

Bellingham Meditation Newsletter

Events & Information On Buddhist Practice in the Bellingham Area

Bellingham Dharma Hall Board Report

Greetings from the Board of Directors! We are now in full swing with our new slate of members under the leadership of our new chairperson, Daimon Sweeney. At our Annual Meeting on November 4th, Daimon shared some words with us, a "touchstone" for moving forward in this next phase of the Hall's growth, in the form of three thoughts and one question:

- 1. **We can be sure many more people in this area want to learn about the Dharma**, and that there will be more in the future. We also believe, of course, that it will be to their advantage to do so.
- 2. **Our current situation with the Dharma Hall space will change.** The Buddha, Nature, uncertainty about the future of the building we currently use, and the growing space needs of the groups provide ample assurance on this point.
- 3. **The Dharma Hall can evolve to another level of effectiveness, or it can break apart as an institution.** This choice faces all systems experiencing changing intensity of input. One core question addresses these thoughts and more:
How can we best represent the Dharma in Bellingham at this time?"

The way the board is currently thinking about this is that the Hall needs to develop a stronger "Mahasangha" identity and culture. This will be necessary if we are to work together towards a more suitable practice space for Bellingham's Buddhist community. All of us can think about this question and communicate with each other to forge an answer that is based on our collective intelligence as an organization. Along these lines, **an important meeting is planned for Sunday, December 3 from 1 - 4 p.m.** at the Hall. Daimon will facilitate. We will be looking at what may need to change in the relationship between the groups and the Hall to ensure that the Hall has the financial resources and structure we need to move forward with our vision. Everyone is invited to participate, and the board especially hopes that members of the groups' leadership teams will be at this meeting.

The board invites more Hall members and friends to get involved in the work of running the Hall and planning our future. If you haven't done so already, please pick up a Skills Survey at the Hall and let us know how you might be able to help. A big Welcome! to our new bookkeeper, Marti Bartlett and a big thank you to departing bookkeeper Hans Sendelbach

Other highlights: This Fall we presented the first ever "Buddhism in Bellingham" lecture series featuring speakers from each of the four traditions that practice at the Hall. Many thanks go to Tim Burnett for organizing the event, and to the speakers: Norman Fischer, John Robinson, Tim Burnett, Eileen Kiera, and Jason Ruvelson. Attendance and response from the community was very positive. Many expressed a wish that this become an annual event.

New sitting time! A noontime meditation break hosted by Zen priest Tim Burnett at 12:15 p.m. every Friday will include a 30 minute meditation followed by short chanting service. Practitioners from all traditions are welcome.

And finally, be looking for upcoming changes in the newsletter. The newsletter will move away from calendar postings from the four groups, and toward Hall related news and creative submissions from the Dharma Hall community.

-- submitted by Karen FitzGerald, vice chair

Please Contribute Your Ideas!

The Dharma Hall board of directors invites you to a facilitated meeting in which we'll explore the best ways for the Hall to be financially healthy, now and in the future. Is it time for the relationship between the groups and the Dharma Hall to evolve? And if so, how? This and other topics will be part of the discussion. This is likely to be a pivotal meeting with lasting implications. With your input in this inclusive process, a bigger picture will emerge, and, very likely, the beginning of a solution which works for everyone. Those in group leadership teams are strongly encouraged to attend, along with all interested group and Dharma Hall members. Diversity of perspectives is the key to a rich mix of possibilities, so please come and contribute.

The meeting is Sunday Dec. 3 from 1-4 pm at the Dharma Hall. Refreshments will be served. Daimon Sweeney, chair of the board of directors, will facilitate.

Background: The groups are growing, financial and space needs are growing, the number of Dharma Hall members has grown, yet the Dharma Hall income is less than a year ago. The nature of the groups has changed from the simple sitting groups we began with thirteen years ago to full blown Sanghas, yet our Hall membership structure has remained the same. The trends call for a creative response. What is the best course of action from where we are now?

