

ARCATA ZEN GROUP NEWSLETTER  
April, 1998

UPCOMING SESSHIN

WEEKLY SITTING

The AZG meets at 8:10 AM Sundays at the Northcoast Aikiext newsletter goes out, many Zen events - AZG and others - will have taken place in the area. It would be wonderful if those who participate could send notes to the newsletter to share their experiences of the extended practice period, the Flathead Sesshin, etc. I look forward to hearing from all of you!

Today's Quote: "Compassion is an action word." -- TAFKAPrince

BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY

This April 8th event will be commemorated April 11 (just as the newsletter is going to press!) with a potluck at Gael's house at 5 PM.

DAY OF MINDFULNESS RETREAT

Arnie Kotler and Therese Fitzgerald, students of Thich Nhat Hanh, are leading a one-day retreat Saturday, April 18 from 9 AM to 5 PM at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship building, located at 24 Fellowship Lane off Jacoby Creek Road in Bayside. There is a \$15 registration fee, and some scholarships are available. A vegetarian sack lunch and sitting equipment should be brought. The organizers request that participants avoid using any scented products.

EXTENDED PRACTICE PERIOD

This year's extended practice period is ongoing, with groups meeting at Gael's house Tuesday mornings at 9:15 and Wednesday evenings at 7:15 for two periods of zazen and discussion. The EPP is scheduled to end May 13.

ONE DAY SIT

Maylie will lead a one-day sit at Gael Hodgkins' house on Thursday, May 13, from 9 AM to 5 PM. Please bring your own bag lunch and sitting equipment. If you need more information call Monique or Gael.

LOST COAST SESSHIN

Our trip to the Lost Coast will begin at 9:30 AM on Friday, May 14, at Black Sands Beach just north of Shelter Cove. We will hike 8.5 miles along the beach in the King Range Wilderness to the homestead at Big Flat. Hiking time averages 5-6 hours. We will return by the same route on Monday, May 18. Hiking terrain varies from rock rubble to packed and loose sand. There will be stream crossings and large rocks to negotiate. Headwinds are sometimes encountered. The weather in May is variable - rain is always possible and days can be foggy, damp, and cool. As with any wilderness hike, it is important that participants be confident in their ability and be prepared for the terrain and distances involved.

Our gear will be flown into Big Flat by small plane, so daypacks need only carry sack lunch, drinking water, jacket/rain gear, and any other personal items necessary. The owners of the property at Big Flat have requested that we minimize the amount of stuff we bring. Specifically, pack for this trip as you would for a backpacking trip. Plane space is limited so consolidate your gear. We won't be bringing zafus or zabutons on the plane. If you want to use a zafu during sesshin, please feel free to carry one in your daypack. Extra sleeping bags and pillows are available at Big Flat to serve as supports and pads. There are also four usable tents on-site; those tents we do bring must be small/backpack tents. The details of what we transport will be worked out with those who sign up for sesshin.

During our stay at Big Flat a regular sesshin schedule will be followed. We will have use of the kitchen, zendo, sauna, and hot tub there. We will be sleeping in tents near the house. All jobs will be shared. Fees reflect the cost of food plus \$50 per person for the use of the facilities at Big Flat. Also included are the cost of air transport and Maylie's expenses. We estimate a total cost of \$110 per person. Scholarships are available. Please send your reservation card plus a \$50 deposit to the AZG by May 1. For those who sign up for this retreat, a second mailing will follow, including a schedule, equipment list, and any other information needed. If you have any questions about the hike or any other aspect of the trip, please call Mark or Gordy.

JUNE SATURDAY SESSHIN CANCELLED

The June Saturday sesshin, held at Gael's house, has been canceled. The August sesshin is scheduled for the second Saturday of the month, from 9 AM to 5 PM, as usual. Please bring a bag lunch and sitting equipment. For more information, call Gael.

JUNE MEDITATION with ZEN MASTER DON GILBERT

Paula Yoon is organizing a morning of meditation, focusing on Compassion, with Reverend Don Gilbert for June 21. A potluck lunch will follow. The retreat will be held at Lloyd Fulton's home on West End Road. (Maps are available on the book table at Sunday sittings, or call Monique) The cost is \$10 a day. Please call Paula if you are interested.

## LETTERS

"If you don't like logging, don't look at it." --letter to the editor, Eureka Times-Standard  
"How strange are the back streets of Pain City." --Rainer Maria Rilke

If Rilke had lived in a rural background in the great Pacific Northwest, he might have written "how strange are the back roads of Pain Mountains." How strange indeed. If we don't like pain should we not look at it? Surely denial has its uses, but not for ecologists. The great ecologist Aldo Leopold wrote "to be trained as an ecologist is to live alone in a world of wounds." Now, many of us who have attachment to this place, this Humboldt bioregion, witness with and embody the suffering of the bioregion at the hands of industrial civilization. Flying over the clearcuts on Yager Creek, Lawrence Creek, Salmon Creek, and Bear River, lands that were stripped of their forests by the greed of corporate raiders, I feel their pain in my body. I am a self-selected inhabitant of this bioregion. Embodying the pain of this land is part of my experience of dwelling in this place. Flying from Arcata to British Columbia, across the temperate rainforests of the great Pacific Northwest, in a small plane a few years ago, the pilot and I sat together silently hour after hour after hour as we witnessed an unbroken series of massive clearcuts on all public and private lands between Arcata and British Columbia.

This pain sometimes immobilizes me. I feel like roadkill, like the disembodied logs on the back of a logging truck on their way to the wood chip factory. Pain can also mobilize me to engage the process, whatever it takes, to begin healing myself. How strange are the back roads of Pain Mountain, the twists and turns, the revelations that appear beyond each bend in the road. And the river runs through, a great brown god, silted with soil from the denuded slopes.

My teachers tell me that time and the river flowing will somehow heal our bodies, if not in this lifetime then in future lifetimes. Attached to a landscape through which we are passing, passing away into new forms of being, I search for new revelations of joy in a world of wounds.

--Gael Hodgkins

## CURRENT AZG DISCUSSIONS

### PRACTICE COMMITTEE

The practice committee met March 7th (Dennis, Gordie, Mark, Marilyn, Monique, Paul, Pete, Quynh, and Rose attending) and 15th (also attended by Maylie). March 7th:

We agreed to make our zafus and zabutons available to the Day of Mindfulness retreat Saturday, April 18th. It was suggested we ask them to include some scholarships

Talked about sending summary of minutes to editor of newsletter

Laid out guidelines for extended practice period to begin March 11th at the same time as the March retreat with Maylie

Formed a committee to address Buddha's Birthday April 8th

Revised Beginner's Handbook. It will be topic of discussion at next practice committee meeting

March 15th:

At Maylie's suggestion, we began using a straw vote to find out where people stand on an issue that is currently under discussion. Thumbs up for agree, thumbs down for disagree, thumbs horizontal for neither agree nor disagree

Reviewed Beginner's Handbook

Asked to have Retreat Coordinator's Handbook made available to members at next meeting

Talked about having the practice committee included in by-laws with power for decisions about the practice

--Pete Kayes

## NEXT NEWSLETTER

The next newsletter deadline is . Mail your comments, letters, articles, announcements, &/or zen poetry, essays, and reflections to Suzanne at the above address or e-mail her Please note on your enclosure that it is for inclusion in the newsletter.