



PIMC NEWS

PORTLAND INSIGHT MEDITATION COMMUNITY

www.portlandinsight.org

APRIL 2003

The Middle Path

By Robert Beatty

I grew up in a family with two alcoholic parents. Every breath we took was profoundly affected by the realities of alcoholism. While basic needs were met and there were wonderful times, there was a gaping hole in the center of the family. The proverbial elephant was in our living room and a huge amount of life energy and vitality was consumed by confusion and denial. Nobody talked about the problem; it was not supposed to exist. In isolation we suffered a lot of difficult emotions, and had to deny them even to ourselves. We played our parts well and kept the family secrets from the outer world. For me, the price of denial was depression, migraine headaches and drug abuse. It took years after leaving home to begin to awaken to the family wounds and to begin to transform them into compassion and wisdom.

Encountering the teachings of the Buddha was the major turning point in bringing sanity and balance into my life. Meditation, and learning to live in the present moment opened my eyes and heart and I began to unearth the anguish that I had been avoiding. Ever so slowly, the power of awareness has illuminated layer after layer of denial and has created the conditions for a modicum of inner peace.

Now I am faced with an outer world that is careening toward disaster. My own nation, perhaps the most powerful state ever on the planet, is defining itself as superior to international law and all the nations of the world. It is sleepwalking its way into "justified preemptive war". At times I experience fear and hopelessness as I become aware of the magnitude of the forces that are driving the war machine, and sense how incredibly small I am in the face of such monstrosity.

As in my family of origin, there is reticence to speak openly about the elephant in our national living room. Many of us are afraid to feel just how upsetting the war is, for fear it will consume us or drive us into depression, rage or anxiety. Most of our political leaders are fearful of speaking up lest they be attacked as "traitors." We are reticent to speak of it among ourselves because it might cause conflict and threaten the little bit of love, comfort, and community that we have managed to cobble together.

Unacknowledged fear fills the hearts of Americans and there is the belief that we can feel safe again by "winning" the "war on terror". This will likely be as successful as the "war

on drugs" or the "war on poverty". War and violence do not work in our inner lives and do not work to bring peace into the world. The Buddha taught, "Hatred never ceases through hatred. Hatred ceases through love alone. This is the ancient law."

In response to this outer tension and turmoil I experience two pulls that on the surface seem diametrically opposed. On the one hand, I am tempted to withdraw into isolation and meditation to enjoy the peacefulness of a mind that does not concern itself with the problems of the everyday world. It would be lovely to bask in solitude and tranquility. On the other, I am drawn to bring the fruits of thirty years of Dharma practice into engagement with the difficult issues that are facing us.

This dichotomy is not new to me. For most of my adult life, despite being very much a householder, there has been a nagging pull that has whispered, "I should be a monk. If I were really serious about Dharma practice I would devote my life to meditation." Instead, I have actually lived a life well summarized by Zorba the Greek, "Wife, house, kids, the whole catastrophe."

The Buddha defined compassion as "the sensitive heart's trembling when faced with suffering". My heart trembles when I think of the people in Iraq dying, the young men and women in uniform who will die and be maimed, the tens of thousands who will be displaced from their homes, the endless suffering that will arise and endure for generations to come from so much death, and the sacrifices everyone will make as the global economy squanders wealth on weapons. I am also moved by the realization that the karma of this attack will likely spawn a generation of psychologically damaged young people who will bring terror to us in the future. My heart cringes when I reflect upon releasing the genie of preemptive attack. This will have unforeseen, and tragic, political and social consequences as striking first is adopted by belligerent nations and individuals.

Ajahn Sumedho, senior Western monk of the Thai Forest Tradition said at Cloud Mountain, "Living with lovingkindness doesn't mean that you have to like everybody. It means instead that you don't cast anyone out of your heart. Sometimes it's essential, and in their best interest, to hold someone in

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From The Board

By Judy Smith

The PIMC Board meeting took place on March 10th at Judy Smith's house. Present were board members, Dick Teutsch, Robert Beatty, Jim Dalton, Michael Hall, Doug Pullin, and Judy Smith; and guest, Carol Armstrong. The following are the notable events of the meeting.

