



Berkeley Zen Center



December 2011 Newsletter

ANNUAL NEW YEAR'S EVE CELEBRATION!

Ring in 2012 at the annual New Year's Eve Sitting and Party. Attend any portion or the entire event. Please enter the zendo between periods (that is, during kinhin only). New and old friends and guests are all welcome.

The schedule is:

8:00 pm Zazen	10:13	108 bells begin
8:35 Kinhin	10:35	Kinhin
8:45 Zazen	10:45	Zazen
9:20 Kinhin	11:20	Kinhin
9:30 Zazen	11:40	Zazen
10:05 Tea	12:10 am	Slow chant of Heart Sutra and end sitting

A celebration and potluck will follow in the community room. Watch the bulletin board for details, and to sign up to help make merry with food and to clean up.

WINTER BREAK

Winter break will begin at the end of afternoon zazen on Friday, December 16 and continue through Sunday January 1. We will resume with our usual Monday program on January 2. During interim, there will be informal zazen Monday through Friday at 5:40 am and 5:40 pm and on Saturdays at 6:00 am for one period, providing that a sangha member volunteers to open the zendo. We need volunteers to lead these informal periods. No experience is necessary! Speak to Tamar if you are able to do this and need instructions. There will be a sign-up sheet on the patio bulletin board.



Affirmation of Welcome

Walking the path of liberation, we express our intimate connection with all beings. Welcoming diversity, here at Berkeley Zen Center the practice of Zazen is available to people of every race, nationality, class, gender, sexual orientation, age, and physical ability. May all beings realize their true nature.

B Z C S c h e d u l e

December

Rohatsu Sesshin

Sunday, 12/4 - Saturday, 12/10

Suzuki Roshi Annual Memorial

Monday, 12/5, 8:20 pm

Buddha's Enlightenment Ceremony

Saturday, 12/10, after lecture—11:10 am

Winter Break

Saturday, 12/17 – Friday, 12/31, story this page

New Year's Eve Sitting and Party

Saturday, 12/31—see story this page

January 2012

New Year's Day (zendo closed)

Sunday, 1/1

Founder's Ceremony

Tuesday, 1/3, 6:20 pm

Wednesday, 1/4, 6:40 am

Bodhisattva Ceremony

Saturday, 1/7, 9:40 am

One-day Sitting

Saturday, 1/21, 5 am – 9:10 pm

Kidzendo

Saturday, 1/28

NEWS FROM THE BOARD

Deep gratitude is extended to the five people who agreed to run for the board this year: Ross Blum, Shelley Brock, Greg Denny, Ron Nestor, and Veronica Reilly.

Here are the 2011 election results. Shelley Brock and Veronica Reilly are newly elected members-at-large, and Ron Nestor has been reelected to member-at-large for a second term. They will join current board members Ed Herzog, Walter Kieser and Colleen Busch. All positions (Abbot Sojun Mel Weitsman, Vice Abbot Hozan Alan Senauke and Office Manager Lisa Nelbach,) and officers (President Gerry Oliva, Vice President Jake Van Akkeren, and Treasurer David Weinberg) were confirmed for another year. Ross and Greg have been invited to serve on board committees.

All of us on the board would like to warmly salute the hard work and dedication of outgoing members-at-large Mary Duryee and Christy Calame who have been invaluable with their insights and significant contributions. While they will be missed, the good news is that they've each agreed to continue their work on board committees. We also extend our appreciation to outgoing Recording Secretary Rondi Saslow, who not only carefully kept our minutes for the past year, but also brought fresh ideas to the board that have led to some very positive outcomes for the sangha.

The board will hold a retreat in mid-January to review this past year and to set a broad agenda for 2012. All of us look forward to serving BZC and meeting the challenges of the upcoming year.

SEWING BUDDHA'S ROBE

If you are interested in preparing for Lay Ordination in 2012, remember that sewing classes start in the last half of January. Classes are open to those who have asked their teacher if they may participate.