Thank you!

-- Karen FitzGerald, vice chair

Five Wishes Workshop

(Check Flyers at the Hall for Date in January or February)

You are invited to join your fellow Dharma practitioners in an exploration of the choices and preferences at the end of life. Karen Ssebanikita of the Whatcom End of Life Council will facilitate this workshop. She will review the legal, personal, medical and social options and techniques for addressing end of life issues. Participants will receive informative workbooks. We will have an opportunity to discuss how we want to be treated, and who will act for us, if we are unable to speak for ourselves. As Buddhists we often approach end-of-life issues from a different perspective and with different questions. Going through this process in the company of other members of the Dharma Hall seems an excellent way to enhance our sense of community and understanding.

There is no charge, but please sign up in advance by contacting John Graber at acjgraber@att.net or 738-0906. We want to make sure we have enough workbooks and information. Tea will be served.

Four Buddhist groups share the Bellingham Dharma Hall. Each group meets on a selected night of the week from 7-9 PM in this common space.

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Dharma Hall Website: www.BellinghamDharmaHall.org

Dharma Hall News continued...

General News and Submissions from our Dharma Hall Members

Behind the Scenes at the Dharma Hall.

Submitted By Jean La Valley

The Dharma Hall exists because members and non-members work tirelessly to keep it going. We hope to introduce our readers to the many people who our volunteers are and what they do to help keep the Hall running. We will also keep you informed on available volunteer opportunities might be waiting for you.

In this issue of the newsletter I interviewed our new bookkeeper, Marti Bartlett and the editor of the newsletter, Rachel Carter.

Marti, You just volunteered to do the bookkeeping for the Dharma Hall. Why did you volunteer for this job? How's it been going?

I volunteered to do the bookkeeping in order to be more involved in the Dharma Hall. I am glad to have a chance to contribute something to the Dharma Hall community and to use skills that I have been developing.

What is your connection to the Dharma Hall and to meditation practice?

I have been meditating with a community on and off for about nine years. I've been involved with both Shambhala and Zen meditation communities in both Bellingham and Minneapolis/St. Paul.

How do you spend your time off the cushion?

I've been going to school at Whatcom taking courses in accounting and have been accepted at Western.

Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

I really enjoy sitting with the informal group in the mornings. It has helped me to have a stronger interest in the Dharma Hall community.

Thanks Marti.

Rachel Carter is the editor of this newsletter, the first issue that she put together was the Summer of 2006 newsletter.

1. Why did you volunteer for this job? How's it been going?

In late March I decided that I wanted to volunteer at the Dharma Hall because my schedule no longer permitted me to sit regularly with any of the various groups that meet there. I still wanted to devote some of my time to Bellingham's Buddhist community so I called the Hall to ask if they had anything that I could do there. I didn't know that they needed a new editor, but I was very excited at the prospect and instantly agreed to do the job.

So far, I'm having a lot of fun with the newsletter, it is an exercise in creativity and patience. I have had the privilege of meeting wonderful new people and I am learning more about the various lessons to be learned from all the different groups that meet in the hall. I feel very lucky to have called when I did to involve myself in this project .

2. What is your connection to the Dharma Hall and to meditation practice?

I have considered myself a Buddhist for five years now, though I have practiced meditation on and off since the age of twelve.

Volunteer interview continued...

My interest and personal practice lies mainly with Zen Buddhism, but I have an interest in all the various forms of practice.

One of the motivations that my husband and I had when we made the decision to move to Bellingham two years ago was the existence of the Dharma Hall. Both of us come from Eastern Washington and we wanted to move to a place that had a strong Buddhist community. The Dharma Hall was the first place we visited when we came to town. My husband and I have both sat with the Zen Practice group over the last two years. Unfortunately, since the birth of our daughter in October of 2005, we haven't had a chance to sit with any one group, though both of us visit regularly to sit at different times throughout the day.