Policy on role of Sangha participants who visit the Board was discussed. Sangha members are always welcome to visit the Board meetings. If they wish to bring up new business, they should contact a Board member prior to the meeting to get an item on the agenda. Full participation in ongoing discussion is not feasible given the short time frame of the meeting, and the need to stay on track and follow the agenda. However, a brief period will be set aside at the end of the meeting for visitors to provide feedback or applicable contributions to the topics discussed in this meeting. We want to create an open atmosphere where new perspectives and ideas can arise.

We are aware of the need to engage in some serious long-term planning for PIMC. Robert and Doug will prepare some guidelines on how to approach the long-term planning process. They will present their ideas at the April meeting.

Robert proposed that a committee be formed to do a feasibility study on

acquiring our own practice space. Ron Matela and Nancy Turner would head up this group. The Board approved this proposal.

A continuing discussion ensues around guidelines for announcements in the three main venues for communication in the Sangha which are the newsletter, the list-serve, and Sunday night announcements. Questions arise around commercial messages, non-sangha fundraisers, and which avenues are best for particular Sangha related topics. We are looking at how this issue is handled in other Buddhist communities.

Dick Teutsch announced he is resigning as Treasurer. He has served in this leadership role for three years now and he felt it was time for him to step down. Dick has brought wisdom and years of professional experience as an accountant and financial adviser to his work with PIMC. We are very grateful for his invaluable contribution as PIMC has launched into a 501(c)(3) tax status organization. Dick has agreed to remain a consultant to the Board.

Previous to the meeting, Board members reviewed the bylaws from the Mid-Peninsula Insight Meditation Community. We decided that due to the highly technical language, we needed input from a legal advisor on the developing of the PIMC by laws. Doug will tap possible legal resources within our community.

Our next Board meeting will be held on April 14th from 6:15 to 8:30pm. The meetings are open to any participant of PIMC. Please contact me if you would like to attend.



*Judy Smith, PIMC Board Facilitator
may be contacted at 503-274-0673,
thirdage@europa.com.*

Sangha Hikes

I am organizing a hike to take place on Saturday, April 19th. I propose we have a hike the third Saturday of each

month through September. If you want to go, meet at The Old Wives' Tales Restaurant, 1300 E Burnside (intersection of Burnside and Sandy).at 8:00 am on April 19th.

Bring a sack lunch and water. We could car pool from there. I have in mind a not overly strenuous hike that we might want to do part of the way in noble silence. For suggestions or questions call Paul Campbell at 360-694-2073.



Imagine . . .

A Tribute to Our Sunday
Night Karma Yogis

By Judy Smith

Imagine how it would be to arrive at the Dharma hall one Sunday night prepared to share a period of meditation and reflection with the rest of the PIMC community, and you find the place locked up solid.

Or, if it was unlocked and you got in, but there was no one to greet you at the door, no lights, no heat, (well, that does happen quite a bit) no hot tea and snacks, no signs to tell you where to park, no floor altar and no informational materials, and no dana bowl. In other words, there was just no preparation to support your practice and that of your fellow practitioners.

Or, imagine that things were prepared for our group and we all participated in meditation and we heard one of Robert's insightful Dharma talks, but, there was no one to close up and we all went home leaving the space in disarray and the doors all open.

Well, that's where our Sunday night Karma Yogis come in. They are three teams comprising a total of 14 people who volunteer on a rotating basis to perform the above tasks. Let's take the

