



Mountain Stream Meditation Center

Dharma Stream

September 2003 to January 2004

Bare Attention Bear Stories

by Nancy Taylor

It was the evening dharma talk in the fall at Granite Creek Ranch, about 35 miles from Jackson, Wyoming; John Travis was sitting in front of a large picture window placed low in the log cabin building. A yogi named Carl was sitting on a chair facing John and the window because his back was hurting. Right in the middle of the dharma talk, Carl noticed movement outside behind John. Sharpening his attention, he discovered that it was a healthy adult bear walking across the lawn of the ranch. Then, as all good meditators do, Carl asked himself "Should I break silence and say something or should I keep silent?" He thought it would be really exciting for everyone to see the bear. They are magnificent animals, and even though most of us see a bear a year or so, it is always a cause of wonder. Then he reconsidered, "It might frighten some people and make them afraid to go outside for walking meditation," plus some people had to walk to cabins late at night in the dark. Carl chose to stay silent, and he spent the next walking meditation period walking in the dining room.

Fall is a busy time at Granite Creek. Just before last October's retreat, the outfitter, Mike, who care of the ranch had to put a horse down due to a broken leg. In Wyoming, the common practice is to lead the horse to a ditch a bit away from the ranch and shoot

Continued on Page 3

Equanimity Now I am Enough

by Michelle Neyman

Never in my life have I done so little and accomplished so much! In June I attended my first 6 night silent Vipassana meditation retreat led by John Travis in Nevada City. The first full day was awful. Not only did I realize halfway through the day that these people were serious and no one was going to talk to me, but I had discovered that walking meditation wasn't like my typical morning cardiovascular work outs but rather pacing for 10-20 feet very slowly and then turning around so as to go nowhere! I felt my anxiety rise sharply as the day went on, and only later did it began to make sense why we weren't talking to others. It was so that we could hear ourselves, our stories, at a very loud volume in our heads. Insight meditation, inquiry into the nature of our conditioning, which I had begun only four months earlier, took on a whole new meaning.

On Day 1 my largest, most influential "story," really the one that guided all others, replayed over and over. It was that I didn't deserve to just exist, to just be, I had to be doing something, being productive or I would what, vanish? Not be loved? 34 years of suffering because of this one root story that I had come to believe as the truth. No wonder my anxiety at the thought of doing nothing for 6 days was so high. My yogi assignment was washing dinner

Continued on Page 7



is the newsletter of Mountain Stream Meditation Center —a nonprofit corporation.

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The Dharma on the Road By Barbara Braham

Over the course of his 45 years of teaching, the Buddha traveled and taught in a number of different places including Jetta's Grove, Vaishali, Kapilavasta and Shravasti. It appears that John is following in the footsteps of the Buddha by bringing the Dharma to several different communities across the country. One of those communities is called Tri-State Dharma, which includes people from Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky.

It is gratifying to watch a community that gathers together only once a year, evolve. There is a core of us who, since 1997, have attended each annual retreat that John has led. That core continues to expand, and there are now close to 30 of us who have been coming back over the years.

The Dharma it is not as well established in the Midwest as it is in California. Consequently, to have the consistency of one teacher who comes back regularly and supports the deepening of our practice over time is very meaningful. For me, there is a sense of being able to begin each retreat where I left off at the last retreat, rather than having to start over with a new teacher who knows nothing about me or my practice.

John's willingness to travel to share the Dharma brings many unexpected benefits to those of us in the communities he supports. First, those of you in Nevada City have an opportunity to practice generosity each time you share him with other sanghas in the country. Those of us who look forward to his annual retreat have the opportunity to practice gratefulness that he is willing to travel, and that his home sangha supports this.

Second, those of us in the Midwest have an opportunity to offer dana which supports both John and the Mountain Stream sangha. And those of you in Nevada City have the opportunity to practice sympathetic joy, knowing that we in the Midwest are happy to have John's presence and the teachings he brings.

Finally, we all support each other through our on-going metta practice. Isn't it nice to know that someone three time zones away is sending you loving kindness?!

The Dharma is growing and thriving in America in no small part because some teachers, like John, are willing to follow the model of the Buddha and bring the teachings to many parts of the country.

