

Kaihan

The Quarterly Newsletter of the North Carolina Zen Center

Fall 2005



The Brooks Branch Zendo is currently operating on the following schedule:

Monday — Friday mornings:

6 AM — 6:40 AM Zazen

Tuesday & Thursday followed by opportunity for interview with Sandy

Tuesday Evening:

7 PM — 8:30 PM Zazen

Thursday Evening:

7 PM — 9 PM Chanting, zazen, interviews and Dharma talk

Sunday Morning

9 AM Work practice

10 AM - Noon Chanting, zazen, interviews and Dharma talk, followed by tea

Sandy regularly attends Tuesday mornings, Thursday mornings and evenings, and Sunday mornings. Also, please note the hour of work practice before the Sunday morning session. Feel free to show up and give a hand in the many small tasks which keep the Center running smoothly.

Upcoming Events

New Years Eve. Welcome in the New Year at the Center, with an evening of sitting, good food, good friends and a champagne toast, and hear the big bell rung the traditional 108 times (if the ringer can keep count!) It will also be a good opportunity to renew your membership with a yearly donation of \$50. We need to know by Christmas if you plan to attend so we can plan accordingly, so please call or email as soon as possible to let us know you're coming, and make your plans to be at the Center, from 6 PM on January 31 until...

January 12 — 18 The Center will host a week-long Zazenkai. Zazenkai literally means "Sitting Zen Gathering." Please come and sit with us. This retreat is open to all, and beginners are welcomed. Instruction will be available, and one may attend full- or part-time, although lodging preference will be given to full-timers. Meals, lodging and interviews with Sandy Gentei Stewart are provided. The Center asks for a suggested donation of \$20/night to cover the Center's expenses. We are asking for partial deposits at least two weeks in advance of the retreat in order to ensure that enough participants will be attending. A minimum of ten participants will be

required for the retreat to “make.” For more information or to make a reservation please call or email the Center.

General Information and News

Lots of news to report this time. Best of all, in addition to the first six dormitory rooms having been completed earlier this year, the shower house has now received a Certificate of Occupancy! We're official. We can now host retreats in style — a spare, zen-like style, but a style nonetheless.

The Center hosted its first large outside retreat in early October. A group of 18 Sufi's came from around the country to participate in Rumi Fest in Chapel Hill, and stayed in the dormitory and utilized the shower house — Matt got the hot water working the day before they arrived!

The Fall Zen Weekend took place this October from Thursday, October 13 to Sunday, October 16, and was a great success. This was the first retreat for Center members since the shower house came on line, with hot water for everyone, and it was greatly appreciated and enjoyed! Attending were full-and part-time participants including B. J. O'Brien, Sam Chatterjee, Jason Dowdle, Bill Stevens, Dongjun Park, Sandy Gentei, Leila Webster, Lee Hill, Tim Holmes, Barbara Gordon, Anna Madden, Kim Young, Matt Young, John Iler, Jennifer Armstrong, Tim Sussman and Casey Miller. All in all, accommodations have taken a quantum leap forward in the last several months, with many thanks offered to all who helped get the Center over this hump and into real operation!

Anna Madden has set up a Yahoo group for our membership and friends. This group provides an online meeting place where members can exchange all kinds of information, sort of a community bulletin board. It is just getting started, and there are many ways it might be used - sharing schedule information, getting updates about the progress of the Center, keeping in touch with other members, and many other ways which have not occurred to anyone yet. If you haven't received Anna's email with the link for joining, email her at madden_anna@yahoo.com and she'll fix you up.

Many people have continued to generously give their time and resources to the Center. John Baugh recently purchased a new computer which he configured and donated to the Center to replace its aging PC. Lynn and Beth Hoffman donated a very nice woodstove, which Matt and Jason installed. Pam Berger continues to handle the Center's bookkeeping and manage its mailing list, although family and household duties might require her to forego this task in the future. Annie Burns recently contributed a much-appreciated sewing machine. And many people gave their time for several work days in August during which the final push was made on the shower house, including Anna, Troy and Shannon Madden; Matt; Sandy; Sandy's worker Bryan; Beth Hoffman; Kenny; Lee Hill, Justin Peele and Piyathida Khumajantranan. And Tim Harrison, the Architect who designed the Center, recently visited to discuss plans for the next phase of construction, the dining hall. Thanks to you all, and to any others I have failed to mention.

The Center's Board of Directors met on Sunday, October 16, after the Fall Zen Weekend concluded. In attendance were board members Carol Hewitt, Roxanne Henderson, Joe Kenlan, Bill Stephens, Leila Webster and Drew Dunn. Also present were Sandy Stewart, Anna Madden and Matt Young. Probably the biggest topic of discussion was the need to find funding sources for the next phase of construction, the dining hall/dormitory. Estimated cost is around \$300,000,

and many possibilities were discussed for beginning to raise this money. More on this as it develops...

A note about dana for upcoming retreats. Several people have commented at different times, both here and at other retreats, that they were unaware that our teacher, Sandy, does not receive a share of the dana which is given as the "suggested donation" for the retreat. For example, here at the NC Zen Center the suggested dana is \$20/night. This goes to the Center to cover operating costs, plus the cost of expendable supplies used during the retreat, such as food. None of this goes to the teacher, as it barely covers these expenses. Additional dana may be offered directly to the teacher as a special token of gratitude for his services, without which the teacher would go uncompensated. We hope you will understand this arrangement, and make what contributions you can both to the Center and to our teacher, who selflessly offers his services toward our spiritual growth.

And about dana in general: there are many ways one can donate to the Center. Some find it convenient to make a regular monthly donation, and the Center finds this predictability very helpful. Others make donations when and as they can, and this is also quite welcome. Donations can be earmarked to go in several directions, to the NC Zen Center Building Fund, to cover general operating expenses, or to go directly to Sandy. Donations may be mailed to the Center, or may be deposited in the dana box on the shoe rack at the entrance to the zendo at the Center, which has three slots to reflect these three ways to contribute.

Comings & Goings

We have recently lost as a regular participant our long-time friend and supporter of the Center, Linda Company, who recently moved to the small mountain town of Abingdon, Virginia, to be closer to family members. Linda has been a student of Sandy's for many years, since before the new Zendo was established at Brooks Branch, and it was Linda who donated the 15 acres of land on which the current zendo stands. Linda has been a fixture in the daily life of the Center for at least a decade as an ordained nun, and her wealth of knowledge, experience and wisdom, not to mention her warm and gentle presence, will be much missed. Please come visit, Linda!

The Center welcomes Karl Linger, who recently moved to this area from Arizona where he sat at one of our sibling centers, Hakuin-Ji. We would also like to welcome Brad Page, formerly of Charlotte. Brad and his son built the original version of the house in which Linda had been living, close by the Center, and with Linda's departure Brad has moved into it, and will be a frequent presence at the Center. Welcome!

The Web

Yellow moon
dusky blue
black branches
owl

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— *En Shin*

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