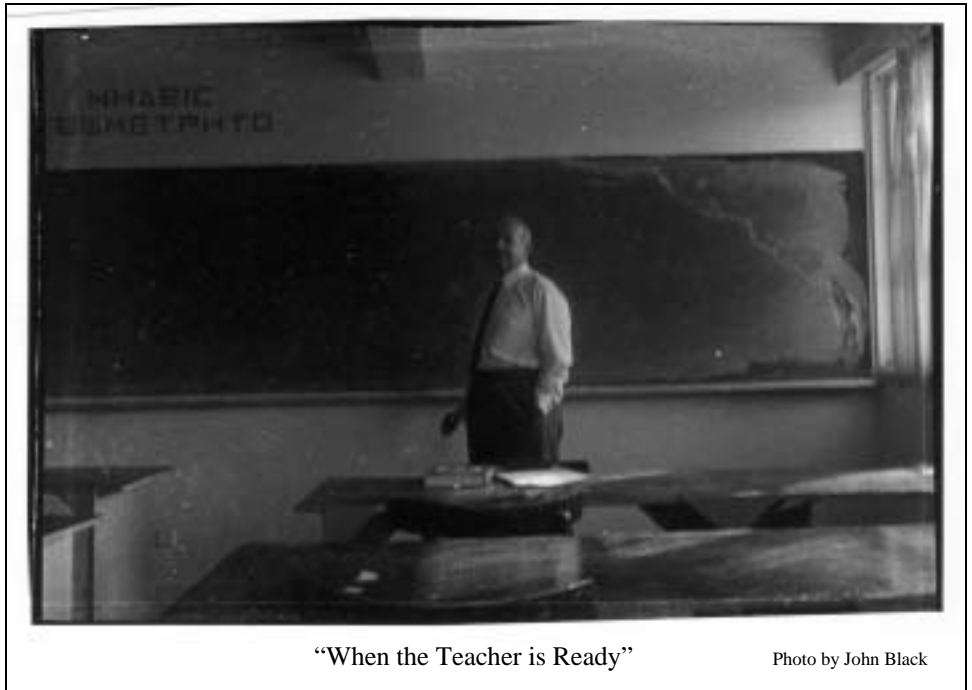
first team who are “officially” known as the Openers & Tea Group:

Phyllis Maynard, Lyn Doiron, Kristi Nelson, Preston Smith, and Had Walmer

rotate the responsibilities of getting to the hall 45 minutes early, opening up, preparing the hall for our group’s needs, and hosting the cookie and tea period before meditation.

They also put out those “no parking” signs that help us to maintain good relations with the neighborhood. You’ll often see one of them scooting out and then back in during walking meditation to bring the signs back inside the hall. A long time member of this team who has just stepped down is Bill Bachhuber. We thank him for his dedicated service.

Greeters are the second group. Greeters are at the front door, handing out chant sheets, helping newcomers feel welcome. Even as long as I’ve been coming here, it’s always reassuring to see one of them there with their warm greetings.



“When the Teacher is Ready”

Photo by John Black

Paul Campbell, Diane Lewis, Ellen Morrison, and Donnella Wood share this task. We are grateful to Sandy Graves who started all of this by just appearing at the front door every

Sunday because she saw the importance of having someone welcoming people into the Dharma hall. For a long time Sandy was the only greeter and the group slowly expanded.

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lovingkindness while you call the police”. Buddhism does not advocate passive acceptance of everything that occurs in the outer world. It does, however guide one to act out of lovingkindness, non-violence, and the realization that there are no enemies, including those whose actions one is trying to stop. The Buddha’s teachings are sorely needed in the social discourse of our time.

Should I withdraw from the world or engage? Should I use meditation to calm my mind and return to the denial of my childhood, or should I become socially active? Carl Jung suggested that when faced with such contradictions, one can contain the opposites of the dilemma, remaining open to both but choosing neither, until the “transcendent third position” reveals itself. The Buddha called this the Middle Path. It’s not some average or middle point between the opposites. It is not a fixed position or a decision. It is something new, previously unrealized. The resolution of the polarity is possible only by not identifying with dichotomous either/or thinking. Perhaps Jesus said it best with the admonition to, “Be in the world but not of it”. This is a tall order, to be engaged with daily life, and so well rooted psychologically and spiritually as to not to get swept away in the torrents of lust, hatred and ignorance. Remaining more or less awake requires frequent withdrawal from the world and dedication to inner practice. It also allows one, as a householder and layperson to practice the Dharma in every aspect of daily life and to bring a voice of peace into the world.



