

Deep Spring Center Board of Directors Meeting

July 27, 2015, 6:30 pm @ Deep Spring Center

Ann Arbor, Michigan

attending: Rori Stienstra, Elizabeth Cheslak, Beth Mulder, Amy Koch, Barbara Brodsky, Dottie Coyne

not attending: Jason Riggs, Adriana Medina, Tana Dean (OM)

1. Brief sitting

II. check in: Tana is recovering well. With the Board's full support, DSC office hours will be abbreviated until Tana is ready to return full time.

Kay has completed her adjunct time on the Board mentoring Beth in the Treasurer position. Gratitude is extended to Kay for her dedication and service to Deep Spring.

III. Sangha / Board Commentary

Rori is excited about some recent trends at DSC: first is "meet-up", a web site that helps people find others in their local community with similar interests. DSC already has 60 members... in just the first 4 weeks! Next, Lisa Zucker responded to a request from several new meditators, for some basic Vipassana instruction; she is holding a short series of classes on Sunday mornings before the 10:00 sitting for anyone interested. Further, each week we have seen new people at the Sunday sitting, several of whom heard about Deep Spring through meet-up. Finally, "Music Matters", a community service organization based in Detroit, contacted DSC seeking meditation instruction for the children in their inner city program. These are all signs of increasing interest in DSC and reflect the vitality of the Center and the potential within our Sangha.

Elizabeth made the commitment to remain on the Board through December 2015.

Amy has been thinking about the organizational structure of the Teachers Council, the Retreat Committee, and the Board. She invited us all to be open-minded and flexible about how we work together, and how we might re-organize as things continue to unfold.

Barbara spoke about the new Teacher Training class that she is co-leading with Dottie. There are nine people in the group who are "enthusiastic and full of good energy". They have met once so far, and are invited to observe the DSC teachers at work at our Sept. Day of Meditation.

IV. Retreat Committee Report

A. Emrich 2015 wrap up

1. the retreat was lovely, and well attended. Financially, we did alright, making just a bit of money.

2. bed bug issue: we are currently working out the details of resolving the issue. Emrich has verbally agreed to reimburse any and all of the retreatants who were harmed or withdrew from the retreat as a result of the infestation.

Plan: Barbara will write to everyone who was at the retreat to make sure we do not miss anyone. When those details are gathered, Tana and Elizabeth will work on the letter to Emrich regarding reimbursement, and plans for insuring this will not happen again.

B. Fall 2015 Retreat in Indiana

1. Retreat is titled "Living from our True Nature: Remembering Wholeness". The dates are set and the deposit has been made to hold the venue. Barbara, Aaron and John Orr have been actively discussing content and format, including: keeping the Noble Silence, optional discussion group at lunch time, small group meetings, Darshan with the Mother, Vipassana. Amy will also be participating as a Teacher at the retreat and asked to be included in further planning discussions. Plan: Barbara and Amy agreed to meet and discuss

2. Retreat Scholarships The process of granting scholarships was a bit chaotic for Emrich this year. There were many requests made and a large amount of scholarship funds were distributed to a larger than usual number of people. DSC has specific, written guidelines that address the application process and limit the number of scholarships available for each retreat. With a loosening of the retreat committee, and changing registrars, those guidelines have not been followed recently. Scholarship discussion included: work trade rather than just the awarding of (cash) funds; limiting the number of and the dollar amount for scholarships per retreat; requiring a non-refundable deposit as a signal of intention to attend the retreat; the need for a Retreat Coordinator; the need to conserve scholarship dollars, and specifically, not use those funds to put a retreat into the black.

Plan: Amy will create a scholarship request form that will be used for the Fall-Indiana retreat. Once the Board approves that form (via email) Tana can put it on the website.

3. Transportation may be an issue at this retreat with people flying in, and it not being held locally. We may create a "rides and accommodations" bulletin board on the website to assist those attending. We need a volunteer for that work, which could be considered for a work-trade "scholarship" arrangement.

Plan: will deal with that suggestion as the retreat gets closer on the calendar

C. SPRING Retreat in Howell 2016

The deposit has been made to secure Howell for April 8-10, 2016. We discussed the pros and cons of inviting the same speaker for a third time, Amma Thanasanti. Consensus was reached and everyone agreed to invite Amma again. If for some reason she is not available, alternative plans will be made for that weekend, as we the space reserved. (This would be a wonderful opportunity for another teacher to lead a retreat. Amy expressed interest in that idea).

