



May 2, 2012

ROCHESTER ZEN CENTER
A BUDDHIST COMMUNITY

Dear Sangha,

After a few fits and starts, spring is well established, and we're looking forward to seeing members and friends – old and new, near and far, young and well-aged – at the end of May when we celebrate Buddha's Birthday.

Here's a list of topics for this mailing, some routine and some new this year:

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Where's My Hard Copy?

This is the third quarterly mailing that we've sent out via e-mail (saving on printing and postage). Even though the website calendar stays more current than the old quarterly calendars that we used to mail out, the old calendars were useful as a hard-copy reference, and they're still available. You can bring the July-September calendar up online [here](#) and print it out, or come by the Center and pick one up.

For those who've elected to continue receiving a hard copy in the mail (by checking the box on the yearly pledge form) this letter and the calendar will make their way to you in a few days.

Buddha's Birthday

This year's celebrations begin with Temple Night and Jukai on Friday, May 25. If you have a figure of a Buddha or bodhisattva at home that you'd like to bring in and place on the main altar, please do. On Saturday we have the Baby Buddha Ceremony, an elephant parade and stories from the Sleeping Sage, as well as the rakusu ceremony for members receiving a new rakusu, a potluck picnic, Buddha's birthday cake, dokusan for out-of-town members and the Annual Meeting. Sunday morning at Arnold Park is devoted to the Buddha Bazaar starting at 10:00 am.

At some point in Saturday's festivities, between the Baby Buddha Ceremony and the elephant parade, the children in the Sangha Youth Group will put on a play telling the story of "The Little Parrot."

A full weekend schedule is included with this mailing and also posted on the Center's website at www.rzc.org.

To help with planning, please let the Center know by Friday, May 18, if you are coming from out of town. There's an accommodations reservation form included in this mailing. We'll find you a place at the Center, at Chapin Mill, or with local Sangha members. If you are making your own sleeping arrangements but plan to attend the ceremonies, please let us know this as well.

SanghaPalooza

Mark your calendars: the weekend of July 27 - 29 we will embark on our first-ever Sangha sleepover-family-camp-extravaganza at Chapin Mill. In addition to all the usual fun stuff we do at Chapin Mill (swimming, boating, hiking, mushroom-hunting) you can enjoy a full schedule of classes and activities ranging from yoga to Chi Gong, enso painting, trail marking, cooking, and more. In addition, you'll be treated to two informal lectures by Sangha members who are doing fascinating things. Oh, and there will be live music jams, board games, s'mores over the fire pit in the courtyard and, rumor has it, possibly even karaoke! As one Sangha wag put it, it's more Burning Man than Lollapalooza, and it's going to be a memorable weekend. More details to come soon, including a full agenda.

Founder's Day

This year we're shifting our annual remembrance of Roshi Philip Kapleau from the anniversary of his death, in early May, to a Founder's Day in celebration of his life. Starting this year – the 100th anniversary of his birth – Founder's Day will be on the weekend closest to his birthday, August 20. (Actually, in the early years of the Center there was a Founder's Day at the same time, so we're coming back to where we started.) This year, then, Founder's Day will be on Sunday, August 19.

Progress at Chapin Mill

Well, we're done! At any rate, the whole interior of the Retreat Center is done, and the siding shingles are on the Phase III northeast wing. Some stucco painting still needs to be accomplished, perhaps during this year's Ralph Chapin Memorial Work Retreat.

Spring came early to Chapin Mill this year, and everything's growing, with the redbuds in bloom in front of the building and the sweet fragrance of the daphnia and viburnum wafting through the air. Work now begins in earnest in the gardens as the weeds celebrate the return of clement weather! On the non-vegetation front, we're currently working on the interior of the Guest House, cleaning out the mold and mildew that made this little gem uninhabitable. In a month or two it should be available for individual retreats.

Plans for later this year include rebuilding the large stone chimney on the Mill House in order to get rid of long-existing leaks into the walls, as well as adding roof insulation and completely re-roofing the Mill House. We'll also be doing extensive exterior painting and staining on all of the buildings, and hopefully obtaining a more efficient furnace for the east end of the Retreat Center. To cut down on our utilities, we want to improve insulation above the kitchen by adding a layer of foam to the mix, and we might also want to add spray-in foam in the southeast wing of the building. Finally, the barn roof needs to be redone badly – but it will probably have to wait till next year!

Comings and Goings

John Grippo, who joined staff back in 2009, left us in February to resume his career. He did return, though, for Sangha Entertainment Night to reprise his signature role as Vinnie, Substitute Bodhisattva. Joanna Pernick has just left after nine months here in training to work on a farm in Bloomfield. And Keith Carpenter, who served for many years on staff, has returned after working as a nurse for several years in Ashville, NC.