3. How do you spend your time off the cushion?

Since October of 2005 my time off the cushion is devoted in learning to become a guide to a new person. I'm a full time mother and an artist. I spend a lot of time running after my daughter and teaching her what I can about the world (though I have the suspicion that I am learning more about it from her), sketching, writing and inking comics and other artistic projects. It is my hope to write a comic book that has Buddhist ideals woven within it, but is not stereotypically a pop-culture Buddhist work. Next year I am planning on attending college to work on my degree.

4. Anything else that you would like to add?

A newsletter is really a community project. I am just the person at the end of a long line of hard working people who make the contributions that I put together. I depend on the people who supply all the information from the other groups. The bookkeeper provides the mailing information and Karen Fitzgerald is an enormous help in answering my many questions and helping me to iron out the procedure by which this newsletter is published and mailed. I'd like to say thank you to all the people who submitted information and take the time to write out everything so nicely.

Thank you Rachel

Exerpt from "Cycle of hoops for the first snow"

-Steve Sanfield

Waking this morning
to find the world
covered in white.

The brown grasses
after a night of snow. seen afresh

Even that junkpile
I meant to put in order
is perfect.

Snapped in two:
that tree I never
should have planted

On the moonlit snow
even my shadow
is cold.

Tracks in the snow:
what happened
while we slept

The power of snow
to make all things
new.

Shambhala Center

CONTACT: Greg Heffron, 360-734-9019 <gheffron@midline.net>

WEBSITE: www.BellinghamShambhala.org

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	December 2006
					1	2	Ikebana — please contact <i>Carol Lord (360) 647-2023</i> for details.
						11:00 AM Ikebana <i>(Fairhaven Library)</i>	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
	7:00 pm Sitting Meditation The Four Reminders	7:00 pm Sitting Meditation	6:30 pm Medicine Buddha	5:30 pm Sitting and walking medita- tion			
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
	7:00 pm Sitting meditation	7:00 pm Sitting Meditation	6:30 pm Medicine Buddha	5:30 pm Sitting and walking medita- tion	Community Day		
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	
	7:00 pm Sitting meditation	7:00 pm Sitting Meditation	6:30 pm Medicine Buddha	5:30 pm Sitting and walking medita- tion			
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
	7:00 pm Sitting Meditation	7:00 pm Sitting Meditation	6:30 pm Medicine Buddha	5:30 pm Sitting and walking medita- tion			
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Bellingham Meditation Society / Vipassana

CONTACT: John Robinson, 360-758-7260 <john@treefrogfarm.com>

Attendance at the **Heather Martin/Pascal Auclair retreat in late October** at the Samish Island campground consisted largely of Bellingham Vipassana practitioners and members of the Samish Island meditation group. In de-briefing sessions afterwards we recognized how well the retreat teachers complemented each other, and we recognized once again the truth of Heather's opening remarks: the instructions for meditation remain the same, but those attending the retreat hear and experience them each time on a deeper level.

The theme of "letting go" in one's life and one's practice was examined often during the week. Pascal, with his French-Canadian accent and general "lightness of being," emphasized how constantly shifting causes and conditions produce the dynamic of people-in-situations which, in the deepest sense, "couldn't be otherwise"—an understanding that can defuse self-condemnation and undercut our constant clinging to past events.

Each person had his or her own experience during the retreat, with its highs and lows, the effort involved, and the insights that opened up or deepened, all part of the essence of what a retreat promotes—a subtle process of change, and a renewed incentive for continued walking on the path of awakening.

NOTE: Heather Martin has had to cancel her plan to give a Dharma talk at the Hall December 19th. However, a heads up: her next visit will be for a non-residential weekend, March 17-18.

