



ROCHESTER ZEN CENTER
A BUDDHIST COMMUNITY

September 19, 2017

Dear Sangha,

The Center is back up and running after our annual two-week break with a lot of activity just ahead. The upcoming final quarter of the year includes two 7-day sesshins (October and November) with a three-week Term Intensive between them as well as a 4-day sesshin in December. We also have a number of ceremonies coming up: Bodhidharma Day in October, a Ceremony of Aid, a Ceremony of Gratitude, and the Taking of the Precepts in November, and Buddha's Enlightenment Day in December followed by the ceremonies and sitting on New Year's Eve.

Fall Term Intensive

On the evening of October 12, the Thursday after the October sesshin, we'll have the opening ceremony for the fall Term Intensive. If you've never done a Term Intensive before or want to refresh your memory, you can find information and enrollment forms on the website at <http://www.rzc.org/program-events/term-intensives/>. If you've ever thought about stepping up your sitting schedule or making practice-fortifying changes to your daily routine, you will likely find it far more doable with the encouragement and support of others. This intensive will run for three weeks and end on November 2, just before the November sesshin.

Rakus and Dharma Names

If you're planning to receive a rakusu this fall, it's a good time to order your rakusu kit from the Center. If you don't have any sewing experience, be sure to give yourself plenty of time for the task! The cost of the kit is \$30, plus \$4.50 for shipping. (Also add four percent sales tax if it's delivered in New York State.) Anyone who has been a member of the Rochester Zen Center or one of its affiliates for at least a year, is formally a student of Roshi, and has taken part in a Jukai (Taking the Precepts) Ceremony (or will attend Jukai on the Saturday after Thanksgiving) may receive a rakusu. Rakusu sewing instructions are available.

Great Jukai Is Back

Last year we moved the November sesshin back a week so it wouldn't overlap the presidential election. That left less time to prepare for Great Jukai (which normally takes place every three years), and so we postponed it until now. Jukai is the annual ceremony of Taking the Precepts, and this "Great" version includes a ceremonial burning of klesa papers that represent our defilements of greed, anger, and delusion. There will also be a display highlighting the Six Realms of unenlightened existence. Roshi plans one or two teishos in the weeks leading up to Jukai to address the place of the precepts in Zen practice. If you're not able to hear them live, you'll be able to play them from the website.

Spring Trustees' Meeting and Annual Meeting of Members

The Center's Board of Trustees held its annual spring meeting on May 20 and 21. Among the actions taken was approval of the 2016 financial report presented a week later at the Center's Annual Meeting of Members.

The Center's Business Manager reported to the trustees and officers – whose responsibilities include safeguarding the Center's financial well-being – that Membership contributions for 2016 (\$186,953) were higher than in any of the five preceding years, for which the average was \$179,349. Chapin Mill net rental income was \$66,114, which was only slightly lower than the 2015 all-time high of \$67,884. However, sesshin income (\$57,205) was lower than in any of the five preceding years, for which the average was \$63,246.

The Business Manager reported that the Center's 2016 operating revenues were \$398,275, or 97 percent of the total budgeted. Operating expenses were \$419,945, or 83 percent of the total budgeted. Accordingly, after including as operating income a five-percent operating draw of \$62,834 from investments, the Center had an operating surplus of \$41,164 for 2016, rather than the \$32,500 deficit that had been projected when the 2016 budget was approved. The principal reason for the operating surplus was much-lower-than-expected health insurance expenses, which resulted from the enrollment of a number of staff members in New York State's Medicaid program; however, it is unknown how the possible partial or total repeal of the Affordable Care Act might adversely affect the Center's finances in the future. Without including extraordinary income, in 2016 the Center's Investment Fund increased by \$69,755, or 5.6 percent.

The Board also heard and discussed the reports submitted by the chairs of the Center's standing committees and task forces. Among the highlights was the report on tentative plans for the Klava House project at Chapin Mill. The project entails building a two-story house of approximately 1,200 square feet near the existing Farm House at a cost of approximately \$150,000. Zen Center staff member Tom Kowal, who has wide-ranging experience with building construction, is acting as project foreman while also providing much of the labor, which will help keep costs within budget. The new house will allow Tom and his wife Donna to move to Chapin Mill, so that Tom can eventually succeed the current Chapin Mill Caretaker, Wayman Kubicka. (Further information on the project is posted on the Center's website at <https://www.rzc.org/klava/>.)

On May 28, in conjunction with our celebration of the Buddha's Birthday, the Center held its fifty-first annual corporate meeting of members. When Sangha ballots were counted, Sensei Gerardo Gally had been re-elected to a three-year term as trustee. In addition, Roshi announced that the Board of Trustees had re-elected trustee Tom Roberts to a three-year term. (Three of the Center's six trustees are elected by the Sangha, two are elected by the Board, and one is appointed by the Abbot.) Among other matters presented at the meeting, Roshi reported that our broadcasting of a live online audio feed of teisho, daily sittings, and all-day sittings via the Center's website has been very well received by Center members. The broadcasts have attracted 35 to 40 listeners per week, and listeners report that they feel included in formal sittings even when they are unable to be physically present in the zendo.

Minutes of the Board of Trustees' and annual corporate meetings, including copies of financial reports and statements, are available in the Communications>Meetings & Finances section of the Center's website at <http://www.rzc.org/communications/meeting-minutes/>.

Sesshin Dates

Below are sesshin dates through December 2018; all are led by Roshi at Chapin Mill unless otherwise indicated.

2017

Sept 30-Oct 7	7-day	deadline: September 7
November 4-11	7-day	deadline: October 12
December 5-9	4-day (John Pulleyn)	deadline: November 16

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January 6-13	7-day	deadline: December 14
February 23-25	2-day (John Pulleyn)	deadline: February 15
April 7-14	7-day	deadline: March 15
June 9-16	7-day	deadline: May 17
July 21-28	7-day	deadline: June 28

Sept 29-October 6	7-day (Amala-sensei)	deadline: September 6
November 3-10	7-day	deadline: October 11
December 11-15	4-day (John Pulleyn)	deadline: November 22

Please bear in mind that if you miss the deadline you may apply late for any sesshin. We always accept qualified applicants if there's room. Also, if you need to book a flight early and want to make sure beforehand that you'll be accepted to sesshin, you may ask for an early decision, and we will accommodate you if we can.

These dates are also listed in the Sesshin section of the Center's website.



John Pulleyn
For the Center