Please speak with Sojun Mel Weitsman or Hozan Alan Senauke before the sewing classes begin (and preferably before the winter break).

After you speak with your teacher, promptly contact the sewing teacher, Jean Selkirk. Check the bulletin board for further announcements.

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE:
Third Friday of the month before each issue.
January deadline: Friday, 12/16, 8 pm



Family Activities at BZC

Saturday Morning Childcare Childcare is offered free of charge on Saturday mornings for zazen from 9:30 to 10:15, then families are welcome to listen to the lecture on the sound system in the community room. It's helpful for planning if you can let us know that you're hoping to attend; phone or email Laurie Senauke, 845-2215, or lauries@kushiki.org. Childcare for 8:45 zazen instruction and beginner orientation may be offered by special arrangement.

Kidzendo A program for young ones three and up is offered on the third Saturday morning of each month (or the fourth if a sesshin is scheduled on the third). We meet in the community room at 9:30 for a meet and greet, then sojourn to the zendo for the first ten minutes of lecture starting at 10:15. Afterwards, families reconvene at 1933 Russell for more activities, possibly including formal tea and one minute of meditation and/or free play, depending on the realities of the moment.

Zazen, Discussion for Parents, Childcare Provided BZC is no longer offering a potluck for families on the third Friday of the month. However, we have started a new dharma group for parents, and we welcome parents in all stages to join us. The meetings will include zazen, check-in, and study. Childcare will be provided for those who need it. We are meeting at 10:00 am on the 2nd Sunday of each month; the group is led by BZC parents/senior students Laurie Senauke and Greg Denny, and the meeting and childcare are at Chez Hopper-Denny. This is not a drop-in group - we would like folks to commit to attending for this current school year. Of course we know that not everyone will be able to make every meeting. RSVP, including your childcare needs, to Laurie (lauries@kushiki.org), Greg (greg@techsperience.org) or Marie Hopper (marie_hopper@sbcglobal.net).

Family Practice Email Group To make it easier to publicize, announce and remind ourselves about family practice activities at BZC, we have a Yahoo group. We'd love to have you join this list if you have children in your life, even if you don't typically attend family practice events. We promise to only send, at most, ONE email per week, just a short reminder of upcoming events. To join, just email Laurie (lauries@kushiki.org) or Marie (marie_hopper@sbcglobal.net).

December	3	Childcare
December	10	Sesshin—no program
December	17	Interim—no program
December	24	Interim—no program
December	31	Interim—no program
January	7	Childcare
January	14	Childcare
January	21	Sesshin—no program
January	28	Kidzendo
February	4	Childcare
February	11	Childcare
February	18	Sesshin—no program
February	25	Kidzendo

An Interview with Berkeley Zen Center's Head Gardener, Nancy McClellan

November, 2011
by Meghan Collins

Five evenings a week, if you come in the gate of Berkeley Zen Center, you are likely to see Nancy McClellan in a red jacket, working with rake or clippers. Every Saturday morning, and during all sesshins, she is present to lead the garden helpers during work periods. Nancy has been head gardener for the sangha for the past three-and-a-half years, following Tamar in this practice position.

Nancy's interest in gardening began in college with succulents and cacti in pots. She now has a 40'x40' garden at home where she grows winter vegetables, tomatoes, herbs, and flower bulbs. Her vision for the Zen Center garden is to try to keep the lushness of spring all year round, and to foster "a place that is from every angle appealing." She gives credit to many others who have helped her over the years, both hands-on and with advice. In the 90s, the late Dolly Gattozzi and a group of her friends worked continually in the garden, as, more recently, did Catherine Cascade before she moved to Oregon. In earlier years, Patrick McMahon placed the garden rocks. Marian Yu, Miriam Queen, and arborist Sachiyo Aoyama shared their work and expertise. The present aesthetic pruner, Lary Huls, is a strong resource, and Nobuo Iwanaga gives loving care to the memorial garden.