Ralph Chapin Memorial Work Retreat

Once again we're starting to make plans for our annual Work Retreat at Chapin Mill. For those who are new or who have never taken part, this retreat is a bit like a mash-up of training program and summer camp. Most of our work is done in the mornings, with clean-up and free time in the afternoons. There are sittings scheduled each morning and evening for those who can attend. A lot of us will be staying overnight – there are plenty of rooms, and you can even camp out if you like. The retreat starts with a sitting at 7:00 pm on the evening of Tuesday, June 26, and finishes with lunch on Saturday, June 30. Come for as much of the retreat as you'd like and bring family and friends who'd like to help out. There's a wide variety of jobs – indoor and outdoor, skilled and unskilled. Each year when we look back on what we've accomplished, we're impressed and grateful for all that an inspired swarm of Sangha can accomplish.

There are no training fees for the retreat, although donations toward the cost of food are welcome. Let John Pulley know if you'll be coming. You can email him at john@rzc.org or call (585) 473-9180. Let us know your time of arrival and departure and, if you'd like to stay overnight, whether you need a place to sleep or plan to camp. If you're coming with children, let us know their ages. It also helps to know about any skills or limitations you may have. Plan to bring your own linens and towels.

Rakusus

The rakusu is an abbreviated form of the traditional Buddha robe (*kesa* in Japanese) and is worn as a reminder of our commitment to the Buddha Way, which we formally enter when we take the sixteen precepts at Jukai. The new life we are undertaking with this step is marked by the Dharma name we receive from our teacher, along with the rakusu. The first time we sit each day, the rakusu is placed on the head (a way of expressing reverence for its meaning), and the following verse is recited:

*Wondrous is the robe of liberation,
A treasure beyond form and emptiness.
Wearing it I will unfold Buddha's teaching,
For the benefit of all sentient beings.*

If you have sewn a rakusu, please return it to the Center by **Wednesday, May 23**, so that Roshi will have time to inscribe it with a Dharma name that he and you choose.

Annual Meeting

The Center's Annual Corporate Meeting is held during Buddha's Birthday weekend. We'll review the Center's financial and spiritual affairs, count ballots for the annual Trustee election, and those Trustees and Officers who are able to attend will be available to answer questions. All Sangha members are welcome at the meeting, which will be held in the Buddha Hall on Saturday afternoon, May 26, at 4:30. The Trustee Nominating Committee has nominated Kathy Collina and Tom Kowal to run this year. Incumbent Trustee Lou Anne Jaeger is completing her third consecutive three-year term and is accordingly ineligible for re-election under the Center's by-laws. Ballots and a brief biographical note for each of the two candidates will be sent to everyone who was a Center member as of the April 26 record date for the election. Please mail your postcard ballot to the Center or bring it to the meeting; ballots won't be available at the meeting itself. Past elections have been decided by a handful of votes, and one by a coin-flip after a tie.

Zen Bow Call for Submissions:

The next issue will be “Eating”

Our bodies require nourishment every day, and each time we consume food we are presented with an opportunity to practice clarity of intention and mindfulness. In the process of eating we can experience caring, social conviviality, sensuality, or solitude. We can observe attachments, greed, defilement, and guilt – depending on the social or emotional conditions that arise. And, when we lose awareness while eating, we can try again at the next meal. The forthcoming *Zen Bow* issue on “Eating” is concerned with the conditions we encounter – physical and emotional – when we consume food. Readers are invited to submit articles and/or images on the theme of Eating to the editors at zenbow@rzc.org by Friday, May 11, 2012.

... Followed by “Illness and Practice”

*Without undergoing a winter
that bites into your bones
How can the plum blossoms regale you
with their piercing fragrance?*
—Huang Po

We all experience illness from time to time – the flu, a migraine headache, an allergic reaction, depression, chronic pain, cancer ... the list goes on. Sooner or later we inevitably face an illness or condition that will end our life. Zen practice helps us live with illness and the clarity, helplessness, anger, and weakness that accompanies it. Living with illness is an opportunity to deepen our practice. Readers are invited to submit articles and/or images on the theme of Illness and Practice to the editors at zenbow@rzc.org by Friday, July 6.

Articles or images on other topics are also welcome and may be submitted at any time.

2012 Summer Picnic

Our annual picnic is scheduled for Saturday, August 11. If we're rained out, we'll move it to Sunday the 12th.

Sesshin Dates

Below are sesshin dates through January, 2013; all are led by Roshi at Chapin Mill unless otherwise indicated.

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|-----------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| June 9-15 | 6-day | deadline: May 17 |
| July 14-21 | 7-day | deadline: June 28 |
| September 14-16 | 2-day (to be announced) | deadline: September 6 |
| Sept 29-Oct 6 | 7-day | deadline: September 6 |
| November 10-17 | 7-day | deadline: October 18 |
| December 4-8 | 4-day | deadline: November 15 |
| January 5-12 | 7-day | deadline: December 13 |

If you miss the deadline, it's all right to apply late for any sesshin. If there's room, you're likely to be accepted.

In the Dharma,



John Pulleyn
For the Center