*Robert Beatty is the guiding teacher of the Portland Insight Meditation Community.
rbeatty@easystreet.com*

The Closers (we should come up with a better name -- sounds like a gambling hall) are the ones who have volunteered to stay late and do a general clean-up and restore the hall to its original form. Our current closers are Carol Armstrong, Theresa Friedline, Joan Norris, Shelley Sauer, and Ron Slatin. This group has the especially difficult task of getting the doors locked. It is truly a practice of patience in working with these doors. Thanks to

Cece Bockenstedt and Claire Balhoff who have offered their services and are now taking a break.

When you see these folks hard at work, I invite you to introduce yourself, thank them, and even lend a hand if it seems appropriate. Many of us are involved with sharing our time and talents with the Sangha because we want to build community, we want to meet others, and we want to contribute to a community and a practice that has given meaning to our lives.



New Committees

PIMC is forming two new committees: a Peace/Social Action Committee and a Diversity Committee. These committees are being created at the initiation of the Board of PIMC, who has invited Linda Sawaya to be the chairperson for both. Linda is an Arab-American artist and peace activist, who recently spent three years in the bay area where she began her vipassana meditation practice at Spirit Rock. Following is an announcement that was sent on the listserve on March 20, from Robert Beatty about these committees.

Peace/Social Action Committee

These are challenging times in which to figure out how our community might be involved in social action in such a way that our grounding in deep practice is strengthened. We have been brailing toward this goal and it has necessarily not been clear how to proceed, nor has it been without difficulty. We have taken only the first few baby steps. This is yet another change, and change is always challenging. This evolution has been spurred on by the rush to war, but this dimension of being a functioning spiritual community has been in my vision from the start.

Please note that there is no expectation that everyone will be interested in or endorse everything the Peace/Social Action Committee does. It is another possible field of practice for those who are interested.

This committee will maintain liaison with the Buddhist Peace Fellowship and keep us informed of activities that might be of interest. It may be that there is a lot of activity of this nature, or rather little. As with all things we have done it will evolve in an organic fashion.

There is a connection and perhaps an overlap between these two committees.

The Diversity Committee

The vision for the Diversity Committee comes from the model developed at Spirit Rock, which was thoughtfully created by their Diversity Council. The intention is to ensure that PIMC is accessible and welcoming to all people who wish to participate in the sangha regardless of ethnic origin, race, cultural background, socio-economic class, age, gender, sexual orientation, or physical ability. Our purpose is to awaken and sustain an engaged exploration into the many levels of

seen and unseen separation among the members of Portland Insight Meditation Community using the fundamental grounding of our Dharma practice.



All members of our community who are interested in being involved in developing and participating in these groups, are encouraged and welcomed to contact Linda either in person at the sangha, by phone 503-297-7497, or by email linda@lindasawaya.com or buddhapainter@attbi.com.

Cushion's a berry
for when I sit I make pies
life's crust filled sweetly.

Hold fast to the raft
though storm tides pull you under
a burning lamp floats.

Rivers alter things
even when they're gone, you see,
landscapes hold torches.

Strong wind lifted me
I looked down on shrinking earth—
my life as a kite.

by Lyn Doiron

April 2003- PIMC Calendar of Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 *7-9pm Beaverton Sit - Dalton Home	2	3 * 7-9pm HeartSong Sangha - 2311 E. Burnside	4	5
6 * Children's Sangha 6:30-8:45 pm - PDC Robert Beatty * 5:30pm Newcomer Orientation & Instruction - PDC * 6:30-8:45pm Meditation and Dharma Talk -PDC	7	8 *7-9pm Beaverton Sit - Dalton Home	9 * 9am-Noon Meditation - PDC	10 * 7-9pm HeartSong Sangha - 2311 E. Burnside	11	12
13 Robert Beatty * 6:30-8:45pm Meditation and Dharma Talk - PDC	14 PIMC Board Meeting	15 *7-9pm Beaverton Sit - Dalton Home	16	17 * 7-9pm HeartSong Sangha - 2311 E. Burnside	18	19 Sangha Hike (See page 2 for details)
20 * Children's Sangha 6:30-8:45 pm - PDC Robert Beatty * 6:30-8:45pm Meditation and Dharma Talk - PDC	21	22 *7-9pm Beaverton Sit - Dalton Home	23 * 9am-Noon Meditation - PDC	24 * 7-9pm HeartSong Sangha - 2311 E. Burnside	25 1 pm Newsletter Deadline for	26 Sangha Sharing Suppers (See page 6 for details)
27 Robert Beatty * 6:30-8:45pm Meditation and Dharma Talk - PDC	28	29	30 Service Committee Meeting -Harris Home			

