The Missouri Zen Center **February-March, 2005**

The Missouri Zen Center
220 Spring Avenue
Webster Groves, MO 63119
(314) 961-6138

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Coming Events

- Feb. 13: International Cultural Festival
- Feb. 28: Board Nominations due
- March 9: Dharma Life submissions due
- March 15: Members Meeting & Board election
- May 7: Hosta Sale

Address Correction Requested

Visit Our Web Site:
www.missourizencenter.org

In Memoriam: Jakuen Bob Eilers

Jakuen Bob Eilers, one of the founders of the Missouri Zen Center, died on January 22, 2005. He had been ill for several years; prior to his illness he was active with the Center. His wife Hatsuko Eilers has also worked with the Zen Center, demonstrating the tea ceremony with Rosan and Zen Center members at the Japanese Festival and helping with food preparation for our food booth at the Festival.

Rosan wrote of Jakuen's service to the Zen Center:

"I taught how to sit to the Oriental Philosophy class students at Washington University. Some of them and some from outside started sitting at the International Society building (with a red torii gate) in 1977. It grew and we rented the Yoga Center space (now Solar Yoga) at DesPeres and Forest Parkway, and in 1979 we organized as a nonprofit organization following the format of Minnesota Zen Meditation Center, because I had practiced under Katagiri Roshi by then (I taught at University of Nebraska at Omaha and he had sesshins there in 1978-9).

"We regularly had Sunday sittings at the Yoga Center doing teisho on the *Shobogenzo* (daily sitting was held at my home). Jakuen and others, notably Kodo, helped with translations, our monthly newsletter *Dharma Life* [now *Sangha Life*], etc. Jakuen as the first president did a lot in establishing the MZC: offering zen and tea demonstrations, participating in festivals, notably Green Tree Festival in Kirkwood, making only a few hundred dollars. He made the small altar with the Buddha's statue, the lower part of the present altar was made by John, drape and cushion by me.

"Jakuen was handy in making many things, and lives around us as the sutra books, the cash box at the Japanese Festival, carrying cases, etc., especially in our warm and dear memories."

We extend our deepest sympathies to Hatsuko, their daughter Yuriko, and to the Eilers' family and friends. Those who wish to contact Hatsuko and Yuriko may do so at 5319 Glen Cullen Way, St. Louis, MO, 63128.

Fundraiser on February 13

The Zen Center will be selling vegetarian sushi and snack crackers, including the much-loved wasabi peas, as a fundraiser at "Celebrate the World: An International Cultural Arts Festival" being held in the Maryland Heights Centre, 2344 McKelvey Road, on Sunday, February 13 from noon to 5 pm. Several members of the Center have volunteered to help with this event. If you wish to help, contact Meiku at the Zen Center.

The Festival offers music and dance, folk art and crafts, arts demonstrations, children's arts activities, meditative and martial arts demonstrations, and food from around the world. Many different individuals and groups will be performing at the Festival, including St. Louis Osawa Taiko Japanese Drums and Dances of India.

On Sunday, February 13 at the Zen Center we will hold only the first sitting starting at 6:20 am and sutra chanting starting at 7 am. Following sutra chanting, sushi preparation for our food booth will begin.

Admission to the Festival is $1 without a ticket or free with a ticket. Tickets are taped to the closet door at the Zen Center. They may also be obtained at Maryland Heights Centre and at www.marylandheights.com through February 12. If you attend the Festival, you can help support the Zen Center by purchasing sushi or snack crackers from our booth!

Call for Submissions

The Zen Center is preparing a special edition of *Dharma Life* on voluntary simplicity. Contributions from members and friends of the sangha are needed. Anything concerning simplicity as a Buddhist practice and way of life is welcome. This could be analyses, stories, personal practices, art (poems, drawings, photos), resources you've found helpful including websites, book reviews, and so on—whatever seems to be relevant. We are interested both in what has worked for you and what hasn't worked. Often we learn as much from what doesn't work as from what does. If you can connect what you've tried to larger cultural/social/political patterns that affected it, please do so. As Buddhists we understand that everything is connected, so feel free to make such connect ions in your contributions.

Send contributions to Kuryo in care of the Zen Center. Questions may also be directed to her. All contributions must be received by March 9 to be included.

Prison Work Update

by Kalen

First, thanks to all those who have made donations to Dan. He will be released in May and will come to St. Louis. Everyone has been so generous — we have received everything from underpants (new) to a stove and a bed and clothing and sheets and towels and promises of furniture to come. WOW! The thing we are lacking is kitchen items — dishes, glasses, silverware, pots and pans. If you have some you would like to get rid of, we'd really appreciate it.