Vipassana non-Residential Retreat at the Asian Center on the Vancouver UBC campus:

Jan. 12-14, Steven Armstrong on "The Mind is not Yours, but You are Responsible for it." To register or for more info: www.westcoastdharma.org, or 607-731-5469, or email: wdharma@interchange.ubs.ca

VIPASSANA PROGRAM SCHEDULE:

The 8--9 PM Tuesday practice periods (after our 7--7:45 sitting) will be as follows for December through February:

1st Tuesday -- A social hour for meditators to mingle and get to know each other informally. Also John Robinson will be available prior to the sitting, 6:30--7 PM, to discuss meditation practice with anyone desiring further instruction, clarification, etc.

2nd Tuesday -- we will listen to a short selection from a taped Dharma talk, followed by group discussion on applying the material to daily life.

3rd Tuesday -- The Book Club meets to discuss Ajahn Sumedho's *The Mind and the Way*.

4th Tuesday -- Sutta study, with Bodhi Bhikku's book as a guide.

A WINTER POTLUCK will take place at the home of Gretchen Harsh in Fairhaven on Sunday, January 28 at 5PM. Gretchen will make directions available beforehand, with encouragement to carpool as much as possible. A Vipassana potluck is always a glad event, and somehow a winter one adds special cheer.

Beginning Again: an Introduction to Meditation in the Vipassana (Insight) Tradition
This day-long class for beginners as well as the experienced will be held on Saturday, February 10th from 9 AM-3 PM at the Dharma Hall. Instruction will focus on concentration and mindfulness practices. Four meditation objects will be presented: sitting, walking, eating and metta (lovingkindness). Dharma discussion will occur throughout the day. Bring your own lunch or eat out near by; tea and cookies will be provided. Cost is by donation. The class will be taught by John Robinson. For registration and more information, contact John Robinson at john@treefrogfarm.com or (360)758-7260.

Practice Schedule:

Tuesdays 7-9 PM

The Vipassana group meets on Tuesday evenings at 7:00 to sit in meditation for 45 minutes.

For programs held during the fall, see the program schedule at left.

Sunday Mornings Retreats

The retreats are held on the second Sunday of each month from 9:30 AM to Noon.

The 2½ hour period includes sitting and walking meditation, and readings focusing on a central theme. This is an opportunity to deepen our practice in a small circle of Sangha support, and can be a help to starting the week with a meditative mind.

Winter dates are: *Dec. 10th, Jan. 14th and Feb. 11th*

For more information about regional retreats or teachers, call the Northwest Dharma Society at 604-731-5469 or check their website:

www.westcoastdharma.org

Get on the
Dharma Hall Announcement
email list by sending an email to:

Karen@KarenFitzgerald.com

Ask to be added.

Bellingham Meditation Newsletter
is a quarterly publication.

Current Quarterly Issue:

December 2006 - February 2007

Spring Issue Submission Deadline:

February 10th, 2007

Bellingham Mindfulness Community

CONTACTS: Danna Zelenka, 360-738-0681 <dzelenka@excite.com>
Karen Fitzgerald, 360-676-5727 <Karen@karenfitzgerald.com>

WEBSITE: www.BellinghamMindfulness.org

Practice Schedule:

Wednesdays 7-9 PM

The Mindfulness sangha practices in the tradition of Thich Nhat Hanh.

Wednesday evenings begin with sitting and walking meditation from 7-8 pm. Various events occur after sitting and are listed to the right.

Orientation for newcomers is available on the first and third Wednesday of each month.

Meditation Retreat At Camp Indianola

The topic of the retreat will be Dogen's Four Virtues of a Bodhisattva: "The 12th century Zen Master, Dogen, recommended four methods of guidance for a bodhisattva that are pertinent to our practice today. They are giving, kind speech, beneficial action and cooperation. During our 7-day mindfulness retreat we will study and practice the "Four Virtues of a Bodhisattva" through our daily meditation and mindfulness, Dharma talks, and study groups."

The retreat, sponsored by The Mindfulness Community of Puget Sound will be held at Camp Indianola, near Kingston, January 12-19.

