



ROCHESTER ZEN CENTER
A BUDDHIST COMMUNITY

August 19, 2016

Dear Sangha,

The Center's annual two-week break begins after the Tuesday evening sitting next week, and the Center resumes its regular schedule on Wednesday morning, September 7. Just two days later we go into a 2-day sesshin, the first of five that culminate with the 7-day January Rohatsu sesshin. The final quarter of the year includes a four-week Term Intensive between the October and November 7-day sesshins and a big Thanksgiving week, with the Ceremony of Gratitude and the Taking of the Precepts.

Comings and Goings

After several years with a large staff and many trainees, we find ourselves in leaner times. Since March we've seen a number of our staff move on to new chapters in their lives. Just to list those who were with us for many months or years: Terry O'Brien, Josh Kneer, Gayle Alexander, Rick Smith, Andy McClain, Dave Musser, and Leo Skye. On the plus side, Tom Kowal, Joey Wustner, and Jack O'Shaughnessy are the newest full staff members, and Pete Leahy is here as a new resident trainee. If you've thought of applying for a period of residential training at the Center, we can promise you there will be a bed!

Fall Term Intensive

On the evening of October 13, 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 fall intensive runs for four weeks; it ends on November 10, 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 of the Precepts) Ceremony (or will attend Jukai on the Saturday after Thanksgiving) may receive a rakusu. Rakusu sewing instructions are available.

Great Jukai Postponed to Next Year

As a rule, we schedule what we call Great Jukai once every three years. (This more elaborate ceremony includes a walk through the Six Realms Tunnel on the way to the Buddha Hall, where we hold the Taking of the Precepts and a ceremonial burning of klesa papers that represent our defilements of Greed, Anger, and Delusion.) We moved the November sesshin back a week this year from its normal slot so that it won't conflict with the presidential election. As a result, there are only a few days between the end of sesshin and Jukai, and for that reason, we've elected to hold our next Great Jukai in 2017, rather than this year, when it would normally occur.

Fiftieth Anniversary: Jon Kabat-Zinn Lecture

Our commemorative weekend in July was a deeply heartwarming milestone for our Sangha. More than 400 members, former members, and friends and families came for the festivities. Pictures are posted [here](#).

Coming up next, on October 15, at 7 pm, Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn, the founder of Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction and good friend of the Center, will give the Fiftieth Anniversary Lecture at the Hochstein School of Music Performance Hall at 50 Plymouth Avenue North here in Rochester. Dr. Kabat-Zinn's lecture is titled "The Mainstreaming of Mindfulness in America: What Zen's Got To Do With It, and Where Does It Go From Here?" More information is posted on the Center's website [here](#) along with a link to tickets.

Spring Trustees' Meeting and Annual Meeting of Members

The Center's Board of Trustees held its annual spring meeting on May 14 and 15. Among the actions taken was approval of the 2015 financial report presented two weeks 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 2015 (\$177,426) were both slightly lower than in 2014 (\$180,600), as well as slightly lower than the average for the five years 2010-2014 (\$178,175). However, Chapin Mill net rental income reached an all-time high of \$67,884 in 2015, and sesshin income (\$63,715) was both slightly higher than in 2014 (\$59,694), and slightly higher than the average for the five years 2010-2014 (\$62,313).

Overall, the Center's 2015 operating revenues were \$403,546, or 102 percent of the total budgeted. Operating expenses were \$475,003, or 98 percent of the total budgeted. Accordingly, after including as income a five-percent operating draw of \$60,788 from investments, the Center had an operating deficit of \$10,668 for 2015, rather than the \$27,900 deficit that had been predicted. From 2009 (the year we instituted our current accounting procedures) through 2015, the Center has accumulated an operating surplus of \$20,919. In 2015 the Center's Investment Fund increased by \$21,493, or 1.7 percent, before subtracting the \$60,788 operating draw. The net decrease after the operating draw was \$39,296, or three percent of the Fund's beginning balance. Much of the poor performance of the Investment Fund during 2015 may be attributed to the generally poor performance of the stock market.

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 of the Task Force on Staff Medical and Dental Coverage explaining that the Center is hoping to save up to \$30,000 per year through a comprehensive restructuring – with the help of an attorney experienced in health-benefit law – of the way in which medical coverage is provided to many of the Center's staff members. The Board also discussed matters such as plans for the Center's fiftieth anniversary celebrations and the possibility of building a small staff house at Chapin Mill.

On May 28, in conjunction with our celebration of the Buddha's Birthday, the Center held its fiftieth annual corporate meeting of members. When Sangha ballots were counted, Jonathan Hager had been elected to a three-year term as trustee, and Betsy Friedman had been elected to a two-year term. In addition, Roshi announced that he had re-appointed trustee Chris Pulleyn to a three-year term. (Three of the Center's six trustees are elected by the Sangha, two are elected by the Board itself, and one is appointed by the Abbot.) Among other matters presented at the meeting, Tom Kowal, who chairs the Center's Facilities and Sustainable Operations Committee, reported that this summer would see replacement of the last original section of the slate roof on 5 Arnold Park, which was built in the early 1880's. The new roof has an expected life of 150 to 200 years.

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 2017; all are led by Roshi at Chapin Mill unless otherwise indicated.

2016

September 9-11	2-day (Eryl Kubicka)	deadline: September 1
October 1-8	7-day	deadline: September 8
November 12-19	7-day	deadline: October 20
December 6-10	4-day (John Pulleyn)	deadline: November 24

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January 7-14	7-day	deadline: December 15
February 24-26	2-day (Wayman Kubicka)	deadline: February 16
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
Sept 30-October 7	7-day	deadline: September 7
November 4-11	7-day	deadline: October 12
December 5-9	4-day	deadline: November 16

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.

In the Dharma,



John Pulleyn
For the Center