

## **Deep Spring Center Board of Directors Meeting**

**January 26, 2015 6:30 pm @ Deep Spring Center**

**Ann Arbor, Michigan**

attending: Rori Stienstra, Tony Rome, Kay Mahan (Board Adjunct), Jason Riggs, Elizabeth Cheslak, Karen Mori (TL), Tana Dean (OM), Dorothy Ann Coyne (RT)

not attending: Barbara Brodsky, Beth Mulder, Amy Koch

### **Brief sitting**

**I. Deep Spring Visioning** Rori opened with a review of where we are in the visioning process. There have been many changes at Deep Spring over the past few years. There have been shifts in membership and commitment as well as changes in organizing principles and structures.

We now seem to be at a starting point for the reconstruction and reorganization of Deep Spring Center. It is an exciting and uncertain time. Part of what we do at Deep Spring is reaching out and touching lives. Maybe that will begin to happen in different ways, or from different angles. However it unfolds, we need to understand where we are now so we can rebuild on a firm foundation.

Deep Spring needs to reestablish and maintain stability if we are going to be able to grow as a center for Vipassana and Spirit. The Board will address this need by beginning a deep and thorough examination of DSC's financial status.

Dottie reflected that "all this change is a wonderful practice". She noted that there have been many Deep Spring teachers over the years, including many who have gone on to teach at other places, the wonderful folks who teach at Deep Spring now, and those who are going to begin Teacher Training this summer. The arriving and moving-on pattern among teachers over time is a positive aspect of a vibrant center.

**II. Channelling Circle** The Board discussed and endorsed Jason's idea of beginning a channeling circle at Deep Spring. It is consistent with the DSC mission statement's purpose of Spiritual Inquiry. His idea has been endorsed by Barbara and Aaron, and would be offered at the center on a dana basis.

**Plan:** Jason will set it up, email those who have expressed interest, schedule times, and let the Board know how it comes together. OK to begin asap.

**III. Retreat Team Report** Current status of the Retreat Team (RT) members, functions and upcoming retreats was discussed.

**A.** The RT is looking for a new Retreat Manager or Managing Team, as Dottie is stepping down. Karen Mori & Dottie will continue as advisers to the new manager or team as needed..

**B.** Currently, there are thirteen team members.

**C.** Registration: Jason and Bill Riccobono are sharing registration responsibilities

**D.** Upcoming retreats for 2015:

1. March Retreat at Steiner: Karen Mori, Frank Levey and Marcus Koch will be leading “Body as Doorway”. Laura turner and Nina Maghsoodi will co-manage. Craig Brann will manage flowers and snacks for Steiner and perhaps the other retreats.

2. April Retreat at Howell Nature Center: Amma Thanasanti will be leading. Ken Morley and Nina will be managing.

3. Summer Emrich Retreat: Barbara Brodsky and John Orr will be leading. Lisa Zucker will teach Beginning Meditation. Sandy Norton and Joe Harrison will co-manage.

4. Autumn Retreat at Howell - DSC has reserved our usual weekend time slot which will be used by Still Mountain Meditation Center (David Lawson) in 2015. Future use of this reserved time to be discussed and determined.

5. October Retreat, which was The Geneva Retreat in 2014, is looking for exact dates and a different venue for 2015. (October 26 thru Nov 3 are possible dates, and Oakwood in Indiana is a possible venue). Deep Spring Center will sponsor. Barbara Brodsky, and (possibly) John Orr will lead this retreat. Amy Koch is working with Barbara on developing this retreat for 2015. Managers tbd

**E.** Ongoing work for the RT include: pricing for each retreat, early-registration discount guidelines, scholarship guidelines, development of a tracking system for scholarship recipients, registration refund policy (for those who cannot attend after registering), volunteer log.

**Plan**: The Board will work closely with the Retreat Team as things develop

**F.** It was noted that Deep Spring’s four traditional retreats are changing for 2015. We will not be holding the Autumn at Howell, but we are hoping to add the October “Geneva” retreat to our annual calendar. The April Retreat at Howell is under discussion by the RT for 2016.

**G.** There is currently a net loss in the number of Deep Spring teachers, which has an impact on the number of retreats and even classes that DSC will be able to offer. Yet, the Retreat Team is robust with good energy and people stepping up to volunteer. So it goes.

