

LAUGHING RIVERS SANGHA ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

11/22/14

Meeting took place at Martha's house and was facilitated by Denys with assistance from Dawn. In attendance: Denys, Tony, Deborah, Michael, Mike M, Fiona, Laura, Bill, Martha, Marty, Dawn, Kate, Jen, Stephanie, George

1. The meeting began promptly and opened with a brief meditation. The mindful meeting guidelines were read
2. An overview of the sangha organization was distributed prior to the meeting by email. There was an agenda item relating to one element of our organization, the Order of Interbeing (OI). Several members asked for more clarification about the role of OI in the sangha, and the purpose of their meetings. Some people expressed perceptions that not enough information is available about this path of practice. The process of being mentored and ordained into the OI was explained, and it was clarified that OI members do not make any decisions about the sangha, but meet regularly to support one another in study and practice of the 14 mindfulness trainings. OI is a particular path of practice undertaken by sangha members who wish to more closely work with the 14 Mindfulness Trainings, and not a decision-making body within the sangha. We have previously devoted several Tuesday night sessions to explaining the structure and purpose of OI in the sangha, and the existence of an OI committee (currently Red and Deborah) and materials are available on the website concerning OI; however, there may be a need for further efforts to educate the sangha about this path. The discussion concluded with a recommendation that we increase our diligence about explaining the structure, opportunities, and process of OI in our sangha and in the larger sangha. This process may include sharing OI milestones (new aspirancy, pending ordination) on Tuesday nights. Information about OI is available on our website, www.laughingrivers.org.
3. George went over the sangha finances (attached).
4. There was a discussion of public days of mindfulness (DOMs). The sangha sponsored a DOM with several Blue Cliff monastics over Labor Day weekend, which was very well-attended. Although free of charge, the event was financially supported by dana from participants and by a grant, and there was a small net gain (which will be included in our contribution to Blue Cliff monastery this year). The group expressed support for sponsoring future DOMs, and Jen, Stephanie, Denys, George and Marty have offered to be part of an organizing committee .
5. There were also interfaith and inter-sangha events last year, including our sitting exchange with the Dzogchen sangha and our "Living Buddha Living Christ" spring retreat. The Vesak celebration, which we attended, represents the interest and intention of many Buddhist groups in the city to form connections with each other. However, there was insufficient interest to generate Laughing Rivers representation at the International Day of Peace this year. The sangha supports future exchanges/events, and Mike M, Michael and Marty have offered to pursue these efforts.
6. In 2013, a sharing group convened to discuss exposing the sangha to additional dharma teachers. Several sangha members have requested that we have a retreat or DOM led by a

female lay or monastic teacher. This wish was reiterated by multiple people attending the meeting, and several teachers known to various sangha members were suggested. The DOM committee and the retreat committee will consider the sangha's wishes and explore inviting female teachers to lead retreats and/or events in the coming year.

7. The sangha showed support for the establishment of a "Joanne Stephenson Practice Scholarship" to provide funds for sangha members to attend retreats offered in our Plum Village tradition. Laura and Denys, and possibly Red, will work on organizing this.
8. The sangha supports pledging \$1000 to Blue Cliff monastery this year, with some money to be raised from dana in a separate basket Tuesday nights, some to come from moneys remaining after expenses were met for the Labor Day event, and the remainder to come from the general fund. We took advantage of a matching fund from the larger sangha last year to triple our support. Michael and Jen will organize this fundraising effort and watch for future matching grants.
9. There was a request that the sangha sponsor an initiative in mindful education. Marty has offered to do research about mindfulness in education and to bring results and a proposal to the CCC.
10. Bill has asked to be replaced as the contact person for the sangha. Michael volunteered to assume this role. Stephanie explained that we can use an email address and a voicemail account that could be accessed by multiple people. This allows us future flexibility if the job becomes too burdensome for one person. For now, Michael will use the laughingrivers email address, which will be posted on our website. We will also place our contact information on the LRS homepage (it is currently on another page in the site so it will be moved to make it more visible).
11. There was a suggestion that various documents now in our closet be scanned. This will be considered by the CCC.
12. Martha and Rebecca have expressed an interest in finding a new place to hold our Tuesday night sittings. They will do a search and report any recommendations to the CCC.
13. We are currently recording and editing dharma talks from the retreats to post on our website. This is a time and energy-intensive task, and there is some concern that showing retreatants' faces would be a breach of privacy. The CCC will consider whether this practice needs to continue.
14. Committees needing new members were posted on a flip chart for sign-up. These included the retreat committee, Member Care committee, CCC, opening/closing team, and others. Any sangha member interested in signing up for any of these teams is encouraged to contact an existing member. See sign-ups and committees below.
15. There was a closing meditation, and the meeting was adjourned. A delicious potluck feast ensued.
16. Thanks to Denys and Dawn for facilitating, Martha for hosting, Michael for bellmastering and all for attending and sharing.

-Respectfully submitted, Deborah

LRS Committee Sign-ups

CCC

Mike M., Marty, Bill, George

Joanne Scholarship

Denys, Laura, Red, Fiona

Member/Sangha Care

Michael

Public DOM etc.

Jen, George, Marty, Stephanie, Denys

Blue Cliff Dana

Jen, Michael

Tuesday Close-up

Laura, Bill, Dawn (when available, another volunteer is welcome)

Retreat Committee

Tony, Michael, Laura, Marty, Deborah, Martha, Denys

Wake-up

Marty

New location

Rebecca, Martha, Jen

Interfaith/ Inter Sangha

Mike M, Michael, Marty