientation: Teresa Lutterman
Newsletter Editors: Ellie Graham, Jessica Logan, Teresa Lutterman, Jenny Ogier, Mary Cushman
Volunteer Coordinator: Erie Jones
Monday Night Program: Doria Reagan, Naoto Kosugi, Jon Prescott
Days of Mindfulness: Ellie Graham
Wednesday night sit & TTS liaison: Ellie Graham
Center Coordinating Committee: Anita Graham, Naoto Kosugi

If you have any questions or want further information, please call us at 206-324-5373 or visit our website at www.mindfulnesspugetsound.org

Our weekly program, which usually includes two periods of sitting, walking, and a Dharma talk or community dialogue, is every Monday from 6:30 to 8:30 PM at our center at 1910 24th Ave. S. We have a Day of Mindfulness on the third Sunday of most months from 10 AM to 5 PM. All are welcome.

We welcome contributions to the newsletter. Please email ideas to lutterman@comcast.net. Please contact Brad Olmstead at brad@happy-o.net to be added or removed from the mailing list.

Only Be Flickering Mind

by Michael Melancon

Flickering flame
Reflects Flickering Mind

Willing Flicker to settle
Does not make it so

Being Flicker
Trims and measures wick.

Steady flame burns quietly.



“Don’t judge each day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds you plant.”

— Robert Louis Stevenson



Work Meditation at Mountain Lamp Day of Mindfulness in October.

Garage Renovation

by Anita Graham

This renovation project began this past summer. It arose out of a wish by our teacher, Eileen Kiera and TTS's teacher Jack Duffy and the respective sanghas to have a larger and more appropriate interview space and a place to sleep over. Also, our teacher and others have envisioned the space being utilized for children's programming. This would be especially welcome to Sangha members with young children who want to attend Days of Mindfulness and regularly scheduled sitting practice periods. The Seattle Practice Center Coordinating Committee has made every effort to have the Practice Center and the garage have compatible exteriors and interiors.



The garage is already transformed thanks to the work of many. David Tower did the major interior framing and installation of windows and skylights. Erie Jones did the wiring. There has been a dedicated group of work party participants who have done jobs like roofing and insulation. Wall boarding by professional contractors is scheduled for November 22 and should be fully completed as you read this. Interior painting and installation of the floor will be next with opportunities to contribute your labor in work parties.

It is our hope that the space will be ready for use by the time of the Diamond Sangha Dharma Teachers gathering scheduled for February 24-28, 2005.

Stay tuned for the next phase of the project, which will include designing a ramp and a porch for the garage. Because of budget limitations there will be a fund-raising push for this phase. Current ideas for fund-raising include a donation box in our kitchen and a delectable gourmet meal provided by culinary artists in our Sangha. Further ideas for fund-raising will be most welcome. Practice Center Coordinating Committee members to contact are: Naoto Kosugi, Mike Melancon and Anita Graham.

Home for Sale in the Mountain Lamp neighborhood

Eileen's neighbors are selling their home and have offered a 3% discount to sangha members. Here are the details:

It is a 1800 square foot house with two baths, sitting on 13 acres on Lake Jorgensen. Asking price: \$279,000. It's listed with Mark Anderson Realty, 306-592-5181. A special bonus is that it's a great neighborhood for meditators, with daily sitting, and frequent other events next door at Mountain Lamp.

MCPS Present, Past and Future

by Eileen Kiera

MCPS dwells in the present moment, but as we enter the year 2005, our Sangha is taking time to look at our history, and our future. I've been going through old documents and memories recently and wanted to write down the story of our Sangha, as I remember it, and as it's reflected in the minutes of many years of meetings.

The first green shoot that was to become MCPS broke ground in winter 1991, when I led a weekend viewing of a retreat on video that Thay had given on Buddhist Psychology in Boulder Colorado. A group of 20 people gathered at the Urban Horticulture Center at the University of Washington, and watched four videos, morning and afternoon on Saturday and Sunday. In between videos, we practiced sitting meditation, and discussed what we'd seen. A small group who wanted to follow Thay's teaching, formed during that weekend. The new Sangha began meeting weekly on Sunday nights and monthly on the third Sunday for Days of Mindfulness. We called ourselves the Peach Tea Sangha because we drank peach tea during our gatherings.

The group met first in the basement of a south Seattle Catholic Church, then later in people's homes. Our Days of Mindfulness were held at St. Thomas Retreat Center in Juanita, now home to Bastyr College. The Days of Mindfulness felt like mini-retreats, as we separated from our lives in the city and enjoyed quiet sitting and long walks through the forest and along Lake Washington. Gradually our numbers grew, and a second sitting group formed on Monday nights in Seattle.