**H.** The Board extends Much Gratitude to Dottie for all her hard work and leadership over the past year as she recruited and revived the Retreat Team. We continue to be grateful to Karen Mori for her willingness to be a resource for every aspect of retreat organization and work. You both have given so generously. Thank you.

**IV. Teachers Council Report** Karen reported on the Teachers Meeting that was held Jan 18th. There are now nine Deep Spring teachers.

**A.** Classes for Spring & Teacher Updates:

~ Lisa and Karen will be offering a Level 1, 4-week “Lovingkindness” class through Rec & Ed, in March 2015

~ Markus and Amy are planning to teach a 4 or 5 hour Saturday class that would include Vipassana basics, sound, breath, and the feeling sense of the body

~ Barbara offered to teach a 2-hour class in May prior to Emrich Retreat about “what is Vipassana” “what is a meditation retreat”  
~ Barbara envisions a year-long class teaching Vipassana and all skills necessary for co-creating with Spirit with the goal to transition to a higher consciousness  
~ Frank may offer a mini-intensive thru Rec & Ed which would continue at DSC  
~ Dottie is taking a leave of absence and is not committing to any teaching activities  
~ Bernie, Dottie and George are offering Sunnyside in the Spring  
~ Retreats were discussed (see III. Retreat Team Report)  
~ discussion about both DSC and Still Mountain offering introductory Vipassana through Rec & Ed. Pricing for DSC classes and the possibility of coordinating class offerings with SM were discussed.

**Plan:** the Board agreed to lower the price to \$10 per class to be in line with the SM offering. Tana will correct the Rec & Ed catalog to reflect this pricing shift.

~ Encouraged by the Teachers, Barbara plans to offer Remembering Wholeness at DSC (subject to Board agreement)

~ The viability of keeping the Deep Spring space was touched on, and it was noted that it is not necessary that DSC have its own physical space in order to continue offering teachings.

**B. Meditation sittings:** attendance at Sunday sitting at DSC is dwindling, only 4-8 people attending since summer. How can we draw more people in? Maybe change the time or day of the week? We need people to lead the Sunday sitting. Maybe offer an hour of teaching right before the sitting, with rotating teachers?

**Plan:** Teachers will be asked to lead a Sunday sitting

Tuesday morning sittings are robust, usually 8-12 present and people find this a lovely sangha.

**C. Teachers Council v. Guiding Teachers with Advisors** The pros & cons of continuing the Teachers Council as a council of equals, vs the possibility of returning to a Guiding Teacher organizational structure were discussed. Is DSC drifting? or are things just unfolding? Would Barbara consider returning to the GT role with a GTAC? Yes if specific conditions are met. This discussion is ongoing. All teachers need to be heard from before any decision is made.

**D. Board and Teachers** need to meet. Suggestion of a monthly community meeting following the Sunday sitting with Board members (and teachers) attending. A half-day Board-Teacher intensive for early 2015 is still under consideration.

**V. Treasurer’s Report** Kay reviewed the Balance Sheet for Nov. 2014 and the Profit & Loss Budget Performance for Jan-Nov 2014. The Deep Spring Center Equity Trend shows a significant deficit over the last 12 months. From the financial perspective, we had a hard year. Donations from the year-end fundraiser are down. People, many of whom were donors, have left Deep Spring. There are fewer teachers and thus, fewer classes. From the treasurer’s perspective, there is a clear need to stimulate income through fundraisers, classes, retreats, and donations. It is hoped that as things settle, the new energy at Deep Spring will draw new people who will potentially provide support for the center. Next year needs to be better if we are to stay afloat.

**VI. The State of Deep Spring Finances** Rori has proposed a deep and comprehensive assessment of our financial status. Time, however, is not permitting that discussion to begin at this meeting

**Plan:** Rori has asked Board members to look closely at the financial materials (handouts) prepared by Tana for this meeting and be prepared to dive into this important investigation and discussion at our next meeting.

**VII. Administrative Matters**

A. Treasure Mart Chairs- have been sold. Funds forthcoming

B. Computer update- Tana has begun using the new office computer. The other computer is ready for dedicated use by the Treasurer

C. The Day of Meditation has been set for Sept 12, 2015 at Interfaith

**Next Meetings:** February 23rd, March 23rd, April 27th. 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 8:30 pm

Respectfully submitted by Elizabeth Cheslak, Secretary