Dan was diagnosed with cancer while in prison. However, at this writing, he is cancer-free and regaining his health. He's in his late 30s and is determined to make something of his life. He has no family or friends on the outside. He can't believe that so many are giving so much. So he would also like me to say "Thank you" for him.

Second, I have teamed up with a Catholic nun, Sister Elaine, and

Continued on Page 3

What is Simplicity?

by Kuryo

Our teacher Rosan says that the three pillars of our practice are zazen, voluntary simplicity, and the Global Ethic. We practice zazen at the Zen Center or at home, when we sit or when we are able to take the mind of zazen into our everyday activities. We know that the Declaration toward a Global Ethic, proclaimed by the *Parliament of the World's Religions* in 1993, sets forth four principles for living: no killing, no stealing, no lying, and equal partnership between men and women. These two pillars seem reasonably clear in concept though, at least in my own experience, often difficult to practice. The third pillar, voluntary simplicity, seems a little more amorphous and ill-defined. Perhaps a start toward a definition of simplicity might help us to think about ways to practice it, and also encourage some of you to contribute to the upcoming Dharma Life issue on simplicity.

According to my *New Webster's Dictionary*, simplicity means "the state or quality of being simple, uncompounded, or uncomplex; plainness or freedom from ornament, luxury, ostentation, or the like; artlessness, candor, or absence of deceit, cunning, or guile ; sincerity or unaffectedness; deficiency of mental acuteness, subtlety, or good sense." The last definition, deficiency of good sense, seems contrary to our practice and so I will put it aside.

Candor, sincerity, and an absence of deceit are important aspects of the dictionary definition of simplicity. This brings to mind our precept, and the Global Ethic principle, of no lying. In this sense living simply means living truthfully, both speaking the truth and being willing to face truth squarely and live from that awareness. But this aspect does not seem to receive much attention in books, articles, and media reports on simplicity. The material aspect commands more attention. This was true during my recent interview on KWMU-FM; both the host and the callers seemed to think of simplicity as lack of clutter, reducing material goods, having fewer but higher-quality goods. While this does fit part of the dictionary criteria for simplicity, it leaves out the mindful, truthful aspect. It doesn't consider the ways in which the mindful and material aspects interact, which I think is what Rosan has in mind when he calls simplicity one of the three pillars of our practice.

Please offer your thoughts, practices, poems, drawings, photos, reviews, resources, and the like to the Dharma Life issue on voluntary simplicity which is in preparation (for details, see the article elsewhere in this issue).

Also, the Zen Center has a Yahoo group on simplicity issues and practices. It offers an ongoing source of support for the practice of simplicity through its postings and through occasional in-person gatherings. If you are not already part of the group and you wish to join, please contact me at the Zen Center.

Continued from Page 2

we are putting together a program to employ people when they are released from prison. We have received permission from the prison system to do this work. We're starting small but we have big plans. Sister Elaine has worked for more than 6 years in the prison system and teaches meditation in her work and also brings Buddhist teachers to all her groups.

This week we went for a grant for start-up funding for a business and we got our first money — a one-time grant for $6,000. This will go a long way. We are looking for other sources of one-time donations so if you know a business or individual that would like to help with this innovative program, please let me know. It's easier for most companies to give money to child-based charities and not to criminals who have caused harm. However, if we want the cycle to stop, it is important to step forward and extend the energy to do so.

Thanks again to everyone who has helped in all the ways possible — by donating or by writing or visiting offenders or by encouraging words.

Conditional Use Permit

We are pleased to report that the Zen Center received a conditional use permit from Webster Groves in December 2004. This means that the Zen Center is approved to operate as a religious organization from its current location. Bows to all of the people who worked toward our receiving the permit!

We still need to receive an occupancy permit as a religious organization (our previous permit was as a residence) to fulfill the terms of the conditional use permit. We are in the process of having the building inspected. The inspection will determine if any work needs to be done to the building to fulfill the requirements of the new occupancy permit.

However, the uncertainty of our parking situation complicates matters. Our conditional use permit states that we must make provision for eight parking spaces within 200 feet of the Center. We do not fulfill this requirement and cannot do so without changing the residential character of the Center. The Board is engaged in dialogue with Webster Groves regarding parking issues. Zen Center members can increase the chances for a successful outcome by attention to where they park their cars when they attend the Zen Center.

Please see "Mindful Parking" for important information on where to park when you attend the Zen Center. The MZC Board and the Zen Center's neighbors thank you very much for your cooperation!