By 1995, a third group was sitting on Monday nights, and it was decided that it would be best if we could find a public place for sitting where we could all join together on Monday nights. At that time, the Three Treasures Sangha was meeting at Pacem en Terris on Capitol Hill, and they welcomed us to share their meditation space for our weekly sitting. We continued to hold our

days of Mindfulness at St. Thomas. In the spring, we held the first retreat at Camp Indianola, with 6 people from the Sangha attending. The next fall, over 20 people attended what became the tradition of twice yearly retreats at Indianola.

In 1996, we formed an ad hoc committee to look into incorporating as a non-profit church, under the laws of the State of Washington, and in the eyes of the IRS. A large committee was formed. We invited everyone to join, asking only for a willingness to participate and a commitment to attend meetings throughout the process. We began by gathering by-laws and articles of incorporation from many different Buddhist groups, then calling representatives of these groups to ask them what worked for them and what didn't, what reflected their reality and what was based on idealism. From this information, we put together an initial draft of governance, and brought it to the Sangha for their input. Another re-writing, and in the summer of 1996, while gathered under an old apple tree, the Sangha as a whole approved the document on a 6-month trial basis. Under our new by-laws, we officially changed the Sangha's name to Mindfulness Community of Puget Sound.

During this same time, we came up with a budget, established membership policies, set up a bank account, signed a teacher's contract, and began looking for a new place to meet on Monday nights. It was an exhilarating time in the life our community, and I continue to feel grateful to the many people who contributed so many hours to the process.

In the mid-90's, many Seattle Buddhist groups were looking for regular meditation spaces. We joined with four other groups in this search, hoping to find a place to share with other people who were practicing meditation. We didn't have much money, so we only really considered renting a facility, but then the house on 24th Ave. S. was

found. Three Treasures was ready to buy, but needed a partner. Through a \$10,000 no interest loan, and generous gifts from many Sangha members, we came up with \$15,000, our half of the down-payment, and became partners in owning the Seattle Practice Center. It was a huge and challenging step for such a young Sangha, a step we made with the confidence that arises naturally from our practice.

From the first days of ownership, the two Sanghas worked together to improve and make our center a home for practice. A Three Treasures' member designed a new garden. Many work days later, a patch of grass became our walking meditation garden. Inside the house, a wall was torn down to open up one of the bedrooms to increase our sitting space. Money was being raised to totally re-do the interior of the house, and to pay off our 5 year balloon payment, due in 2002. A generous gift of \$50,000 and a no-interest loan of \$25,000, as well as many other contributions, made it possible to tear down the walls and make one large meditation hall, and to re-do the kitchen and entry way. In fall of 2003, we celebrated the long work of fundraising and remodeling the old house into the beautiful space we enjoy today. And even still the work continues with the garage becoming a new interview, and community-gathering space. Contributions made to the Sangha these days go towards finishing this project and building a covered walkway between the main house and community space. It is with your continued generosity that we are able to make our home in practice a reality for many people.

During these years of owning and remodeling the center, we have continued to develop our mindfulness practice through Monday night sittings, regular Days of Mindfulness, and retreats at Indianola and Mountain Lamp (there lies another story). People come and go: we have lost beloved members to illness and death, to changes in jobs and moves to new cities, to normal

attrition. And still the Sangha endures. This next year, we will begin to look at what we've become, and take time to evaluate our practice and our organization. The questions we will be asking will include whether the committees that support our practice are functioning, whether our by-laws reflect the way we are operating today, and what new ways our organization can support us to deepen in practice. I invite you to contact me directly with your thoughts about our Sangha, and ideas and dreams you may have for the future. Please email me at wildrosefarm@seanet.com. I will be sharing your ideas with others, so please let me know if you want anonymity and/or confidentiality.



*Buddha head at Mountain Lamp
January 2005
Photo by Eileen Kiera*

A Move for Sue and John

by Sue Perkins

In late January, my husband John and I will move north to Deming to become guest managers for Mountain Lamp Community. We're looking forward to living in a place dedicated to practice and spending time with time teachers Eileen Kiera and Jack Duffy. John will do most of the guest manager duties while I continue my consulting business from my home office. We will both help to facilitate days of mindfulness and retreats.