* Sunday Evening and Wednesday Morning Events - Portland Dharma Center (PDC), 2514 SE Madison, Portland

* Tuesday Evening - Dalton Home: 11965 SW Foothill Drive, Beaverton. Call Jim at 503-641-8336 if you need directions.

* Thursday Evening - HeartSong Sangha led by Doug Pullin: 2311 E. Burnside on the 3rd floor, Portland. Reach Doug at 503-293-4177.

Half Day

A great opportunity to come together for three hours of uninterrupted sitting and walking.

Sits Continue:

Wednesdays: April 9 and 23, May 14 and 28. From 9am - noon at PDC.

Residential Retreats With Robert Beatty

May 17-21st

Sea To Sky Retreats

Vancouver, BC

jenniferakeane@hotmail.com

604.732.0325

July 18-24th

Johnson's Landing Retreat Center

Kootenai, BC

info@JohnsonsLandingRetreat.bc.ca

888-756-9929

October 14-20th

Hollyhock Holistic Learning Center

Castle Rock, WA

www.hollyhock.bc.ca

800.933.6339

May 23- 26th

Cloud Mountain Retreat Center

Castle Rock, WA

www.cloudmountain.org

888-465-9118

July 25-28th

Marsh House

Whidbey Island, WA

patriciafulnecky@hotmail.com

206-789-1784

December 6-12th

Cloud Mountain Retreat Center

Castle Rock, WA

www.cloudmountain.org

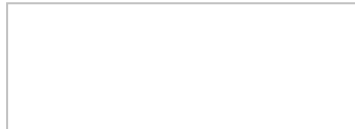
888-465-9118



Portland Insight Meditation Community
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Sangha Sharing Suppers

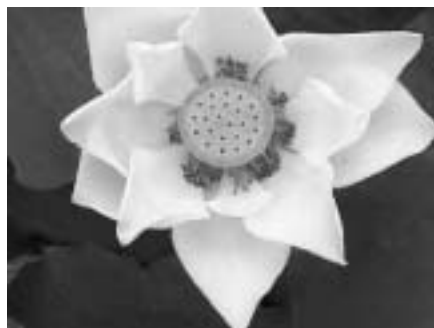
Saturday, April 26

As we reemerge from our winter hibernation, it's time to break bread with old friends and new for a spring-time sharing supper, which are small potlucks held in the homes of community members. Please join us for the next sharing supper on Saturday, April 26th. Sign up on Sunday nights from April 6th through 20th. Or sign up via email or phone with Terri.

When you sign up, you may choose to host or attend a sharing supper. This is a family event. If you wish, please

sign up to bring your partner, family, and/or children. If you volunteer to host, let me know how many people you can accommodate and if you have room for kids. If you're a host, expect a call and email from me on Monday, April 21st to give you your guest list. You in turn will call your guests to coordinate meeting time and food and give directions to your home.

Contact Terri Huggett with questions.
terrihug@msn.com 503-281-3002.



May Art Issue Cancelled

I've had some unexpected events come up and I will not be able to publish a special Art Issue in May. If you've already completed something creative for the newsletter, please let me know and I'll try to fit it in. Sorry for the inconvenience.

Regular submissions for the May newsletter are due on Friday, April 25th.

Submit to: Karen Havran,
khavran@hevanet.com, 503-231-2758