Members Meeting & Board Election

The MZC Board announces that nominations for new Board members are open. The Board is charged with ensuring that the Zen Center abides by its bylaws. In addition the Board takes responsibility for organizing the work necessary to keep the Zen Center in existence.

In accordance with our bylaws —and also because we'd love to have more people to help us— we request nominations for new members to the Board. Nominees should have a strong commitment to our practice and to the Zen Center as a place for the sangha to practice and a means to bring the practice to more people. Nominees need to be willing to participate in Board meetings, usually held once a month, and to do whatever work they commit to during the meetings. The term of membership is three years. You may nominate yourself or someone else. Please submit your nominations to the Zen Center no later than February 28.

The Board member election and annual Members Meeting will be held on Saturday, March 15 starting at 5 pm. at the Zen Center. Anyone who meets one of the following criteria may vote at that meeting:

- has taken lay ordination at the Zen Center
- is current with membership dues; or
- is active but is not able to pay dues; anyone falling into this situation should contact the Zen Center by February 28 so that we can have a ballot printed for them.

Following election of Board members, any other necessary business will be conducted. Then we'll share a vegetarian potluck. Please bring a dish to share and enjoy the food others bring! We are fortunate to have so many talented cooks in our sangha!

Mindful Parking

During the process to obtain the Zen Center's conditional use permit, input from residents on the street (some of whom have been inconvenienced by Zen Center members' cars partially blocking access to their driveways) resulted in a request that we stop parking on the street. In this way we can avoid being the cause of any future problems to residents and their guests. The sangha has generally cooperated with that request, and we are grateful to all of you for doing so.

The Board is in conversation with the city of Webster Groves to clarify permit requirements regarding parking at the Center, as noted elsewhere in this newsletter. Mindful parking will contribute toward a good outcome for this conversation.

To practice mindful parking, park on the pad behind the back porch of the Zen Center or in our driveway. If the driveway is full, park in one of the nearby public parking lots and walk from there to the Zen Center. Locations of these lots follow. **Please DO NOT park on the street, not even in front of the Zen Center!** Thank you for practicing mindful parking!

Continued on Page 4

Continued from Page 3

East of the Center, there is a public parking lot in back of McCord Design Group, Natural Fact, and the other businesses at the corner of Big Bend and Dale. Access is from Big Bend; the entrance is next to McCord Design Group.

There is another public parking lot in back of Stratton's at the corner of Big Bend and Old Orchard west of the Center. From Big Bend, turn north onto Old Orchard and turn left into the lot.

Hosta Sale coming in May

The Zen Center's Hosta Sale fundraiser will be held as usual on the Saturday before Mother's Day, May 7. This year we expect to offer some container plantings as well as hostas and other beautiful plants.

As always, we'll need help from volunteers to prepare the plants for sale. A workday or two may be held on a Saturday morning in March to make the planting mix. Please watch the listserve and postings at the Zen Center for work periods. Also, please set aside one or more Saturday mornings in April to help us prepare the container plantings and to dig up the hostas and other plants, and plan to help us with the Hosta Sale itself on May 7. More details on workdays and the Sale itself in the next newsletter!

Live Simple Life!

by Rosan Daido

The Four Limitlessnesses (friendship, commiseration, joy, equanimity) are also called the Brahma-vihara (Divine-residence). Equanimity (upekkha, lit. throwing away) is the base of the other three.

Possession is possessedness. As long as we are possessed of power, matter and me, we cannot genuinely enjoy limitless liberation, light, love and life. The more we rat-race in the civilization cage, the more we endanger and engulf the nature net of truth, beauty, goodness and holiness. Settle in simplicity and satisfaction.

[Editor's note: Rosan will return to St. Louis in early March and will remain here for a couple of weeks. We wish him a safe trip and look forward to practicing with him.]

Zen Center E-mail List

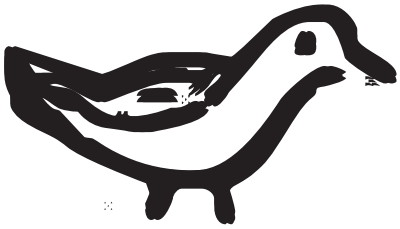
The Zen Center's old list server is no longer in existence. A new one has been set up, and all members and friends of the sangha are invited to subscribe. To subscribe, send an email message from the address you wish to use for list messages to:

`missourizencenter-subscribe@buddhistcouncil.us`

The message field should remain blank.

