

Springs Mountain Sangha

The dharma rag

Volume 8, Issue 3

May/ June, 2005

Inside this Issue:

- ❖ *Joan's thank you*
- ❖ *Steering Committee Notes*
- ❖ *Voices: Your Submissions*
- ❖ *Letters to the Editor*
- ❖ *Community Call*
- ❖ *Calendar*



Andrew P

MY WARMEST THANKS TO ALL OF YOU WHO GAVE SO MUCH TIME AND ENERGY TO PUT ON THIS YEAR'S RESIDENCY. IT WAS QUITE A RICH MONTH, AND I'M GRATEFUL TO EVERYONE WHO PARTICIPATED WITH SUCH GOOD WILL. YOU ALL SHOULD BE VERY PROUD OF SPRINGS MOUNTAIN SANGHA –IT'S REALLY SOMETHING, YOU KNOW, AND I FEEL FORTUNATE TO BE ABLE TO SPEND THIS TIME WITH YOU EACH YEAR...

WITH LOVE,

JOAN



Andrew P

Springs Mountain Sangha's
Monthly Newsletter
The dharma rag
Editor: Judith Steed
Published the third week of
each month, mostly.

Submissions of articles related
to Buddhism are encouraged
from all readers and may be
sent to the editor at:

P.O. Box 60904

Colorado Springs, CO 80960
or at dharmarag@smszen.org.
Submission deadline is the
second Friday of each month.

Come visit our website @
www.smszen.org

LETTERS

May 10, 2005

Dear Sangha,

Not quite two weeks after watching Joan Sutherland's small white truck disappear onto a foggy highway, I feel a bit like a gardener surveying an assortment of plants ready to take their places in the garden. Joan brought us quite an array of questions to plant in our practices. Some were questions about joy: "Am I afraid of this happiness?" What is it like to take joy in each other's joy? What is it like when I can't, when I suffer "spasms of self-concern"? Other questions apply most pointedly to practice. What is it like to be host to this vast and most particular life? What baby am I welcoming when I celebrate Buddha's birthday? And some questions are directed specifically to the ways we bring our practice to bear on the particulars of life in these interesting times. What are the small but not always easy acts that I can offer now? How can we continue to strengthen ourselves as a group, so that we grow and also take care of ourselves and our relationships within the group?

In the wake of Joan's residency, some other questions tend to have keen edges, too: questions like how to find more ongoing support for individual practice, having felt so strongly how helpful Joan's teaching is; how to sustain and build on a practice that feels alive and essential, but demanding; and what about those times when daily life requires so much, and the "highs" of new discovery may be less accessible?

I'd like to offer a little advice and a couple of invitations.

Advice: Eddies of emotion that can follow a time of intense practice like the one we've just had seem to be an essential part of the experience for at least some of us. My experience is that if I take a little time with them, that helps. I haven't been swimming in a while, but I remember that after a good long swim, climbing out of the pool I'd feel a delicious heaviness. Within the space of a minute or two I'd get reacquainted with my land body, having shed it for a while to swim. This feels a little like that. This practice body is not just like my practice body before the

residency, it's a new thing -same body, somehow, but different somehow, too, and worth noticing.

Invitation: Just as the end of a residency period forces us to notice that each of us makes tracks alone, it can also highlight the yearning for company along the way. The sangha, this odd practice community we make together, thrives on the creative combination of individual practice and group support. I invite you to consider the balance for yourself. Does it feel good to you right now? Are there ways you'd like the sangha to support you better? Are there ways you'd like to offer your talents and energy to the group? In either case, you can help this community develop by letting steering committee members know what you'd like to do or to have done differently.

Another invitation: As your meditation instructor, I'd like to know how I can best support your practice. Would you like a class or discussion group offered on a particular theme? Would you welcome a Monday evening talk on a specific topic? Do you have questions you'd be most comfortable raising in a one-to-one discussion? I'd like to hear your ideas. You can write to me at sbender@corb.com.

Thanks for your strong practice in the activities of the past month and more. The encouragement we've offered each other by sharing so much real practice has been moving to witness, as well as deeply heartening to me, personally. I think I'll go on doing Zen some more.

Sarah



Andrew P

A Synopsis of Recent Steering Committee Meetings

As has been our practice the last couple of years, Joan sat in on our steering meeting while she was here in residence. We scheduled this meeting for the evening of the 26th, just at the end of the residency, and we examined how things had gone and how we might make adjustments next time. We put aside our usual business and took the time to check in with each other about our experiences of the residency and our part of the work thereof. Then we considered some options for improving the difficulties: That we didn't want to work Joan quite as hard or at least would like to give her a little more rest, and that we wanted to spread the work load and practice opportunities among the Sangha.