Plan: Rori will let Karen know she can contact Amma and invite her. If Amma is not available, Amy has offered to organize a retreat and co-lead with another teacher. Another possibility would be to offer the space to another Sangha.

D. FALL Retreat in Howell 2016

Still Mountain will be using our Howell dates in fall 2015. Their deposit has been received. We discussed how to handle that time period in the future. If we hold onto it, there are ways Deep Spring could use that weekend: organize a self-retreat, share the time with another group, invite a guest Dharma teacher, hold a beginning Vipassana retreat, etc. If we give up our standing reservation, it will be gone. The Board agreed that we will keep the Fall at Howell time for now.

Plan: Tana will notify Hugh at Still Mountain that it is DSC's intention to retain the fall time slot, and consider annually how best to utilize it. Fall at Howell may be available to Still Mountain and to other Sanghas and groups in the future.

This led to a deeper conversation about Deep Spring and its future. We again discussed a vision of the Center: what will we look like in ten or fifteen years? How will we get there? As Barbara inevitably reduces her involvement over time, it is the Deep Spring Teachers who will become the stable foundation that carries DSC into the future. The Teachers will need to assume a more active, more visible role. By leading retreats (beyond Steiner), increasing community outreach, and initiating community service the Community will begin to identify All the Deep Spring Teachers as essential components of the Deep Spring.

There was strong support for the idea of starting now to integrate DSC teachers into all aspects of DSC retreats, including their full participation in organizing, planning, teaching, holding individual conferences and presenting Dharma talks at the retreats. The intention is to create continuity and growth of our Sangha, and to expand the role of all Deep Spring Teachers.

V. Day of Meditation and Spiritual Inquiry (DOM)

Elizabeth gave a status update for the DOM: all the workshop offerings, teachers, time slots and room assignments have been finalized; wording for the registration form (session selection) is receiving a final edit by each teacher, and will be completed and ready for posting by Wed 8/5. The email seeking Volunteers to work at the Sept 12th DOM will go out next week. Volunteers who request it, will receive a 50% discount on their registration fee.

Plan: any further communication with the Board and Teachers will be via email, as the event will occur before the next Board meeting.

VI. Treasurer's Report

Beth presented the June actuals, which the Board reviewed and discussed. Overall, we are holding our own, and the Center remains financially stable. Although the numbers look down, it's because monies have been expended to secure venues for retreats that have yet to generate income: it's too soon in that payment cycle. The Emrich retreat essentially broke even. We are awaiting an update on the July on-line fundraiser.

Thank you, Beth, for doing a lovely first solo presentation this evening! You've got it!!

VII. Teacher's Council Report

A. The Board extends gratitude to Lisa Zucker for teaching a series of Beginning Meditation classes before Sunday sittings. Her spontaneous open-hearted offering meets an important need and is deeply appreciated.

B. Teacher Council Meetings: the last council meeting was held in March

Plan: Amy will email all the teachers with a date for their next T.C. meeting

C. Fall classes: Barbara will continue teaching on Tuesday evenings.

Karen Mori will be teaching the half-day Introduction classes in the fall.

Plan: we look forward to hearing about any new class offerings after the next T.C. meeting

D. Teacher training update (see III. Commentary)

E. Feedback indicates that participants really seem to like the half-day workshop format, like Barbara's "Inner Garden" series (9-2 with an hour for lunch)

Plan: Teachers, please consider when planning classes in the future

VIII. July On Line Fundraiser discussion deferred until September meeting

IX. Remembering Wholeness at Deep Spring

A. We are delighted that Remembering Wholeness will be coming soon to Deep Spring Center. The first two sessions: Saturday, August 29th at 9:00 and Sunday, October 11th at noon

B. Several volunteers have stepped up to work with Amy on: organizing, assisting, setting-up and breaking-down the events, including: Beth, Betty, Lalita, Nina

X. Administrative Issues discussion deferred

Next Meetings: September 28th, October 26th, November 23rd..... no meeting in August.

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.

Deep Spring Board Intensive: September 13th 1-5 pm.

This Planning and Team Building meeting is closed to all but Board members and Board candidates, location tbd

Adjourned at 9:00 pm

Respectfully submitted by Elizabeth Cheslak, Secretary