You will receive a message asking you to confirm your subscription. Follow the directions in that message and your address will then be added to the list. If you encounter difficulties, consult the list owner at this address:

`missourizencenter-owner@buddhistcouncil.us`



Regular Zendo Schedule

Sunday

6:20-7:00 am	Zazen
7:00-7:20 am	Service (sutras)
7:20-8:00 am	Zazen
8:00-8:10 am	Kinhin
8:10-8:30 am	Zazen
8:30 am	Talk/discussion, work period, tea

You are welcome to come throughout the morning, but please do not enter the zendo during zazen. Enter quietly at other times.

Monday

6:00-6:40 am	Zazen
6:30-7:00 pm	Instruction
7:00-7:20 pm	Zazen
7:20-9:00 pm	Discussion/ questions

Tuesday

6:00-6:40 am	Zazen
7:00-7:40 pm	Zazen
7:40-9:00 pm	Tea/discussion

Wednesday

6:00-6:40 am	Zazen
7:00-7:40 pm	Zazen
After sitting	Writing Practice

Thursday

6:00-6:40 am	Zazen
7:00-7:40 pm	Zazen

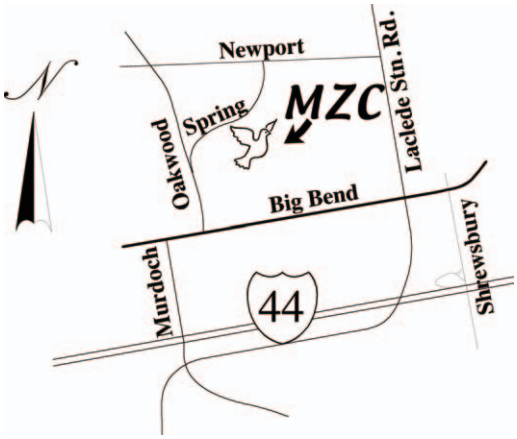
Friday

6:00-6:40 am	Zazen
7:00-7:40 pm	Zazen
After sitting	Dinner out

Saturday

8:00-8:40 am	Zazen
8:40-9:30 am	Discussion
10:00-10:30 am	Family Sitting

Work periods may be scheduled following zazen.
Any changes to this schedule: please contact the Zen Center.



Scheduled Events are apt to change from time to time. When in doubt, call to verify.

February 2005

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
			1 6:00 am Zazen 7:00 pm Zazen Writing Practice	2 6:00 am Zazen 7:00 pm Zazen	3 6:00 am Zazen 7:00 pm Zazen	4 8:00 am Zazen 10:00 am Family Sitting
5 6:20 am Sunday Service	6 6:00 am Zazen 6:30 pm Instruction 7:00 pm Zazen 7:20 pm Q & A	7 6:00 am Zazen 7:00 pm Zazen 7:40 pm Tea & Discussion	8 6:00 am Zazen 7:00 pm Zazen Writing Practice	9 6:00 am Zazen 7:00 pm Zazen	10 6:00 am Zazen 7:00 pm Zazen	11 8:00 am Zazen 10:00 am Family Sitting
12 6:20 am Sunday Service	13 6:00 am Zazen 6:30 pm Instruction 7:00 pm Zazen 7:20 pm Q & A	14 6:00 am Zazen 7:00 pm Zazen 7:40 pm Tea & Discussion	15 6:00 am Zazen 7:00 pm Zazen Writing Practice	16 6:00 am Zazen 7:00 pm Zazen	17 6:00 am Zazen 7:00 pm Zazen	18 8:00 am Zazen 10:00 am Family Sitting
19 6:20 am Sunday Service	20 6:00 am Zazen 6:30 pm Instruction 7:00 pm Zazen 7:20 pm Q & A	21 6:00 am Zazen 7:00 pm Zazen 7:40 pm Tea & Discussion	22 6:00 am Zazen 7:00 pm Zazen Writing Practice	23 6:00 am Zazen 7:00 pm Zazen	24 6:00 am Zazen 7:00 pm Zazen	25 8:00 am Zazen 10:00 am Family Sitting
26 6:20 am Sunday Service	27 6:00 am Zazen 6:30 pm Instruction 7:00 pm Zazen 7:20 pm Q & A	28 6:00 am Zazen 7:00 pm Zazen 7:40 pm Tea & Discussion	29 6:00 am Zazen 7:00 pm Zazen Writing Practice	30 6:00 am Zazen 7:00 pm Zazen	31 6:00 am Zazen 7:00 pm Zazen	

PLEASE POST

March 2005

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
						1 8:00 am Zazen 10:00 am Family Sitting
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