For more information contact Michael Melancon
michael_melancon@yahoo.com

Dharma Hall Board of Directors

Daimon Sweeny (Chair) -
Daimon.7@clearwire.net

Karen FitzGerald (Vice Chair)-
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karen@karenfitzgerald.com

Bob Penny (Treasurer) - 398-8834
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Joe Hebert (Secretary) -
joenjen@hotmail.com

John Robinson -
john@treefrogfarm.com

Monica Aebly -
bham2friends@yahoo.com

Jack Birr -
jeb@abhost.us

Bellingham Mindfulness Community Wednesday Night Schedule

- Dec. 6** Precepts Recitation and Dharma Discussion of Precepts *
Dec. 13 Dharma Talk with Guiding Teacher, Eileen Kiera
Dec. 20 Buddha's Enlightenment/Solstice Ceremony *
Dec. 27 Cleaning Meditation and Sutra Service
.....
Jan. 3 2 Periods of Sitting, Precept Recitation, ending with 3rd Period of Sitting *
Jan. 10 Dharma Questions
Jan. 17 Bell Master's Choice (Indianola retreat 1/12-1/19)
Jan. 24 3 Periods of Sitting and Sutra Service
Jan. 31 Cleaning Meditation
.....
Feb. 7 Precepts Ceremony *
Feb. 12 Periods of Sitting and Lovingkindness Meditation, followed by informal tea and cookies
Feb. 21 Dharma Talk with Guiding Teacher, Eileen Kiera *
Feb. 28 Sutra Study
.....
Mar. 7 Dharma Talk with Guiding Teacher, Eileen Kiera*
Mar. 14 Precepts Ceremony
Mar. 21 Dharma Talk with Guiding Teacher, Eileen Kiera *
Mar. 28 Earth Touching Ceremony
.....
Apr. 4 Dharma Talk with Guiding Teacher, Eileen Kiera *
Apr. 11 Precepts Ceremony
Apr. 18 Dharma Talk with Guiding Teacher, Eileen Kiera *

* Orientation Provided

Day of Mindfulness at Mountain Lamp:

February 25th, 10am - 2pm.

For information or registration please visit our website at www.mountainlamp.org
or contact John Bergin at 360-592-0600

The Bellingham Dharma Hall

is located at the corner of State Street and Maple in downtown Bellingham, in the Masonic Hall/Scottish Rite building,
1101 North State Street
Suite 300

Morning Meditation

All traditions are welcome to sit mornings
Monday through Friday
From 6:30 to 7:15 AM

For more information contact:
John Graber 738-0906

Bellingham Zen Practice Group

WEBSITE: www.BellinghamZen.org

INFORMATION & ORIENTATIONS: 360-398-7008, press 2# <info@BellinghamZen.org>

Upcoming Winter 2006 - 07 Bellingham Zen Practice Group Events

In addition to our weekly Thursday evening zazen (7 - 9 pm at the Dharma Hall), the Bellingham Zen Practice Group is sponsoring the following events this Winter in and near Bellingham.

December 2 – Rohatsu Retreat – 6:00am - noon

In early December, Buddhists throughout the world gather for retreats in celebration of the Buddha's enlightenment. Joining with all Buddhists, the Bellingham Zen Group will host a half-day retreat on December 2 at the Dharma Hall. Please come for sitting and walking meditation, a special Buddha's enlightenment ceremony, breakfast, and a Dharma Talk by our resident priest, Nomon Tim Burnett. \$10 - \$20, sliding scale plus donation to the teacher. Register online by 11/25 at www.bellinghamzen.org.

For questions, contact Registrar at registrar@bellingham.org or 360-510-3167.

Winter Zen Buddhist Practice Period – January 18 – March 4

January 19 - 21

Mountain Rain Retreat with Zoketsu Norman Fischer – Vancouver. Opening retreat of the Practice Period. Register at mountainrainzen@yahoo.ca or call Registrar at 604-873-3008.

