

Deep Spring Center Board of Directors Meeting

March 23, 2015, 6:30 pm @ Deep Spring Center

Ann Arbor, Michigan

attending: Rori Stienstra, Elizabeth Cheslak, Tony Rome, Kay Mahan (Board Adjunct), Jason Riggs, Beth Mulder, Amy Koch, Karen Mori (TL)

not attending: Barbara Brodsky, Tana Dean (OM)

Brief sitting

I. Sangha / Board Commentary ongoing discussion by all present regarding DSC Visioning.

It was generally agreed that the Board/ Teacher Council Intensive, held yesterday 3/22, was both interesting and likely helpful as we move forward. Yesterday's discussions laid a groundwork for developing our vision. The question arose: how will we (the Teachers and the Board) manage disagreements as they arise and allow decision making that respects the diversity of perspectives? We need to develop a set of operational principles and guidelines as our transition continues. There will be a lot to process over the next few years.

One vision is Deep Spring Center as the container and facilitator of opportunity for people to come into contact with the Dharma and related paths toward liberation. The fundamental principles that we can all support include non-harm and non-duality. Hopefully, people will be drawn to DSC by the relevance of our classes, retreats, programs, and workshops and by the integrity of our teachers.

The idea of creating a co-operative with other like-minded individuals and local organizations was mentioned. It may be wise at some point to share space and other resources with one or more groups. This, along with other aspects of the evolving new vision, leads to the question: what will DSC look like as we go forward?

How will the Teachers Council and the Board work together? We need close coordination with each other as we clarify our vision implement change. Some suggestions included: forming an integrated governing body that includes Teachers and Board members over the next few years, with the large group meeting quarterly and the core Board meeting monthly. It is the intention of the Board to deepen our support for the Teachers. Rori suggested that we all read "The Council of Equals" by George Sanfacon and discuss it at our next meeting.

Plan: continue discussion at the next Board meeting

consider holding Sangha meetings more frequently than once a year (perhaps monthly after a Sunday sitting? quarterly? during fifth Sunday pot luck meetings?)

To facilitate communication and out-reach to the larger community, it was suggested that the website needs attention. DSC is aware of this need and Tana is currently developing a proposal to update the website including what needs to be done and an estimate of how long it might take. She will be working with Joe Keller on organizing & formatting. Amy offered to assist with content.

II. Board Membership As requested at the last meeting, current Board members brought the names of potential future Board members for discussion.

Plan: we each agreed to call potential members and report at the next meeting

It was suggested that the Board might want to connect with business people, creative people or others who may have skills to assist, mentor or guide us through this period of growth and change. We all agreed to remain open to the idea of utilizing outside resources or consultants as specific needs are identified.

III. Retreat Team update

- A. Steiner retreat: led by Frank, Karen and Markus, this was a beautiful, silent retreat, and a deep and rich experience. This Beginning Vipassana retreat was well attended; there were many new faces, beginning meditators and first time retreatants. It was a well managed, with delicious food, and attentive managers. Steiner House is a lovely, peaceful setting. In the spirit of generosity, the retreat leaders shared their dana equally with the managers. This was a good retreat for DSC financially.
- B. Spring retreat at Howell with Amma Thanasanti- Karen is organizing. Ken Morley and Nina Maghsoodi will be managers. The retreat is filling with more than half the spots taken. Soon DSC will need to think about reserving the space for 2016. **Plan:** discuss at a future meeting.
- C. Registrar and other business- Bill Riccobono has agreed to take on the role of Retreat Registrar. Jason is stepping down and will mentor Bill. Karen has developed an information flow for FAQ's to assist incoming retreat managers and registrars, since answering questions is a large and time-consuming part of the registrar's responsibilities. This should be a big improvement. The scholarship process has been revised. People will now apply on-line and pay a \$25 non-refundable application fee to assure applicants hold serious intention to attend.
- D. Retreat letter- will be written by the Teachers in the future
- E. Retreat Coordinator- still seeking someone to fill this role, which includes: overseeing all the retreats, promotion and advertising, contract work, setting fees, making sure there are managers in place for each retreat. The retreat team has not coalesced to the degree we'd hoped. Leadership is needed now.
- F. Scholarships as work-exchange- it was proposed that DSC offer a reduced retreat fee in exchange for working at that particular retreat, rather than simply extending monetary assistance. **Plan:** Discussion on how to implement at the next meeting
- G. Retreat manager role- it was noted that the role needs refining and that managers need training and perhaps some incentive (reduction or waiver of the retreat fee) for their volunteer services.

Plan: Amy will write a proposal regarding recruiting and training retreat managers and bring it to the next meeting

H. Day of Meditation Sept 12th has been reserved at Interfaith Center in Ann Arbor

Plan: Elizabeth has agreed to coordinate the event

I. Emrich retreat- to be led by Barbara, Aaron, John Orr, and Lisa. We are all wondering if attendance at this long-beloved retreat will be influenced by the “new fall retreat”. Will people go to both? will Emrich numbers decline?

IV. Treasurer’s Report Balance sheet and the current Profit and Loss statements were reviewed. We are still in reasonable financial shape, although donations are down and program revenue (classes and retreats) is down.

Plan: Rori, Kay and Beth will work on a projected budget for our next meeting

V. Teachers Circle

A. Teacher update- Karen will be taking a break from teaching for summer and fall of 2015. Lisa is leaving the Teachers Circle, but will fulfill her previous teaching commitments.

B. Guiding Teacher role- the Teachers support the idea of Barbara returning to her role as Guiding Teacher. Barbara agrees, but with the these conditions: a) support and shared responsibility for decision-making, and b) that Aaron be allowed to speak at Board meetings.

Plan: Rori will talk with Barbara about Aaron’s voice at Board meetings

C. Deep Spring Summer workshops- Barbara will be leading two half-day DSC workshops this summer in Chelsea on Friend’s Lake, Saturday July 11 and August 15.

Plan: Amy will be helping with one retreat and Barbara will enlist assistance for the other

D. Teacher biographies on the website need updating

E. Remembering Wholeness- the Board agreed to place Remembering Wholeness on the Deep Spring website as a Deep Spring event

F. Day of Meditation- the teachers are working on their offerings for the fall

VI. Administrative issues

A. The Casa in Brazil- there was discussion about listing the Casa trips on the Deep Spring website, and what information would be included. Consensus was to list under “Events of Interest” with website links for more information.

B. Channeling Circle- Jason will continue to lead the Channeling Circle on Friday nights. With the intention to hold space and assure the safety of all, he continues the practice of screening all candidates before they attend.

VII. Budget Planning will be discussed in depth at the next meeting

Next Meetings: April 27th, June 1st (meeting for May), June 22nd. 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