Barbara Braham is a member of Tri-State Dharma in Nowhere

Indiana.

REGISTRATION CHARGES for all retreats cover operating expenses. Day long registration charges are on a sliding scale from \$10 to \$20, the 2-night residential charge is \$75, 3-night residential is \$95, 4-night residential is \$130, and the five week introductory class is \$30. Daysitters at residential retreats will be charged \$10-\$20/day, according to their ability to pay. There is a nonrefundable cancellation charge of \$30 for 4-night retreats. Cancellation charges go to a scholarship fund to assist those who are not able to cover the cost of attending. If you feel that the registration charge would prohibit you from attending a retreat, please let the contact person for that event know that you wish to take a scholarship. Some nontraditional events are on a fee basis. Dana is a Pali word meaning **GENEROSITY**. Dana is traditionally offered at sitting groups, classes, and retreats to support the teachers and retreat staff to continue their dharma work. Registration charges do not cover the teachings, which are freely given because they are considered priceless. Donations to Mountain Stream may be tax deductible in accordance with the law.

Bare Attention

it. The ditch happened to be in close proximity to the parking lot for the retreat. A dead horse is sometimes used as bait at hunting camps to attract bears, and this horse did just that. So in our manager's introductory talk along with instructions about not putting too much toilet paper in the toilets because of the sensitive septic system, we were told to watch for grizzly bears as we walked up to the parking lot, particularly at night.

We rent dude ranches in the spring and fall for our retreats, and they are often surrounded by abundant wildlife. I have come to learn that retreat life in Wyoming offers different challenges than sitting near Highway 101 in Santa Rosa or Sir Frances Drake at Spirit Rock. Our fall retreats coincide with elk hunting season in Granite Creek. The same outfitter who rents us the building and shot the injured horse, runs a hunting camp out of the corrals to the north of the ranch. He rents horses to elk hunters who have permits for the Granite Creek drainage. So, as we sit the fall retreat, gunshots ring out through the woods and fields behind the ranch, piercing the silence of the hall. At first, I am shocked and filled with judgement, it is the beginning of the retreat and my equanimity practice is not quite up to speed. I feel hatred for the hunters killing the beautiful elk. I look at the stuffed trophy heads of animals all around our meditation "hall" with great disdain. As I deepen my practice through the nine day retreat, I begin to soften into practicing metta, first, for the elk. I say to the elk as soon as I hear the shot, "May you get away, may you be free from suffering", then later, I can include the hunters

in the metta, and their families who depend on the meat for their winter's meal. Then, when my friend Ted brings delicious elk steaks over for dinner, I remember the whole practice of inter being... the interrelatedness of all things, the shots, the metta, the meat, and my practice comes alive here in Wyoming.

Retreats began in Jackson after two of our sangha members sat with Mary Orr up at Blacktail Ranch in Montana. They invited Mary to come to Jackson and held a weekend non-residential retreat in 1996. We expanded to a weekend residential retreat the same year, and started renting dude ranches in the off (non-tourist) season the year after that. One year Mary couldn't come, and she suggested we invite John. For seven years John has been coming in October and April to lead retreats for the Teton Sangha. We were nervous about trying a nine day retreat, because of peoples' work schedules and the expense of such a long retreat. We started a little scholarship fund and a work-study program and have had about 18 yogis come for the whole nine days. John feels at home in the mountains having spent time in Switzerland and the Himalayas of India. "You are a self-reliant, strong bunch of meditators," he often says. Most of us aren't quite sure what he means by that. I have had the privilege to practice both at Spirit Rock and with the Teton Sangha, and I sense the depth of commitment and practice of our mountain sangha comes from practicing on our own without a teacher most of the year. There is also a determination and persistence that gets cultivated

Continued from frontpage

over the years of living with 9 months of winter and a few months of temperatures that dip to 20 below zero. Our sangha sits together once a week on Friday nights. In the summer we are again haunted by guns, as they re-enact an old western shoot out on the town square a block away. We sit from 6PM to 7PM and the shoot out is at 6:30PM. If I am sleepy, the guns are a great way to sharpen my awareness!

