

Deep Spring Center Board of Directors Meeting

June 22, 2015, 6:30 pm @ Deep Spring Center

Ann Arbor, Michigan

attending: Rori Stienstra, Elizabeth Cheslak, Jason Riggs, Karen Mori (teacher liaison) Tana Dean (office manager) Adriana Medina (Board candidate)

not attending: Barbara Brodsky, Amy Koch, Beth Mulder, Tony Rome, Kay Mahan (Board Adjunct)

Brief sitting

I. Sangha / Board Commentary

Rori spoke about Sangha, and how splitting the sangha holds the possibility for growth and renewed vitality, the way that splitting plants can allow them to grow and spread in new directions. She also expressed her appreciation for the wisdom of the Dharma, and for Dharma teachers. She noted that the true nature of things is impermanence, the continual arising and falling away of everything.

The new Deep Spring website is being created, and Tana shared her enthusiasm at seeing the many possibilities arising from the new website and from the social network “meet up”. She said it feels like a miracle that in this wide world, new people continue to find Deep Spring, and that despite all the struggles, that Deep Spring is still here. She has much appreciation for that.

Karen noted that eight or nine twenty and thirty year olds attended the Emrich retreat. There is joy that seeds were planted for Vipassana practice.

II. Retreat Committee Report/ Emrich

A. Emrich wrap up

1. The retreat was lovely, with a good mix of experienced and new meditators
2. financials: the retreat basically broke even, expenses were covered, but there was no extra income for Deep Spring. Tana submitted the numbers.
3. bedbug issue: several retreatants were afflicted with bed bugs. Three full-week people left the retreat. There was discussion of compensation for those involved, with consensus that Emrich needs to provide funds to Deep Spring for the purpose of refunding the individuals who were affected. There should be no financial loss incurred by Deep Spring as a result. Some discussion with Emrich has occurred around this issue and Emrich has offered Deep Spring the 2015 rates for 2016 (they are planning a 10% increase in price)

Plan: Tana (with Elizabeth) will compose a letter to Emrich requesting the funds we will need to make whole the people affected.

B. Plan for Emrich 2016

1. combined retreat: It was proposed that the summer 2016 Emrich retreat be a combined retreat, including the fall Spirit retreat with the Emrich Vipassana retreat. This would eliminate any “conflict” for people in choosing which of these longer Deep Spring retreats to attend. The thought is, people would have the opportunity to partake of either Vipassana or Spirit, or both. It is felt that combining the two retreats would likely enhance attendance and lower the fiscal risk of holding two large residential retreats so close on the calendar.
2. Deep Spring teachers: it was proposed that DSC teachers increase their offerings at the 2016 Emrich retreat. This would take the pressure off Barbara and John as well as provide opportunity for DSC teachers to grow in the Dharma. Leading guided meditations, providing basic meditation instruction and giving Dharma talks were a few of the ideas that came up for more teacher participation.
Plan: needs to be presented to the Teachers Council for their consideration
3. the need for a steering committee to develop the new combined retreat was identified. Barbara and John Orr would be senior teachers, and take the lead on the steering committee, but other DSC teachers will have a voice and will be teaching and offering more.
Plan: needs to be discussed at the Teachers Council
4. weekend option There was discussion of eliminating the weekend option at Emrich. It is felt by some to be disruptive to the flow of the retreat, that the coming and going disturbs the energy and disrupts the noble silence.
Plan: refer to the steering committee once formed

III. Financials- Treasurer’s report

The financials were reviewed and the Balance Sheet was discussed. Deep Spring remains financially stable, with the Profit and Loss statements comparing May 2014 with May 2015 and the 2015 Year to Date reports both showing improvement from 2014. The Board continues our commitment to fiscal responsibility, to keeping expenses low and to closely monitoring the use of DSC funds.

IV. Financial Operational report

Per the Board’s request, Tana has created a set of spreadsheets that provide detailed tracking of all Deep Spring financial activity: DSC income & expenses, and retreat income & expenses. The comprehensive nature of these spreadsheets gives a much clearer picture of our financial status: how much income does DSC need to generate each year to keep going? where is the money going? is there balance? where can we economize? what areas need more attention? This clearer picture will assist the Board with long term planning as well as budgeting. The Board reviewed the spreadsheets and discussed our findings. Appreciation is extended to Tana for a job well done!

Plan: Tana will generate Quarterly Reports: June, Sept, Dec and March

V. Teachers Council

The Teacher's Council has not met in several months, so no report, just discussion.

A. The Day of Meditation is scheduled for Sept 12th. We have some tentative offerings: Barbara- Intro to Vipassana, Dottie- co-teach or interpret for Barbara, Julie- Metta, Frank- breathwork, Amy- sound immersion. The offerings and a "name for the day" need to be finalized soon.

Plan: Elizabeth will email all the teachers to solidify their offerings

Elizabeth will then work with Tana on creating a flyer and on publicity for the DOM

B. Teacher development: Jason and Adriana offered to teach or present at the DOM: Jason- channeling circle, Adriana- the bio-physical aspect of meditation. The question arose as to whether they would need a "second chair" to oversee their offering, as neither is a Deep Spring teacher. When is someone "qualified" to teach at Deep Spring?

Karen offered to convene a "study group" that would meet several times during the summer for potential new teachers. This would provide Jason, Adriana the opportunity to practice presenting, hone their teaching skills and be ready to participate in the DOM. It would also provide other experienced meditators the chance to the "dip their toes into the waters of teaching" to see if teaching is something they might like to pursue. This idea was received with great enthusiasm by the Board.

Plan: Karen will email the teachers for their input on the summer study group, which she would lead, and which would include practice for teaching Beginning Vipassana.

C. Teacher training- Currently Barbara and Dottie are training a group of 7 or 8 beginning teachers.

VI. July Fundraiser

This annual fundraiser is aimed at increasing the number of monthly donations for Deep Spring. This creates stability and allows for financial planning. It is a series of weekly emails starting July 7. Rori presented the content she had written for the emails, which are organized as "Five Questions" : Why Meditate? What Spirit? Why Deep Spring? Why Donate? and the fifth to be written by Barbara. Discussion followed.

Plan: each member of the Board will edit and make suggestions to Rori's original text and have that feedback to Rori by the end of the week 6/26. Rori will finalize, Tana will format for publication starting 7/7.

VII. Remembering Wholeness discussion deferred until July meeting

VIII. Administrative Issues the new Deep Spring website

The newly revised Deep Spring website is ready and the goal to launch is July first. We have all previewed the new website, and agree that the design is beautiful and that it is much more user friendly. Tana has been sending out a series of email teasers, to create excitement and anticipation within the community.

In order to develop the website, Tana has changed to a local hosting site: A2 Hosting, as previously discussed and approved by the board. For simplicity of management, Tana is the documented owner of the hosting site which she shares with Deep Spring. We rent space from her, and have paid for the first 12 months.

Next Meetings: July 27th, September 28th, August- no meeting,

All meetings are held at Deep Spring Center unless otherwise announced. All meetings are open to the Sangha. Minutes from past meetings can be found on the Deep Spring website.

Adjourned at 8:40 pm

Respectfully submitted by Elizabeth Cheslak, Secretary