The first and obvious conclusion was that this residency was a step beyond previous efforts and extraordinary practice for many members. All three retreats were basically full and were very powerful. There were abundant practice opportunities on many levels: from classes at CC and an introductory, day-long event, through a deep 6 day retreat to the radical feast of the koan seminar, there was great, deep practice.

Next, we realized we could save ourselves some trouble and confusion by simply recording what we did and what was involved in this enterprise. As Joan said, it would be so much easier if we didn't have to reinvent this every time. So we planned a meeting to begin to generate a manual for doing residencies: I'll elaborate later in this article. The gist of our discussions was that this residency illustrated the limitations to our typical way of doing business.

We've been an informal group all along; we've resisted defining ourselves tightly, and prided ourselves on celebrating each member's offerings and weaving our nest from these offerings. We spent some time noticing and discussing the benefits and pitfalls of this orientation; that it makes a wide, accommodating group where various people can feel at home, but it can be ungainly. And it seemed clear that this level of endeavor, this month-long residency with its many

activities and locations, demands a more explicit level of organization.

Clay Taylor offered his experience with the Berkeley Zen Center and their many Practice Leader roles. In order to clarify the workload and distribute it effectively, it makes some sense to adopt some such form of organization. One decision we made at the meeting was that the committee would not plan any activity without a coordinator committed to it. This will hopefully serve as a reality check to assure that we have the energy and commitment to follow through on promises.

Some other concrete suggestions were that we explore putting Joan up in town to reduce her travel time, and open up some leisure opportunities like college concerts, etc. (in any case we need to build in a little more rest and support for the teacher). We'd also like to assign her a liaison for the period leading up to and including the residency. And at Sarah's invitation, we scheduled the next meeting for the 8th at her house to lay the groundwork for a residency manual.

Steering Committee and Residency Planning Meeting May 8th

At the invitation of the chair, a number of those active in putting on the residency gathered at Sarah's home on Sunday afternoon to brainstorm a manual for future residencies. This also served as our monthly steering meeting, and we're back to the second Sunday afternoon of the month for our regular meeting.

I would like to emphasize that we welcome any Sangha member to these meetings and would be happy to have new blood on the committee. There are a number of ways to become more involved in the life of the Sangha, this being one of them, and if you're interested please talk to me or another steering committee member.

Again, we didn't do our usual housekeeping at this meeting: selecting leaders for the month, scheduling longer sits, etc. We did check in again about everyone's piece of the work of the residency. This brought up a number of important points about details of the retreats: how we coordinate food, which jobs should be merged or separated, can one person cover this or does it need two.

We started with a list of roles, to specify the work in terms of who covers it. Then we moved on to the separate events of this residency, 14 of them in all, and began to look at what was involved with each one. Given time and fatigue, we didn't finish this, but felt that everyone was able to talk about pressing issues and clear their minds. The scope of this work became apparent, and we celebrated a job well done with blueberry pie and ice cream.

We look forward to writing a clear manual for the next residency, tentatively scheduled for the fall of 2006. We will publish some of the work in future issues of the rag or perhaps on the website. We scheduled our next meeting for the second Sunday of June, 1:00PM at Sarah's again, and welcome wide Sangha participation.

William Jeavons, for the Steering Committee, May 9

VOICES

What appears in the wake of springtime showers?
A field strewn with corpses, a field full of flowers.
My heart travels the vast chasm, gliding heavily
among the extremes.
The impartial, relentless sun pours down, shriveling
flesh, nourishing blossoms.
I pluck a few, still squirming, giving back to the
untouched radiance,
Leaving the rest to unravel their burden, indifferent.
All this time the wandering stream looks on,
Endlessly singing its ancient song--
Listen...

Andrew

Morning bell sounds through the spring snow
Reach behind my head to turn for the lamp
Lamp crashes to the floor

(this is a poem structure where you write a word vertically to act as the starting letter of the actual words of the poem:

Seeing
N
O
W

(I stopped here. ... Yes, I think I stopped!) Frank

"Please Call Me By My True Names"

By Thich Nhat Hanh

Do not say that I'll depart tomorrow
because even today I will arrive.

Look deeply: I arrive in every second
to be a bud on a spring branch,
To be a tiny bird, with wings still fragile,
learning to sing in my new nest,
to be a caterpillar in the heart of a flower,
to be a jewel hiding itself in a stone.

I still arrive, in order to laugh and to cry,
in order to fear and to hope.
The rhythm of my heart is the birth and
death of all that are alive.

I am the mayfly metamorphosing on the
surface of the river,
and I am the bird which, when spring
comes, arrives in time to eat the mayfly.