People are drawn to Jackson for more than the old west flavor of the town. We have the privilege of living very close to two magnificent national parks, Grand Teton and Yellowstone are less than an hour away. I asked Marcia Craighead, who acts as our sangha coordinator and retreat manager, what she thinks is unique about practicing Vipassana in the mountains. "The open space of the surrounding mountains draws the mind into spaciousness which makes this landscape a perfect place to practice," she said.

Perhaps that spaciousness is the reason yogis have gone to the mountains to sit in caves and look for inspiration, and the reason many monasteries sit on top of mountains. In the Tetons, we are humbled by our environment every time we look out a window or step outside. Today a forest fire is raging to the north of us, and the mountains are shrouded in smoke. Each day I am reminded that my practice must relate to something larger than the small self, the fire, the elk, the gun shots, the cold outside, and that deepens my practice.

Nancy Taylor teaches yoga in Jackson and has just completed the CDL program at Spirit Rock. She leads daylongs and teaches beginning meditation classes in

Center of the Room

by Lisa Walance

I was sitting in the Center of the Room, in the One Seat, with the Door and Windows Open.

Elation came in on the breeze. "Come On," he said. "Its lovely out there. Sweet, warm, sensual, seductive – let's go!" I never even considered looking back. But Elation does not have much stamina and he dropped me like a hot potato as soon as he was out of energy. I trudged back to the center of the room and before taking the one seat, I closed the door and windows.

But Anger came in anyway. "Who needs a door?" he said as he grabbed my arm. "We'll just break the damn thing down." He flung me into his car – a 70's something Mopar, 454 engine, chrome poking out everywhere. 90, 110, 120 miles per hour. The road was straight, endless and we had plenty of fuel. After a long while, he screeched to a halt and said, "If we turn back now and drive slowly, we will make it all the way. " We looked at each other. "Nah!"

And off we roared again. When we finally ran out of gas, I made another trudge to the center of the room. I patched the door closed as best I could, and this time, shut *and locked* the windows.

It didn't work and soon enough, the young twins came in, Righteous and Suffering. "We are going Proclaiming," they said, "Wanna come?" "Absolutely!" I cried. I might have looked back, for only a second or two. After several stints, Suffering got off her box, pulled me off mine, and said matter of factly, "When I grow up, I want to be Avalokitesvara, or Kannon Do, or maybe Kwan Yin. I am not sure which yet."

"Oh." I said, suddenly remembering. "Me, too."

And there I was, sitting in the Center of the Room, in the One Seat, with the Door and Windows Open.

Spine Straight.

Breathing In.

Breathing Out.

Present Moment.

Wonderful Moment.

I was chosing to awaken from forgetfulness and find my true home.

I was chosing for us all to be free.





Mountain Stream Meditation Center

Retreats and Events— September 2003 to January 2004

Sep 6-7, Sat-Sun

Daylongs, 9-5
Spirit Rock, Woodacre, CA
John Travis, Fred Wapahpah
Sweat Lodge on Sunday
415-488-0164

Sep 13-14, Sat-Sun

Sat Breath Workshop 9-5
Sun Meditation Daylong 9-5
John Travis
Nevada City
Barbara 530 272-6425

Sep 19-26, Fri-Fri

7-Night Residential Painting
Retreat
The Spirit of Creativity
Spirit Rock, Woodacre, CA
Anna Douglas, John Travis and
others
415 488-0164 Ext 363

Oct 3-10, Fri-Fri

7 Night Residential Retreat
Jackson Hole, Wyoming
John Travis
Marsha 307 733-1889

Oct 4, Sat

Daylong—Wise Speech
Nevada City, CA
Donald Rothberg
Barbara 530 272-6425

Oct 5, Sun

Daylong
Socially Engaged Buddhism
Reno, NV
Donald Rothberg
Christy 775 882-1662

Oct 25, Sat

Daylong 9:30-5:00
The Trance of Immortality
Spirit Rock, Woodacre, CA
415-488-0164

Oct 26, Sun

Daylong, 9-5
Spirit Rock, Woodacre, CA
John Travis, Fred Wapahpah
Sweat Lodge
415-488-0164