Now, there is exciting activity on the zendo's west side. Catharine Lucas and Dianne Schnapp have each taken a space and are designing fresh beds in their own styles, so watch for new developments there.

Nancy has been an artist since the age of six, when she made her bedroom closet into a studio where she secluded herself for hours to draw and paint. She is a graduate of the San Francisco Art institute, where she earned a Master of Fine Arts degree. For many years afterwards, she painted in oils by day in her live-in loft studio, bolstering her income with many art and non-art jobs, including night work at Macy's and I. Magnin.

Her paintings attracted a following but, like most artists, she needed a steady day job for survival, and for 23 years she worked as an assistant in an Oakland law office specializing in class action suits on home-improvement scams (mostly vinyl siding). The flexible hours there allowed her to continue her own work and

the work enabled her to buy the house in north Oakland where she has lived for more than two decades.

Since leaving the law office in 2006, she says that she is busier than ever. "I am never bored. It is a three-ring circus," but a wearying one, to manage house maintenance, art, Zen practice, and gardening all at once. She does not paint at present, but draws from life every day and works with photographs to keep her artist's eye fresh. She also writes plays, and belongs to a private improvisation group among friends, which she says gives her ideas for playwriting.

Nancy revealed that she has a fondness for aliases, which she says stems from her self-effacing mother's condemnation of "pushy" behavior. "Dressed up like a circus horse" was her mother's put-down for any signs of showing off. Therefore, if you look up Nancy's e-mail address in our directory, you will find "friedabates," which began as her high-school alias of "Frieda Bates." Her *nom de paintbrush* is "Gloria Boatwright."



Like many of us, Nancy's path toward Zen began with books when she was in college. She read Meister Eckhart, St. Teresa of Avila, Martin Buber, and Suzuki Roshi's *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*. She first came to BZC (looking for a Suzuki Roshi-based center close to home) in 1992, "in the midst of a terrible love affair," but she observes dryly that, as a basis for Zen practice, that didn't work out too well. Later, in '96, she returned for a better reason—inspired by friends, she wanted to practice Zen. Once she was settled in, "Rebecca Mayeno dragged me by the ear to Mel, and said to him, 'Nancy wants lay ordination.'"

Since taking the head gardener position Nancy is in the zendo less than she used to be, but she sits when she can, attends classes and ceremonies, and has a home meditation practice. She hopes to sit part of Rohatsu sesshin. Gardening is her main practice and chief joy. She also enjoys working with so many varied people in the sangha, although she feels she has a long way to go in interacting with people. Perhaps it is modest Frieda Bates who adds, "but almost every time things work out in inexplicably miraculous ways."

One thing is certain: no one can enter the grounds of Berkeley Zen Center and not be affected by the beauty and peace that has been nurtured there by Nancy McClellan and her predecessors.

OLD PLUM MOUNTAIN DVDS AVAILABLE

Looking for the perfect gift or stocking stuffer for your loved one or favorite bodhisattva this holiday season? Consider giving the DVD, *Old Plum Mountain: The Berkeley Zen Center, Life Inside the Gate*. Not only will you surprise and gladden your gift-getter, but proceeds from the sale of the DVD go toward supporting BZC. The DVD can now be ordered from the Berkeley Zen Center web site, www.berkeleyzencenter.org, or purchased directly at the BZC bookstore table every Saturday.

NEW BOOK BY RAUL DENKEI MONCAYO

Routledge has just published a new book by BZC's Raul Denkei Moncayo: *The Emptiness of Oedipus. Identification and Non-identification in Lacanian Psychoanalysis*.

Raul will donate two copies to the library in case anyone in the sangha is interested.



Series

FELDENKRAIS AWARENESS THROUGH MOVEMENT

Rosie Rosenthal, a long time friend of BZC, will offer a three-part series in January, demonstrating the Feldenkrais method of body awareness and movement. This work was developed by Moshe Feldenkrais (1904-1984), using his scientifically inclined mind to develop a system whereby he could deal with recurring injuries that were restricting his life. The system teaches flexibility of mind as well as increasing flexibility in our bodies, and aims more at self-education than at therapeutic manipulation. The first class will focus on gentle innovative movements, based on self-observation and our ability to learn and adapt. The second and third classes will use these techniques to concentrate on the lower back.