I expect to be in Seattle at least once a month for business, so I'll be able to attend some Monday sittings as well as MCPS retreats. Mountain Lamp is MCPS's rural practice center and I hope to continue to practice with you there. We warmly invite you to join us for the scheduled monthly practice days and retreats. You can also arrange to stay at the hermitage for a personal retreat or just to visit, joining us for our daily morning practice. The Mountain Lamp phone number is (360) 592-0600.

Sue is the Practice Elder for MCPS. She and John were married at Mountain Lamp in August of 2003.

To show our affection and gratitude for Sue and John, there will be a work part on Saturday January 22. We will be helping them with their move. Details will be announced via email and at the Seattle Practice Center.

Recycle with FreeCycle!

by Teresa Lutterman

I needed to get rid of several cement landscape blocks of various shapes and sizes. I knew there was a place that recycles cement, but you need to deliver the cement to them and there is a charge. I did a little research on the Internet and found FreeCycle. I joined the group, posted my "offered" add, and found a lady who was very happy to come to my house and pick up all my blocks!

Since then, I've been able to recycle many items that might otherwise have been thrown away. Find more information at:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FreeCycleCKC/>

Notes from the Board

by Teresa Lutterman

The MCPS board met on November 22 and discussed the issues of sangha finance, the garage remodel and volunteers.

Our ongoing bank balance is projected to be lower than what we need to meet our minimum commitment of \$4,000. One solution was a more consistent reminder for dana on Monday nights, plus a better location for the dana bowl. Changing the way retreats are funded (requiring a larger deposit, requiring the fee paid in full up front, etc.) was discussed.

The garage remodel is progressing well, but an additional \$7,500 is needed to finish. Three Treasures Sangha will provide \$4,500 in January. Fund raising will be needed to make up the difference. ***MCPS is in need of leadership, ideas and volunteers to make this happen, and interested people should contact Anita Graham at 206-431-8308.***

Ellie Graham will be assembling the 2005 calendar.

Naoto Kosugi proposed purchasing selected CDs from Thay's Winter 2003 Deer Park Retreat. The idea is being referred to Eileen, Mike Melancon and the Practice Committee.

Sangha jobs and Board positions are in need of being filled.

Important Meeting on Monday, February 28

Please plan on attending the All Sangha meeting on February 28 to discuss the "state of the Sangha" and elect Board members. The meeting will be during held during our normal Monday night meeting time, 6:30 to 8:30 pm.

JOINT SANGHA MEETING – OCTOBER 16, 2004

by Jenny Ogier

Seventeen members of the Mindfulness Community of Puget Sound and Three Treasures Sangha came together for the semiannual joint sangha meeting on the evening of October 16, 2004 at the Seattle Practice Center.

The agenda presented had 10 items, whose interconnectedness (no independent origins) became apparent as the meeting proceeded. Doria Reagan facilitated with help from others.

The first item was a proposal to continue the disabilities workshop, held in September 2004, on an on-going basis. Participants wanted to continue discussions of disability, suffering and healing in the context of practice. Discussion of continuing the workshop brought up issues of parking and practice center usage. A more explicit proposal for ongoing workshops was asked for, to then be voted on by the boards of each sangha.

The question of possible governance restructuring was discussed with three options being presented:

- 1) leave the structure as it is, but add more meeting to create more cooperation between the sanghas;
- 2) decrease individual board and sangha meetings and increase the number of joint board and sangha meetings. This would require by-law changes (re the number of meetings);
- 3) make the Coordinating Committee a board and have individual sangha committees doing different things. This would have the effect of dissolving the two practice groups as separate entities, and making the Practice Center one legal entity. This would necessitate changes in insurance.

After discussion it was proposed that further research be done on proposal #3, obtaining legal and insurance advice regarding the creation of a single entity.

The next item discussed was the issue of zoning and rental options. This discussion brought in the issue of parking. Until our zoning is clarified as to whether it is residential, commercial or church it was agreed that events held at the center would be limited to “first circle” and “second circle” events – those open to members of the community, friends and special events such as weddings, funerals, birth celebrations in which one of the teachers is present. At this time there will be no advertising of events in the outside community.

In discussing parking, it became apparent that more information is needed regarding present possibilities and future property expansion and acquisition. To accomplish this, two things were proposed:

- 1) Eileen Kiera will continue to pursue obtaining a written right of first refusal agreement with our neighbor to the south of the center. There already is a verbal agreement between the neighbor and Eileen.
- 2) A new committee, the Futures Committee, is being formed to look into zoning issues, parking problems, exploring other properties in the area and the legalities of all of this. Mike Allen has agreed to be the contact person. Anyone interested in helping with this, or anyone with expertise in these areas, please contact Mike at 206-632-8834.