I am the frog swimming happily in the clear pond,
and I am also the grass-snake who,
approaching in silence,
feeds itself on the frog.
I am the child in Uganda, all skin and bones,
my legs as thin as bamboo sticks,
and I am the arms merchant, selling deadly
weapons to Uganda.

I am the twelve-year-old girl, refugee on a small boat,
who throws herself into the ocean after being raped by
a sea pirate,
and I am a member of the politburo, with plenty of
power in my hands,
and I am the man who has to pay his "debt of blood" to
my people,
dying slowly in a forced labor camp.

My joy is like spring so warm it makes flowers bloom in
all walks of life.
My pain is like a river of tears, so full it fills the four
oceans.

Please call me by my true names,
so I can hear all my cries and laughs at once.
so I can see that my joy and pain are one.

Please call me by my true names,

so I can wake up,
and so the door of my heart can be left open,
the door of compassion.

From Peace is Every Step by Thich Nhat Hanh
submitted by Lucinda

The sidewalk is covered with worms after last night's
rain, and the flowers have a renewed vibrancy.
Most of the worms have been squished by shoe or
bike tire and are drying up in the morning sun,
but as I walk along I notice some that are moist and
moving,
so I pick them up and toss them into the grass.
Worm Karma.
Maybe they'll work their way back into the soil,
enriching it in their way, allowing more things to
blossom and grow.
Anyway, the creek next to the path is full and rushing
along.
Regardless of how much water is in it, though, I
always enjoy its sound.

Andrew

To A Poor Old Woman
By William Carlos Williams

munching a plum on
the street a paper bag
of them in her hand

They taste good to her
They taste good
to her. They taste
good to her

You can see it by
the way she gives herself
to the one half
sucked out in her hand

Comforted
a solace of ripe plums
seeming to fill the air
They taste good to her
seeming to fill the air

Submitted by Lucinda

LETTERS FROM/ TO THE EDITOR

Dear Readers,

Remember this is an interactive newsletter and sangha. That is to say, it is not our intention that information run only one way. Information, ideas and engagement flow among us all. Check the website frequently for updates and events, for resources and opportunities. Each and every one of you is precious and we need each other.

As I have written before, this is your newsletter. It is a place where you can share your thoughts, ideas and observations and where you can read the thoughts, ideas and observations of your fellow travelers. I have this not so secret wish that as we share together, here and there, an idea or sharing might trigger in any of us an "ah-ha" or a "mmm." Please don't be stingy. You never know when what you share might be an opening for another.

The submission deadline is the third week of the month. Perhaps if we can get a head of steam, we can get back to monthly issues. Thank you all.

Gratefully, Judith

To The Editor, Judith Steed.

Meditation, recently at the S.M.S has brought much peace and tranquility to my life. Incense can add a sensual dimension; lately, it has taken a heavy toll on my senses causing sore throat, burning eyes, stuffy nose and the cold.

I am interested in learning if others are experiencing these incense-induced symptoms or if my senses are overreacting.

It seems to me as if I am walking into an incense-Cigar Bar.

I would like to hear your views from the desk of Judith, the editor of *dharmarag*.

Thank you! Priya

Note: During the Monday evening sits we use water offerings and minimal amounts of incense. During morning sits (wed./sat.) a little more incense may be burned. If you would like to know our policy on incense and other ritual elements during our various sits, please contact one of the Steering Committee members.

Community Callwww.smszen.org/index.htm**Opportunity to Earn Boundless Merit and more!**

It is with much excitement that I type these words: Ian, Wendy and I are moving back to the Springs in June! After yearning to return for some time and being frustrated at passively waiting for all the pieces to present themselves, we realized we had to leap forward and make it happen. We have started the ball rolling in regard to job searching and will soon begin looking for a place to live. Still, we need help with this transition and are seeking sangha support in any shape or form that it can be offered. Please contact us at wendrew98@earthlink.net with anything that arises regarding our leaping. Our deepest and most heartfelt GASSHOS to you all! - Ian, Wendy and Andrew

And having done the groundwork for a **Community Concerns Committee**, we'd now like to staff it. This is a committee to deal with intra-sangha relationship difficulties that elude simple solution. We seek a pool of mature members who would be willing to do some conflict resolution occasionally. It is our intention that training be provided as needed. If you would be willing to serve the Sangha in this way, please contact any member of the Steering Committee.

Minding thoughts and feelings:**A meditation class for people facing health challenges**

Research indicates that meditation can facilitate self-exploration, bring about the relaxation response, promote healing, reduce pain and help with symptom management.

This class will include meditation techniques that foster awareness of the body and breath. We will examine thoughts and feelings that are related to living with chronic health conditions, including anxiety, anger and disappointment. We also aim to discover the joy and pleasure which we often overlook in our lives.