February Shuso Class

Please watch for announcements at the Dharma Hall of the Shuso's Practice Period Class, taught by this year's Shuso, Kyoan Sandy Taylor of Seattle. She will be traveling to Bellingham to teach this class and take part in all Practice Period events.

March 3 - 5

Three-Day Sesshin with Zoketsu Norman Fischer – Bellingham Dharma Hall. Closing Retreat of the 2007 Practice Period. Thursday evening to Sunday afternoon - \$30 - \$60 sliding scale plus donation to the teacher. Register online at www.bellinghamzen.org. For questions or paper registration, contact Registrar at registrar@bellinghamzen.org or call 360-510-3167

March 5

Shuso's Dharma Inquiry Ceremony – Sunday, 3:00pm – Bellingham Dharma Hall. Shuso Kyoan Sandy Taylor will answer dharma questions from the sangha. Free. Members of all Dharma Hall groups are welcome.

Practice Schedule:

Thursdays 7–9 PM

Practice is in the Soto Zen style and includes sitting meditation (zazen), walking meditation (kinhin), and a bowing and chanting service. The evening closes with tea and discussion.

7:00 PM zazen

7:30 PM kinhin

7:40 PM zazen

8:10 PM service

8:30 PM program (varies):

 dharma talk, student talk,

 or work

9:00 PM clean up

Who to Call About the Hall

Building Business:

Jack Birr – jeb@abhost.us

Newsletter Editor:

Rachel Carter - 756-0189

reicreature@hotmail.com

Webmaster and Hall Scheduler:

Ted Williams - 676-5727

tedw@cc.wvu.edu

(See group pages for group contacts)

Flight went on so long
Movies, books, my mind got old
At last - grey clouds - home!

— Tim Burnett

Weekly Zazen and Service - Thursday evenings - 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM

We practice at the Bellingham Dharma Hall every Thursday evening. Newcomers are always welcome, and orientations with senior students are available by request at 6:30 each Thursday. One-on-one practice discussion with our resident priest, Tim Burnett, is also available. After two 30-minute periods of zazen, the evenings proceed as follows:

First Thursday - Zen Work Period (Samu) Working quietly together in the spirit of meditation, we fulfill our commitment to the Dharma Hall by cleaning the space, taking care of sangha jobs, and bringing the stillness of zazen into our activity.

Second Thursday - Dharma Talk A formal dharma talk is given by our resident priest, Nomon Tim Burnett, or a visiting speaker with authorization to give Dharma talks.

Third Thursday - Bodhisattva Precepts Ceremony The Bodhisattva Precepts Ceremony is an ancient ceremony in which we renew our intention to live ethically with kindness and regard for all beings. It is a deep ceremony of return.

Fourth Thursday - Student Talk Students prepare a short talk on their practice, which may be linked to a reading, followed by discussion. If you would like to give a talk, please speak with Tim or any Leadership Council member.

Bellingham Meditation Newsletter Request/Renewal Form

Members receive the newsletter free of charge, and do not need to fill out this form. If you are interested in becoming a member of the Dharma Hall, stop by the hall and fill out a membership form. *This form is for receiving the newsletter only.*

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ email _____

_____ I would like to be on the mailing list and contribute to the newsletter.

(\$5 suggested donation) ___\$5 ___\$10 ___other

_____ Please add my name to the mailing list, although I am unable to contribute at this time.

Mail to: Bellingham Dharma Hall (attn: Hans Sendelbach) 1101 North State Street, Suite 300, Bellingham, WA 98225

A \$5 donation covers the cost of sending four seasonal newsletters.

Note: if your mailing label says "last issue," fill in and mail the form above in order to continue to receive the newsletter without interruption OR renew your membership.

Bellingham Meditation Newsletter
1101 North State Street, Suite 300
Bellingham, WA 98225

complimentary copy

Consider becoming a member of the
Bellingham Dharma Hall