



ROCHESTER ZEN CENTER
A BUDDHIST COMMUNITY

March 3, 2017

Dear Sangha,

Buddha's Birthday

We hope we didn't use up all the beautiful spring days in February and there will be a few left over for May and our annual celebration of the Buddha's birth over the Memorial Day weekend. Everyone is welcome, and more details will go out later. In the meantime, save the dates – May 26th through 28th.

New Meeting Space in the Dormitory

As part of an outreach initiative, we plan to start a mindfulness-based pain management program aimed at people in the Rochester community dealing with chronic pain. Casting about for an accessible venue, we've settled on the right side of the dorm behind 7 Arnold Park and are beginning to get it ready as a meeting room. Already, the Wednesday evening Refuge Recovery program is meeting there. We've purchased a large set of well-designed chairs (some of which will be used in the zendos in Rochester and Chapin Mill), and carpet will go in next week. Check it out the next time you're at the Center!

Finding Your Seat

Zen is not an easy practice, and getting some momentum going is famously difficult. If you find yourself struggling, know that you're in good company. For some time, we've been talking about ways to help new people get started (and help older hands keep going). Taking a page from our sister Center in Vermont, we're going to begin offering a follow-up to the introductory workshop that first introduces members to Zen practice here in Rochester.

On Saturday, April 1 at 11:00, everyone – new members, trial members and old timers – is invited to come to the Center for a session with Roshi and others that will address the whole process of “finding your seat”:

How can I get comfortable doing zazen?

How do I negotiate all the procedures and guidelines that come along with practice at the Center?

What books might be helpful to read?

How do I explain what I'm doing to my friends and family?

(And any other questions you're wrestling with.)

Assuming it goes well, we'll set up a regular schedule, perhaps following a week or two after each introductory workshop. For this first meeting, we are inviting everyone to join us for the informal noon-time sitting and the lunch that follows. So besides having some questions answered, you'll have a chance get to know more of the people practicing alongside you.

Chapin Mill Work Retreat: Work, Zazen, and Summer Fun

Veterans of the annual Ralph Chapin Memorial Work Retreat are fond of describing it as “summer camp, but for adults,” although children and young adults (and dogs!) are also welcome. This year's work retreat will start on

Tuesday evening, June 27, and conclude with lunch on Saturday, July 1. Every year, some 40 - 50 of us come from near and far to help get the Chapin Mill buildings and grounds ready for another summer. Over the years, we've refined our schedule to balance work, sitting, and free time to spend with Sangha members and friends.

Trustee Nominations and Spring Ballot

This spring, Sensei Gerardo Gally's three-year term as a Sangha-elected trustee will come to an end. The Center's Trustee Nominating Committee is looking for two names (one of which may be Gerardo-sensei's) to appear on the ballot. Suggestions for candidates are welcome from all Sangha members. If you'd like to suggest a possible nominee, write to the Center, *Attention: Trustee Nominating Committee*, or send an e-mail to nominations@rzc.org. Or you may directly contact any of the members of the Nominating Committee: Roshi, Corporate Secretary Scott Jennings, Trustee Jonathan Hager, and Sangha members Brenda Reeb and Deborah Zaretsky. Please submit any suggestions by March 31, so the Committee will have time to consider them. Ballots will then be mailed to all members, and the votes will be counted at the Center's annual meeting of members, which takes place during Buddha's Birthday (Memorial Day) weekend.

(Three of the Center's six Trustees are elected by its members, two are elected by the Board of Trustees itself, and one is appointed by the Abbot. Each year at the spring meeting, the term of one of the member-elected Trustees expires, and an election is held to fill the opening. Under the Center's by-laws, an elected Trustee is limited to serving three consecutive terms, but again becomes eligible to serve after being off the Board for a year.)

A Note from the Financial Office

Many thanks to all the members who have responded generously and promptly to the 2017 annual membership pledge forms that the Financial Office sent out last November. (If you haven't yet returned your pledge form, we would appreciate your sending it at your earliest convenience.) Annual membership contributions are the main source of the money needed to pay the Center's bills, and the Sangha's continuing generosity is vital to the Center's financial health.

For the benefit of members who itemize their income-tax deductions, the Financial Office has also sent out statements detailing each person's financial contributions to the Center during 2016. If you haven't received your statement or have any questions, please contact our Business Manager, Scott Jennings (scott@rzc.org).

Rakusu Ceremony

During Buddha's Birthday celebrations over the Memorial Day weekend, there will be the customary rakusu ceremony. To receive a rakusu, you need to have been a member of the Center for at least one year, be a formal student of Roshi, and have taken the precepts. If you haven't taken the precepts previously, you'll have a chance to do so on the Friday evening of Buddha's Birthday weekend. Order your rakusu kit and sewing instructions by sending your request along with \$30, plus \$4 for shipping. (For New York State addresses, add 4% sales tax; that's an extra \$1.20, for a total of \$35.20 with shipping.) The Center follows the Zen tradition of people sewing their own rakusus, which makes receiving and wearing it more meaningful. Be sure to give yourself plenty of time to sew.

Events on the Horizon...

All-day sittings: March 26, April 30, & May 21

Finding-Your-Seat refresher session: Saturday morning, April 1

Temple Night & Buddha's Birthday: Friday evening, May 26 – Sunday, May 28

Chapin Mill Work Retreat: Tuesday evening, June 27 – Saturday, July 1

Sesshin Dates

Below are sesshin dates for the rest of this year; all are at Chapin Mill and led by Roshi unless otherwise indicated:

2017

April 8-15	7-day		deadline: March 16
June 10-17	7-day		deadline: May 18
July 29-August 5	7-day	(Amala-sensei)	deadline: July 6
September 8-10	2-day	(Eryl Kubicka)	deadline: August 31
Sept 30-October 7	7-day		deadline: September 7
November 4-11	7-day		deadline: October 12
December 5-9	4-day	(John Pulleyn)	deadline: November 23

2018

January 6-13	7-day		deadline: December 14
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Please bear in mind that if you miss the deadline for any sesshin, you may apply late. 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.

In the Dharma,



John Pulleyn

Head of Zendo