Oct 31-Nov 7, Fri-Fri

7-Night Residential Retreat
Nevada City Area
John Travis
Barbara 530 272-6425

Nov 8, Sat

Daylong, 9-5
Carson City, NV
John Travis
Christy 775 882-1662

Nov 14-16, Fri-Sun

Non-residential Weekend
Grand Forks, ND
John Travis
Tamar 701 772-2161

Nov 25-30, Tue-Sun

5-Night Residential Retreat
Spirit Rock, Woodacre, CA
John Travis, Robert Hall,
Anna Douglas
415-488-0164

Dec 1-6, Mon-Sat

Sandwich Retreat
Nevada City, CA
Monday - Friday Evenings
Then Sat Day Long
John Travis
Barbara 530 272-6425

Dec 13 Sat

Daylong 9-5
Nevada City, CA
John Travis
Barbara 530 272-6425

Dec 27-Jan 4, Sat-Sun

New Year's Retreat
8-Night Residential
Spirit Rock, Woodacre, CA
John Travis, Gil Fronsda
Eugene Cash, and Others
415-488-0164

Jan 25-28, 2004, Days-Unk

Not Sure Retreat
Some crazy thing
John Travis
Sun Valley, ID
Barbara 530 272-6425

May 6-16, 2004, Thur-Sun

10 Night Residential Retreat
The Jhanas & Satipatthana
Leigh Brasington
Nevada City, CA
Barbara 530 272-6425

Board Meetings

Board meetings are open to all. They are held on Sunday evenings, please be sure to call as the locations listed are tentative. Potluck at 6pm, meeting at 7pm.

September 28	Barbara Tandy	530-272-6425
October 19	John Travis	530-263-4096
November 16	John Mowen	530-265-8467
December 14	Steve & Susan Solinsky	530-265-5977
January 11 9485	Mary Helen Fein	530-878-
February 15 0199	Catrinka Holland	530-265-

Insight Meditation Classes

Classes are appropriate for beginners and experienced meditators.

Rocklin

Sept 30, Oct 7, 14, 21, 28

Five Tuesday Evenings

5:30 to 7:00 pm

Cornerstone Community Church

4495 Granite Drive

Mary Helen Fein

530-887-9400 (daytime)

530-878-9485 (evening)

Grass Valley

Oct 20, 27, Nov 3, 10, 17

Five Monday Evenings

5:30 to 7:00 pm

Center for Self-Healing

419 Colfax Avenue, Grass Valley

Susan Sugarman

530-265-4463

Area Sitting Groups

Auburn

Canyon Spirit Yoga Center

538 Auburn Ravine, Auburn

Tues—7:30–9:00 PM

Mary 530-878-9485

Carson City, NV

Mon—7:00–9:00 PM

Christy 775-882-1662

Chico

Wed—7:00–9:00 PM

Nancie 530-898-9139

Davis

Thurs—7:00–9:00 PM

Chuck 530-750-3132

Davis

Mon—7:00–9:00 PM

and 2nd Saturday of Month

9:00 am–12:30 PM

Tony & Toni 530-758-2904

Nevada City/Grass Valley

Wild Mountain Yoga Center

574 Searls Avenue

Mon—7:30–9:00 PM

Barbara 530-272-6425

Be-

ginning Instructions 1st Mon of Month

Reno, NV

Thurs—7:00–9:00 PM

Jennifer 775-323-5741

Sacramento

Sun—7:00–8:45 PM

Sacramento Buddhist Meditation Grp

Voice Mail Box 916-491-4788

Sacramento

Second & Fourth Thurs—7:00–9:15 PM

Sacramento Insight Meditation

Dennis 916-447-9999

Truckee

Wed—7:00–9:00 PM

Cathy 530-587-0948

South Lake Tahoe

Mon—7:00–9:00 PM

Brian 530-577-0826

What's in a Name

by Anne Macquarie

Dharma Zephyr Sangha is one of the oldest Buddhist meditation groups in northern Nevada, meeting every Monday evening for the past 13 years. Our name blew in the door one sitting.

Dharma means the teachings of the Buddha, the “principles of behavior that human beings ought to follow so as to fit in with the natural order of things; qualities of mind to develop so as to realize the inherent quality of the mind in and of itself.”

Zephyr After the famous wind of western Nevada, the “Washoe Zephyr,” about which Mark Twain wrote: “A Washoe wind is no trifling matter. It blows flimsy houses down, lifts shingle roofs occasionally, rolls up tin ones like sheet music, and now and then blows a stagecoach over and spills the passengers...”