This 6-week class will meet **Thursdays 10 - 11 am**

May 19 - June 24 Location: Aspen Room Memorial Administration Center 2420 Pikes Peak Ave.

Cost: \$ 40.00 for 6-week course Tuition scholarships are available for eligible participants

The instructor is **Clay Taylor**, who meditates and lives with chronic pain from a spine injury.

Call Britta Newcomer, RN at Memorial Hospital, @ 365-2535 for information and registration

Sangha Weekly Calendar & Eventswww.smszen.org/calendar.htm**Events**

Always check the events section of the website for the most current update of our planned happenings. Not only check for the time and location but also consider leaning in and helping out and even making event suggestions, planning and reviewing for this newsletter. These are your events too and the sangha needs all your support, engagement and feedback you can offer.

Change: due to summer activities at Shove Chapel, the Saturday morning sit time is changing to 6 to 8 a.m. (Half an hour earlier than usual).

- ❖ **May 22nd** 6:30pm-?? Full Moon sit at Sarah Bender's house - contact Sarah for directions at 594-0724, or email sbender@corb.com.
- ❖ **June 11th** all day sit from 6:00 am to 3:00 pm. Woman's Club, Colorado College. See website for directions.
- ❖ **June 18th** day-long hiking retreat - silence and mindfulness hiking meditation. Please contact Clay Taylor at 477-1808 for details.

Stay posted for Summer events too!

Weekly Sitting Schedule

- ❖ **Monday** evenings starting at 6:10 p.m. at Shove Chapel: 1010 North Nevada on the campus of Colorado College.
 - ✓ *First Monday* of the month: 30-minute sutra Service, brief walking meditation, two 25-minute periods of sitting
 - ✓ *Second Monday*: two 25-minute sitting periods, including walking meditation, followed by a social gathering
 - ✓ *Third Monday*: two 25-minute sitting periods, including walking meditation, followed by a talk or reading
 - ✓ *Fourth Monday*: One 25-minute sitting period and community member shares personal Zen Practice experience: "Way Seeking Mind." If you'd like/willing to take a turn, please call Sarah Bender
- ❖ **Wednesday** Mornings from 6 to 7 a.m. at Shove Chapel.
- ❖ **Saturday** Mornings from 6 a.m. to 8 a.m. (note change), also at Shove Chapel. After the sitting many of us usually walk to a nearby coffee shop for breakfast.
- ❖ **Sunday** we often have steering committee meetings or discussion groups or workshops.

May, 2005

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1	2 6:15 pm Sutra Service	3	4 6:00-7:00 am Zazen	5	6	7 6:30-8:30 am Zazen
8	9 6:15 pm Community Night	10	11 6:00-7:00 am Zazen	12	13	14 6:30-8:30 am Zazen
15	16 6:15 pm Talk Night	17	18 6:00-7:00 am Zazen	19	20	21 6:00-8:00 am Zazen
22 Full Moon Sit @ Sarah's	23 6:15 pm Zazen Zen Practice	24	25 6:00-7:00 am Zazen	26	27	28 6:00-8:00 am Zazen
29	30 6:15 pm Zazen	31				

June, 2005

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4 6:00-8:00 am Zazen
5	6 6:15 pm Sutra Service	7	8 6:00-7:00 am Zazen	9	10	11 Full Day 6:00-3:00 Zazen - loc TBA
12	13 6:15 pm Community Night	14	15 6:00-7:00 am Zazen	16	17	18 6:00-8:00 am Zazen, & Day Long Hike
19	20 6:15 pm Talk Night	21	22 6:00-7:00 am Zazen	23	24	25 6:00-8:00 am Zazen;
26	27 6:15 pm Zazen Zen Practice	28	29 6:00-7:00 am Zazen	30		

Dana for Springs Mountain Sangha

Springs Mountain Sangha engages in three weekly sittings, study groups, retreats, residencies for our holding teachers, the *dharma rag*, website, and other communication media. Contributions from members and friends are the Sangha's sole financial resource. Let's share the dharma assets!

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: (h) _____ (other) _____

Email: _____ (required for e-distribution)

Contribution Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Checks should be made out to Robert King, Treasurer.

Springs Mountain Sangha is a member of the Open Source Project, in both the Soto & Rinzai traditions.

To learn more, visit our website, <http://www.smszen.org/> or contact us at Dharmarag@smszen.org or Redsteed@ispwest.com (editor). Please check if you prefer to receive the newsletter by email, saving resources & expenses.

The dharma rag

c/o Editor: Judith Steed

P. O. Box 60904

Colorado Springs, CO 80960

www.smszen.org,