The classes will be on three Saturday afternoons, **January 7, 14, and 28** from 12:30 to 1:30 in the community room. Class fee per session is \$5.00. All are welcome. Wear comfortable clothing. We will be sitting in chairs. A sign-up will be posted in mid-December. Rosie is a Guild Certified Feldenkrais practitioner with four years of training and many advanced courses. She also maintains a private practice. For questions you may call her at 525-3867.

SOJUN ROSHI'S 2012 STUDY GROUP

Sojun Roshi's study group will continue in 2012. The group is open to all and will begin in a four part series during the first half of the year. Sojun will pick a subject, yet to be determined, and will comment on the material as well as leading discussion. The study group has a more leisurely and detailed format than is possible during his Saturday lectures.

We finished 2011 studying Zen Master Bankei and his teaching of the "unborn Buddha nature." This year we'd like to try meeting on the last Friday of the month from 7:15 to 8:45 pm. The four Friday evening dates will be: **1/27, 2/24, 3/30, and 4/20**. The schedule for the second half of the year is yet to be determined.

The sign-up for the series will be posted in early January. The fee for the first half-series is \$40.00, and will not be pro-rated for missed classes. If you have questions or wish to sign up early, please email class coordinator Ron Nestor, mnestor1@yahoo.com. We ask that you not sign up until you are sure you can attend. The bulletin board sign-up will be posted the first week of January.

Reminder

ROHATSU SESSHIN

This year's Rohatsu sesshin, led by Hozan Alan Senauke, begins on Sunday, December 4 and ends Saturday, December 10. This last BZC sesshin of the year celebrates the practice and life of Shakyamuni Buddha, and all sangha members and friends are invited to attend Buddha's Enlightenment Ceremony, which will be on the morning of Saturday, December 10 at 11:10, right after lecture. Rohatsu is also a time to be inspired by the memory of our founder, Shunryu Suzuki Roshi. The Suzuki Roshi Annual Memorial Ceremony will be on Monday evening, December 5 at 8:20, and everyone is also warmly invited to attend this ceremony.

If you have signed up for Rohatsu this year and have questions, please contact sesshin director Jake Van Akkeren at 925-933-3486 (before 9:00 pm) or by e-mail at jvanakkeren@comcast.net.



BZC POLICY ON COLDS AND FLU SEASON

In an effort to support each other's health, we are asking that sangha members stay home if they are ill. We are recommending following the Center for Disease Control's guidelines: please don't come to the zendo if you have fever, cough, runny nose, muscle aches, or anything you equate with viral illness. Please stay home and take care of yourself for seven days or until you have not had fever for 48 hours, whichever is longer. If you realize you are ill after you have arrived on a Saturday or sesshin day, please let the director know and go home. Some of us are not only older, but also have medical conditions that are immuno-compromising,

so your awareness and self-care are important to us all.

We understand that some coughs and sneezes result from allergies. Please inform the sesshin director if this is the case with you. If you are uncertain, speak with the sesshin director, who can consult with an M.D. if one is available. If you have concerns about someone else in sesshin who appears ill, please consult with the sesshin director rather than approaching the person yourself.

If you have further questions, please contact Health and Safety Coordinator Peter Pfaelzer or BZC vice-president Jake Van Akkeren.

O C C U P Y !

BZC photographer Ko Blix caught some of our sangha members participating in Occupy Oakland/UC Berkeley events recently. Here's a sampling.



Photo by Ko Blix

Mark & Hazel Copithorne explain that People > Money

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Ken Knabb at UC Berkeley

Photo by Ko Blix



Bruce Coughrin & Laurie Senauke at Oakland

Photo by Ko Blix

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