Sangha means the community of people who practice the Dharma. Traditionally the term meant the community of monks and nuns dedicated to a Buddhist path, but in the West it has evolved to mean the larger community of lay practitioners.

Folsom Prison in Need of Zafus

The Folsom Prison Sangha is in need of more zafus and zabutans. Our original set of an 12 was grnerously donated by the Sacramento Bhuddhist Peace Fellowship and Lions Roar Sangha. We would like to expand that by another 12. If you would like to make a donation so that we can purchase them please send a check to Mountain Stream and mark Folsom Prison on the check. Also old Buddhist books for their library would go a long way. Contact Stu Clancy at 530-878-9485.

Equanimity

dishes, and by the second evening I washed dishes like never before, still believing that since I couldn't tell the others about my accomplishments or degrees this would be the only way to prove that I deserved to be there. Little did I know.

Being silent and meditating from sunup to sundown allowed me to slow down like I never have before. I was also more observant of my surroundings and of the other spiritual beings in my midst. I doubt I would have noticed the angelic nature of Joan's face, the grace of Margo, the focused mindfulness of Nancy, Larry's playful nature, the way Gurinder sat so darn still, John's ability to so skillfully remind me that now is enough, that I am enough. Mari, also new to the practice, and I bonded when on Day 3 she broke silence as we looked at our daily schedule of sit, walk, and eat, repeat until bed time, and commented "Well, I guess there's no time for fun!" Her humor was so welcomed and endeared her to me.

I had so many judgements that first day about this community that I now consider friends. I assumed that they were selfish people with too much time and money on their hands. Somehow I separated myself from them, it just seemed easier at the time. I thought if all the money that was spent on this retreat could have instead been used to feed the hungry, or comfort the homeless with

shelter or a meal, that that would have been wise action. Little did I know that Stu sits on a weekly basis with prisoners at Folsom, or that Nancy befriends the homeless in her community. It was my conditioning, not the Truth, that led me to believe that slowing down, taking real time away from the business of "doing" is a selfish act. What I have come to believe is that the passion and compassion I share with others, I also deserve.

Before the retreat I didn't have a daily sitting practice. That has since changed, and with it, my commitment to this path. John Travis' Dharma talks were insightful, awe inspiring, and compassionate. I had no idea what I was getting into when I signed up as evidenced by the fact that I

Continued from frontpage.

brought all the usual stuff for vacations: my books, journal, and camera! I was able to use one of the three, and I now have an 8 x 10 photo of our group on my desk at work. Along with our retreat schedule and the word EQUANIMITY pasted above my computer monitor, it reminds me that I am not my degrees, or promotions, or grant awards and activities, and that in every moment I can choose a path of suffering or not. I must be choosing it less, because since the retreat friends and colleagues have commented that I seem calmer, more relaxed and centered, and I have felt glimpses of a freedom that comes from knowing that Here, Now, and I, am enough.

Michelle Neyman is a new meditator and member of the Chico Group.





Mountain Stream
Meditation Center

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Mountain Stream Meditation Center

is a nonprofit organization, a vipassana community of Buddhist meditation groups dedicated to open heart, open mind. Retreats are held in various locations from the Sacramento Valley to the Eastern Sierras. Local meditation retreats are small and intimate. They feature vipassana instruction, sitting/walking meditation, group or individual meetings with the teacher, opening and closing circles, vegetarian fare, and dharma talks.

John M. Travis

has been teaching meditation since 1986. He studied in Asia with senior teachers of both Theravadin and Tibetan traditions and completed a four-year teacher training with Jack Kornfield. He is the founding teacher of Mountain Stream Meditation Center in Nevada City, California, and a teacher for Spirit Rock Center, a Buddhist retreat and training center in Marin County. John has a private practice as a meditation counselor, and a Hakomi body-centered therapist.

For appointments call 530 263-4096.

Insight Meditation

is a simple and accessible vehicle for opening the heart, clearing the mind, and living in a peaceful and free way. It is based on a 2,500 year old Buddhist practice which trains a clear awareness of breath and body, heart and mind, and the universal laws which govern our lives.