It was also agreed to continue the current policy of parking one block from the center.

A garage update was presented.

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Monday Night Schedule for MCPS, January through April 2005

January 2005

Jan. 3: Beginning Anew Ceremony led by Sue Perkins
January 10: Orientation at 5:30, Small group discussions - The Meaning of Sangha
January 17: Celebration of Sue Perkins as she transitions to Mt. Lamp
January 24: Three periods of sitting followed by Guided Relaxation
January 31: Potluck at 5:30, Community Gathering

February 2005

Feb 7: TBA
Feb 14: Orientation at 5:30, Dharma Talk by Eileen Kiera,
Feb 21: Dharma Talk by Eileen Kiera
Feb 28: Potluck at 5:30, Community Gathering

March 2005

March 7: Dharma Talk by Eileen Kiera
March 14: Orientation at 5:30, Dharma Talk by Eileen Kiera
March 21: Small Group discussions
March 28: Potluck at 5:30, Community Gathering

April 2005

Apr 4: TBA
Apr 11: Orientation at 5:30, Orientation at 5:30
Apr 18: TBA
Apr 25: Potluck at 5:30, Dharma Talk by Eileen Kiera

Contacts:

Monday Night Program: Doria Reagan, 206-728-7466
Orientation: Teresa Lutterman, 425-373-9332

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Edith Rohde spoke of a gratitude project to thank Jim Sheehan for his generous gift to the center's renovation project. The project is in the form of a book of collected sangha members' writings and artwork expressing their appreciation of the new center.

And lastly, Lee Shields offered to donate a stone Buddha head to the center. The head has been left on display in the kitchen until the Coordinating Committee makes a final decision on accepting and placing the sculpture.

The next joint sangha meeting will be held probably in the spring of 2005.

Newsletter Mailing List

You have the option of getting the newsletter via email in PDF form. This option saves us money! If you want to receive the newsletter by email, please inform Brad Olmstead at Brad@Happy-O.net.

To use our resources wisely, we periodically purge the mailing list. If it has been two years since you 1) requested to be on the mailing list or 2) made a donation or 3) attended at retreat, your name will be removed unless you request otherwise.

If you wish to be added or removed from the list, please email Brad.



Sanhga Brother's Video in MCPS Library

Guy Evans's documentary Broken Limbs is now available in our library. This was aired on PBS in September. You can learn more about it at www.brokenlimbs.org.

Mindfulness Community of Puget Sound Membership & Subscription Form

Yes, I would like to participate in the Mindfulness Community of Puget Sound as a:

Regular member: \$25/month (or whatever you can) to support practice center and activities.

(note—Regular Members pay reduced fees for retreats.)

Associate Members: \$10/year to defray cost of newsletter.

Supporting Member: Donation basis. Members who cannot attend regularly but would like to receive newsletter and support the Sangha financially.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone: (day) _____ (evening) _____

E-Mail _____

Return to MCPS, 1910 24th Ave. S, Seattle, WA 98144

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6:00 – wake to the delicate sound of the small bell;
6:20 – 10 bells invite us to gather;
6:30 – 3 long songs from the big bell settle and embrace us;
8:30 – a small bell cradled in the palm celebrates the arrival of breakfast;
9:15 – singing gathers us for our work meditation;
10:20 – 10 bells proclaim Eileen’s Dharma talk;
11:30 – lapping waves and crunching sand orchestrate our walking meditation;
12:30 – formal meal, with bells, gathas and 50 chews per bite;
1:30 – free time (fast footfalls stretching sore sitting legs);
3:00 – deep listening to Dharma discussion;
5:00 – 3 long, relaxing meditation bells;
6:30 – a tiny golden bowl sings to our appetites;
7:30 – 3 more deep sonorous bells settle us into the last meditation of the day;
9:30 – the same delicate bell that invited us out of bed 15 hours before, sends us back to sleep.



Retreat Dates for 2005

Here is a list of the retreats for the upcoming year:

Residential retreat at Camp Indianola with Eileen Kiera: March 25 – April 1.
Mountain Lamp retreat with Eileen: May 20 – 22.
Mountain Lamp retreat with Eileen: August 5 – 12.
Mountain Lamp retreat with Eileen: September 17 – 18 (This will be combined with a Day of Mindfulness at Mountain Lamp on September 17th.)
Non-residential retreat at the Seattle Practice Center with Eileen: November 4 – 6.



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1910 24th Ave. S.
Seattle, WA 98144

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